

# Ephesians 2:15-16 Commentary

PREVIOUS

EPHESIANS - CHRIST AND THE CHURCH  
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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)

**BGT** Α τ ς γ ρ σ τ ι ν ε ρ ν η μ ν , π ο ι σ α ς τ μ φ τ ε ρ α ν κ α τ μ ε σ τ ο ι χ ο ν τ ο φ ρ α γ μ ο λ σ α ς , τ ν χ θ ρ α ν ν τ σ α ρ κ α τ ο , 15 τ ν ν μ ο ν τ ν ν τ ο λ ν ν δ γ μ α σ ι ν κ α τ α ρ γ σ α ς , ν α τ ο ς δ ο κ τ σ ν α τ ε ς ν α κ α ι ν ν ν θ ρ ω π ω ν π ο ι ν ε ρ ν η ν

**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](#))

**NLT (revised)** For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. 15 He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups.

**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, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**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,

**Weymouth** - by setting aside the Law with its commandments, expressed, as they were, in definite decrees. His design was to unite the two sections of humanity in Himself so as to form one new man,

**KJV** Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

**NKJ** For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,

**ESV** For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,

**NET** For he is our peace, the one who made both groups into one and who destroyed the middle wall of partition, the hostility, 15 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, thus making peace,

**NIV** For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to

create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,

**CSB** 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.

**NRS** For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. 15 He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace,

**NAB** For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh, 15 abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing peace,

**NJB** For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one entity and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, by destroying in his own person the hostility, 15 that is, the Law of commandments with its decrees. His purpose in this was, by restoring peace, to create a single New Man out of the two of them,

**GWN** So he is our peace. In his body he has made Jewish and non-Jewish people one by breaking down the wall of hostility that kept them apart. 15 He brought an end to the commandments and demands found in Moses' Teachings so that he could take Jewish and non-Jewish people and create one new humanity in himself. So he made peace.

**BBE** For he is our peace, who has made the two into one, and by whom the middle wall of division has been broken down, 15 Having in his flesh put an end to that which made the division between us, even the law with its rules and orders, so that he might make in himself, of the two, one new man, so making peace;

#### BY ABOLISHING IN HIS FLESH THE ENMITY WHICH IS THE LAW OF COMMANDMENTS *CONTAINED* IN ORDINANCES: katargesas, (AAPMSN):

- **By abolishing in His flesh** - Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 10:19-22
- **The law of commandments** - Galatians 3:10; Colossians 2:14, 20; Hebrews 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
- [Ephesians 2:13-15 The Unity of the Body, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

### CHRIST NULLIFIED THE ENMITY

**By abolishing** ([katargeo](#)) **in His flesh** ([sarx](#)) **the enmity** ([echthra](#))...**the law of commandments...in ordinances** - **Abolishing** modifies or perhaps better explains "**broke down**" in Ep 2:14+. In short the cross made ineffective the power or force of the ongoing centuries long enmity between Jew and Gentile. Of course this enmity is abolished only for those who are now by grace through faith in Christ. Peace in the Middle East can only be nullified by the glorious triumphant return of the Prince of peace/shalom! Until that day enmity and hostility will continue unabated, and in fact with crescendo in the Great Tribulation, the horrible time of Jacob's Trouble (Jer 30:7)

**TECHNICAL NOTE** - The phrase "**in His flesh**" "*en sarki auto*" is found in the Nestle-Aland Greek text at the end of verse 14. Therefore the **ESV** is more accurate than the **NAS** - "For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down **in his flesh** the dividing wall of hostility **15** by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, (Eph 2:14-15ESV) The NAS reading makes it sound like the enmity was in the Law but that is not exactly correct. The enmity was caused by the Law.

As alluded to in the following comments, there is debate about what Jesus abolished in His flesh that nullified the enmity between Jew and Gentile.

**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)

**R Kent Hughes** - 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" (Mt 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! (See [Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ](#))

**John MacArthur** comments 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 could not fully worship in the Jewish Temple, and a Jew would not worship in a pagan temple. In Christ they now worshiped together and needed no temple or other sacred place to sanctify it. All ceremonial distinctions and requirements were removed (cf. Acts 10:9-16; 11:17, 18; Col. 2:16, 17), (See [Ephesians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Harold Hoehner** does not feel Paul is referring to the ceremonial law writing that "Jews and Gentiles were enemies because the former sought to keep the Law with its commandments and regulations (cf. Col. 2:14, 21–23), whereas Gentiles were unconcerned about them. This difference was like a barrier between them. But now that the Law is inoperative ("Christ is the end of the Law" [Rom. 10:4]), Jewish-Gentile hostility is gone. Some translations (e.g., KJV, NASB) give the idea that the Law was the enmity, but that is wrong; the Law was the cause of the enmity. Christ "destroyed" the barrier (hostility) by making the Law inoperative. (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Hoehner** gives a more detailed analysis in his exegetical work writing that "In Paul's writings it consistently means "to render inoperative, nullify, invalidate" (cf. Rom 3:3, 31; 4:14; 6:6; 7:2, 6); hence, in this context to translate it "to put death" or "to destroy" is incorrect. The law was not put to death or destroyed but has been rendered inoperative or nullified for the believer....The law of Moses, the content of which are the commandments consisting of decrees, has been rendered inoperative for believers in Christ and hence the hostility between Jewish and Gentile Christians has been destroyed. Since the whole Mosaic law has been rendered inoperative for Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ, it is a false dichotomy to distinguish between the moral and ceremonial laws, making only the ceremonial laws inoperative. Christ is the end of the whole law for believers (Rom 10:4) and we as believers are no longer under that pedagogue (Gal 3:25). In fact, we have died to the law (Rom 7:1–6). Does this mean that there are no laws in the Mosaic law that the believer of today is obligated to obey? Only those that have been reiterated in the NT. We are under the new covenant, and the old covenant has been done away. It is no longer our modus operandi. Christ has fulfilled it and it is no longer operative, and this applies to both Gentile and Jewish believers who are in Christ. To be sure, Paul was opposed to antinomianism for he states that he was under the law of Christ (lit. "in-law of Christ," νόμος Χριστο ) (1 Cor 9:21) and was to fulfill the law of Christ (τὸ νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ) (Gal 6:2). Much debate has been generated over these statements, but suffice it to say that the least one could say is that the law of Christ is expressed in the new covenant, that is, the NT. Therefore, Paul's progression in the argument is that Christ has destroyed the symptom, that is, the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, by making inoperative the root or cause, namely, the law of commandments in decrees. Hence, the nullification of the Mosaic law has great significance for Jews and Gentiles in Christ." (See [Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

**Abolishing** (2673) (**katargeo** from **kata** = intensifies meaning + **argeo** = be idle from **argos** = ineffective, idle, inactive from **a** = without + **érgon** = work) 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.

The **Net 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.

**Flesh** (4561) (**sarx**) in this context 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 fullness 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. ([Ephesians 2 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** 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”.

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

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!

**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; 1Th 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. ([Ephesians 2 Commentary](#))

*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* - 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 (Ro 10:4)

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

**Commandments** (1785) (**entole** from **entellomai** = order, give commandments) is most common of the words meaning commandment, stressing the authority of the one commanding, while *éntalma* (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. ([New International Dictionary of NT Theology](#))

**TDNT** sums up **dogma**...The basic meaning is "what seems to be right": a. "opinion," b. "principle," c. "resolution," d. "decree," and e. "the law." The verb means "to affirm an opinion," "to establish a decree," "to publish an edict."

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.

**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.

**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 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!.

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### **QUESTION - [What is the difference between the ceremonial law, the moral law, and the judicial law in the Old Testament?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The law of God given to Moses is a comprehensive set of guidelines to ensure that the Israelites' behavior reflected their status as God's chosen people. It encompasses moral behavior, their position as a godly example to other nations, and systematic procedures for acknowledging God's holiness and mankind's sinfulness. In an attempt to better understand the purpose of these laws, Jews and Christians categorize them. This has led to the distinction between moral law, ceremonial law, and judicial law.

#### **Moral Law**

The moral laws, or *mishpatim*, relate to justice and judgment and are often translated as "ordinances." *Mishpatim* are said to be based on God's holy nature. As such, the ordinances are holy, just, and unchanging. Their purpose is to promote the welfare of those who obey. The value of the laws is considered obvious by reason and common sense. The moral law encompasses regulations on justice, respect, and sexual conduct, and includes the Ten Commandments. It also includes penalties for failure to obey the ordinances. Moral law does not point people to Christ; it merely illuminates the fallen state of all mankind.

Modern Protestants are divided over the applicability of *mishpatim* in the church age. Some believe that Jesus' assertion that the law will remain in effect until the earth passes away (Matthew 5:18) means that believers are still bound to it. Others, however, understand that Jesus fulfilled this requirement (Matthew 5:17), and that we are instead under the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2), which is thought to be "love God and love others" (Matthew 22:36-40). Although many of the moral laws in the Old Testament give excellent examples as to how to love God and love others, and freedom from the law is not license to sin (Romans 6:15), we are not specifically bound by *mishpatim*.

#### **Ceremonial Law**

The ceremonial laws are called *hukkim* or *chuqqah* in Hebrew, which literally means "custom of the nation"; the words are often translated as "statutes." These laws seem to focus the adherent's attention on God. They include instructions on regaining right standing with God (e.g., sacrifices and other ceremonies regarding "uncleanness"), remembrances of God's work in Israel (e.g., feasts and festivals), specific regulations meant to distinguish Israelites from their pagan neighbors (e.g., dietary and clothing restrictions), and signs that point to the coming Messiah (e.g., the Sabbath, circumcision, Passover, and the redemption of the firstborn). Some Jews believe that the ceremonial law is not fixed. They hold that, as societies evolve, so do God's expectations of how His followers should relate to Him. This view is not indicated in the Bible.

Christians are not bound by ceremonial law. Since the church is not the nation of Israel, memorial festivals, such as the Feast of Weeks and Passover, do not apply. [Galatians 3:23-25](#) explains that since Jesus has come, Christians are not required to sacrifice or circumcise. There is still debate in Protestant churches over the applicability of the Sabbath. Some say that its inclusion in the Ten Commandments gives it the weight of moral law. Others quote [Colossians 2:16-17](#) and [Romans 14:5](#) to explain that Jesus has fulfilled the Sabbath and become our Sabbath rest. As [Romans 14:5](#) says, "Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind." The applicability of the Old Testament law in the life of a Christian has always related to its usefulness in loving God and others. If someone feels observing the Sabbath aids him in this, he is free to observe it.

#### **Judicial/Civil Law**

The Westminster Confession adds the category of judicial or civil law. These laws were specifically given for the culture and place of the Israelites and encompass all of the moral law except the Ten Commandments. This includes everything from murder to restitution for a man gored by an ox and the responsibility of the man who dug a pit to rescue his neighbor's trapped donkey ([Exodus 21:12-36](#)). Since the Jews saw no difference between their God-ordained morality and their cultural responsibilities, this category is used by Christians far more than by Jewish scholars.

The division of the Jewish law into different categories is a human construct designed to better understand the nature of God and define which laws church-age Christians are still required to follow. Many believe the ceremonial law is not applicable, but we are bound by the Ten Commandments. *All* the law is useful for instruction (2 Timothy 3:16), and nothing in the Bible indicates that God intended a distinction of categories. Christians are not under the law (Romans 10:4). Jesus fulfilled the law, thus abolishing the difference between Jew and Gentile "so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross..." (Ephesians 2:15-16). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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**QUESTION - [What does it mean that Jesus fulfilled the law, but did not abolish it?](#)- WATCH ASSOCIATED VIDEO**

**ANSWER -** Jesus said, "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. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished" (Matthew 5:17–18).

This important statement of our Lord gives us insight into His mission and the character of God's Word.

Jesus' declaration that He came to fulfill [the Law and the Prophets](#), not to abolish them, obviously contains two statements in one. There is something Jesus *did* and something He did *not* do. At the same time, Jesus emphasized the eternal nature of the Word of God.

Jesus goes out of His way to promote the authority of the Law of God. He did not come to abolish the Law, regardless of what the Pharisees accused Him of. In fact, Jesus continues His statement with a commendation for those who teach the Law accurately and hold it in reverence: "Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19).

Note the qualities that Jesus attributes to the Word of God, referenced as "the Law and the Prophets": 1) The Word is everlasting; it will outlast the natural world. 2) The Word was written with intent; it was meant to be fulfilled. 3) The Word possesses plenary authority; even the smallest letter of it is established. 4) The Word is faithful and trustworthy; "everything" it says will be accomplished. No one hearing Jesus' words in the [Sermon on the Mount](#) could doubt His commitment to the Scriptures.

Consider what Jesus did *not* do in His ministry. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus says that He did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets. In other words, Jesus' purpose was not to abrogate the Word, dissolve it, or render it invalid. The Prophets will be fulfilled; the Law will continue to accomplish the purpose for which it was given (see Isaiah 55:10–11).

Next, consider what Jesus *did* do. Jesus says that He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. In other words, Jesus' purpose was to establish the Word, to embody it, and to fully accomplish all that was written. "Christ is the culmination of the law" (Romans 10:4). The predictions of the Prophets concerning the Messiah would be realized in Jesus; the holy standard of the Law would be perfectly upheld by Christ, the strict requirements personally obeyed, and the ceremonial observances finally and fully satisfied.

Jesus Christ fulfilled the Prophets in that, in His first coming alone, He fulfilled hundreds of prophecies concerning Himself (e.g., Matthew 1:22; 13:35; John 19:36; Luke 24:44). Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law in at least two ways: as a teacher and as a doer. He taught people to obey the Law (Matthew 22:35–40; Mark 1:44), and He obeyed the Law Himself (John 8:46; 1 Peter 2:22). In living a perfect life, Jesus fulfilled the moral laws; in His sacrificial death, Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial laws. Christ came not to destroy the old religious system but to build upon it; He came to finish the Old Covenant and establish the New.

Jesus came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them. In fact, the ceremonies, sacrifices, and other elements of the Old Covenant were "only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves" (Hebrews 10:1). The tabernacle and temple were "holy places made with hands," but they were never meant to be permanent; they were but "copies of the true things" (Hebrews 9:24, ESV). The Law had a built-in expiration date, being filled as it was with "external regulations applying until the time of the new order" (Hebrews 9:10).

In His fulfillment of the Law and Prophets, Jesus obtained our eternal salvation. No more were priests required to offer sacrifices and enter the holy place (Hebrews 10:8–14). Jesus has done that for us, once and for all. By grace through faith, we are made right with God: "He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14).

There are some who argue that, since Jesus did not "abolish" the Law, then the Law is still in effect—and [still binding](#) on New Testament Christians. But Paul is clear that the believer in Christ is no longer under the Law: "We were held in custody under the Law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the Law became our guardian to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by

faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian” ([Galatians 3:23–25](#), BSB). We are not under the [Mosaic Law](#) but under “the law of Christ” (see Galatians 6:2).

If the Law is still binding on us today, then it has not yet accomplished its purpose—it has not yet been fulfilled. If the Law, as a legal system, is still binding on us today, then Jesus was wrong in claiming to fulfill it and His sacrifice on the cross was insufficient to save. Thank God, Jesus fulfilled the whole Law and now grants us His righteousness as a free gift. “Know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified” (Galatians 2:16). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### Related Resources:

- [Do Christians have to obey the Old Testament law?](#)
- [What does it mean that Christians are not under the law?](#)
- [Does God require Sabbath-keeping of Christians?](#)

**SO THAT IN HIMSELF HE MIGHT MAKE THE TWO INTO ONE NEW MAN: hina tous duo ktise (3SAAS) en auto eis ena kainon anthron:**

- **One new man** - Ep 4:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Colossians 3:10
- [Ephesians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 2:11-22 Our Biography In Brief](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 2:13-15 The Unity of the Body, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

### THE CHURCH A NEW CREATION

**So that** ([hina](#)) introduces a purpose clause. Paul will actually give two purposes of Christ's abolishing the enmity - first creation of one new man and second (v 16) reconciliation in one body (church). In the present context the thing which had never existed was believing Jew and believing Gentile together as one entity. And the verb "**might make**" is actually the verb that means create ([ktizo](#)), so the bringing together of Jew and Gentile was in effect a miraculous new creation.

It is interesting that 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

**In Himself He might make** ([ktizo](#)) **the two into one new** ([kainos](#)) **man** - **In Himself** indicates Jesus is the medium or means of reconciliation. This work was a new creation on a new foundation with the cornerstone being Christ Himself. Note the phrase **one new man** refers not to individuals but is used corporately. In other words, this truth in this context refers to Christ's **body**, the church, which is in turn composed of individual **new** (also [kainos](#)) creations in Christ (cf 2Cor 5:17+). It is fitting that only **new** men in Christ (individuals) would be the composition of the one **new** man (Christ's body).

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).

**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. ([Ephesians 2 Commentary](#))

**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. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#).)

**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. This verb describes Christ as the Creator in Col 1:16 "For by Him all things **were created**, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him."

Paul used **ktizo** describing the saints as God's new creation in Christ. "For we are His workmanship ([poiema](#) - Masterpiece!), **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). Later Paul instructs the Ephesian saints to "put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been **created** (**ktizo**) in righteousness and holiness of the truth." (see **note** Ephesians 4:24)

**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. **Kainos** signifies qualitatively new in contrast to **neos** 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.

**Net 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** 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+, **new** Jerusalem in Rev 3:12; 21:2, **new** wine in Mk 14:25, the **new** name in Rev 2:17+; Rev 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+). 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+; He 9:15+). This is a better covenant (He 7:22+), infallible (Heb 8:7+), everlasting (Heb 13:20+), grounded on higher promises (He 8:6+). 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).

**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

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## **James Smith - THE CHURCH AS A NEW MAN EPHESIANS 2:14–22**

In by-gone ages the Church's character "was not made known unto the sons of men" (chap. 3:5). It was "a mystery hid in God" (chap. 3:9). In all ages God had His Holy ones; but the Church as a new man, a new created Body of Christ, through which the manifold wisdom of God was to be made known (chap. 3:10) had not yet been revealed. This is the theme before us now.

**I. The Divine Plan.** This was to make in Himself of twain (Jew and Gentile) one new man, one new Body, so making peace (v. 15). This new Body was to be—

**1. COMPOSED OF JEW AND GENTILE.** These terms represent the whole human race. He that is not a Jew is a Gentile, whatever be the colour of his skin or the language he may speak. The Church is to be composed of "called out" ones from every nation and people under the heavens.

**2. RECONCILED ONE TO ANOTHER.** No more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens and of the household of God (v. 19). "All one in Christ Jesus." In being brought to God, each member is to be brought into sympathy and fellowship with one another. They all belong to the "household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

**3. RECONCILED TO GOD.** "That He might reconcile both unto God in one body" (v. 16). Before God there is now neither Jew nor Gentile, but one body, made nigh by the Blood of Christ (v. 13). All are saved by grace. This "new man" is "accepted in the Beloved" for the Head of this new creation is Christ Himself.

**II. The Divine Preparation.** Before this gracious purpose of God could be accomplished a great work had to be done, a work that God only could do. There was

**1. A WALL OF PARTITION TO BE BROKEN DOWN.** "He hath broken down the middle wall of partition" (v. 14). In the temple worship the Gentile court was cut off from the inner court by a separating wall or partition. But in this new creation in Christ all such prejudice, sectarianism, and every dividing thing is to be broken down. But men are still building partition walls in their priestly pride, religious bigotry, and pagan superstitions; but, thank God, that in Christ all are done away, "broken down."

**2. ENMITY TO BE SLAIN.** "He hath reconciled both unto God by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (v. 16). The Cross of Christ is God's mighty weapon for breaking down barriers between individuals and nations, between human hearts and a Holy God. The greatest of all partition walls is the enmity of the carnal mind (Rom. 8:7). This enmity cannot be cured, it must be slain; and the humbling and melting vision of Christ crucified for our own sins can slay it.

**3. BOTH MUST BE POSSESSED BY THE SAME SPIRIT.** "Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (v. 18). This union between Jew and Gentile is not a mere expediency for a temporary end. It is a vital and eternal work of God's grace. One Spirit animates the whole body. "For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentile, bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). Christ is the Fountain Head of this Spirit-life that flows through every member of the body. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink" (John 7:37).

**III. The Divine Purpose is to have this "new man" as a fixed abode of God through the Spirit** (v. 22, Weymouth trans.). Does that mean that in the coming age the Church will be the fixed abode of the Holy Spirit for the manifestation of the glory of Christ? "He shall abide with you forever."

**1. ALL BUILT ON THE ONE FOUNDATION.** Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being

the chief corner stone (v. 20). The prophets as well as the apostles built upon the truth revealed, whether by the Holy Spirit or by Christ Himself (Heb. 1:1, 2). In both instances Jesus Christ Himself was the chief corner stone, binding the whole spiritual fabric as one to Himself. The strength and stability of the structure depends on the presence and position of the "Chief Corner stone" (Matt. 21:42).

**2. ALL FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER.** "In HIM all the building is fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (v. 21). In Christ every separate believer is depending on Him as the foundation of all their hopes, but they are also individually to be "fitly framed together" with their local fellow-believers. There is to be "no schism in the body." Stones which do not fit with each other make an untrustworthy or uncomely structure. Christians have often ruined their testimony by being out of harmony with their brethren. The Church is a growing concern, "growing unto an holy temple in the Lord."

**3. ALL UNITING TO MAKE A FIXED ABODE FOR GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT** (v. 22). When this holy temple in the Lord will be ready as a fixed abode for Him to whom it belongs, no tongue of angel or pen of scribe can tell. But the day will come when the last addition will be made, and when the top stone will be put on, with "shoutings of Grace, Grace, unto it" (Zech. 4:7). Truly every stone in the building is a monument of the grace of God through Christ Jesus. Thus this "new man," full-grown and glorified, will become the temple of the Lord, and a witness to the triumph of Christ's sacrifice in the kingdom that is to come. Well may we pray: "THY KINGDOM COME."

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### In Christ There Is No East or West

John Oxenham (1908)

([Solo Vocal](#)) ([Congregation](#))

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.

In Christ shall true hearts ev'rywhere  
their high communion find.  
His service is the golden cord  
close binding humankind.

Join hands, then, people of the faith,  
whate'er your race may be.  
All children of the living God  
are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,  
in him meet south and north.  
All Christly souls are joined as one  
throughout the whole wide earth.

### 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
- [Ephesians 2:13-15 The Unity of the Body, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

## CHRIST THE PEACEMAKER

*Thus establishing* ([poieo](#)) *peace* ([eirene](#)) - *Thus* is not in the Greek text. Christ is not merely a peace-maker; He Himself is "our peace." Recall that the idea of peace is not just absence of hostility, but is also the bringing together or joining together of that which was separated, in this case the Jews and the Gentiles. As Paul has just stated Christ established this supernatural **peace** by abolishing the enmity and bringing these two hostile parties together. Oneness with each other was the result of their individual oneness with Christ, the Peacemaker. The verb **establishing** (or making) is in the present tense which 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.

Note what Paul is NOT saying here -- he is not saying that all Jews are now at peace with all Gentiles! All one has to do is look at the Middle East conflict to see that is not what he is saying! The context is clear that it is only those Jews and Gentiles who place their faith in Messiah (Eph 2:8-9) who enter into this "peace accord" so to speak.

**Hoehner** writes that "Paul had to show that Christ made Jews and Gentiles one, destroyed the middle wall of partition, and rendered inoperative the law of commandments. That, in turn, was the purpose for the creation of one new person which resulted in peace. This is opposite of the hostility expressed in verse 14. Again, the unity of believers is stressed." (See [Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

**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) -

**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." **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." ([New Testament Commentary](#))

**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, 4 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)

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**Warren Wiersbe on peace** - Peace in our time! Peace with honor!" Some of us still remember those words of British Prime Minister, Sir Neville Chamberlain, when he returned from conferences in Germany in September 1938. He was sure that he had stopped Adolf Hitler. Yet one year later, Hitler invaded Poland, and on September 3, 1939, Great Britain declared war on Germany. Chamberlain's great peace mission had failed. It seems that most peace missions fail. I read somewhere that from 1500 b.c. to a.d. 850 there were 7,500 "eternal covenants" agreed on among various nations with the hope of bringing peace, but that no covenant had lasted longer than two years. The only "eternal covenant" that has lasted—and that will last—is the one made by the eternal God, sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ. It is Christ's peace mission that Paul explains in this section, and three very important words summarize this great work: separation, reconciliation, and unification. (See [Ephesians Through Revelation](#))

**Ephesians 2:16** and might [reconcile](#) them [both](#) in [one body](#) to [God through](#) the [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.](#)

**BGT** κα ποκαταλλ ξ το ς μφοτ ρου ς ν ν σ μαπ ι τ θε δι το σταυρο , ποκτε νας τ ν χθραν ν α τ .

**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](#))

**NLT (Revised)** Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

**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, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

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

**Weymouth** - thus effecting peace, and to reconcile Jews and Gentiles in one body to God, by means of His cross—slaying by it their mutual enmity.

**KJV** And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

**NKJ** and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

**ESV** and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

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

**NIV** and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

**CSB** He did this so that He might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross and put the hostility to death by it.

**NRS** and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.

**NAB** and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it.

**NJB** and through the cross, to reconcile them both to God in one Body; in his own person he killed the hostility.

**GWN** He also brought them back to God in one body by his cross, on which he killed the hostility.

**BBE** And that the two might come into agreement with God in one body through the cross, so putting an end to that division.

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

- **Might reconcile them both** - Romans 5:10; 2Co 5:18-21; Col 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

And might reconcile ([apokatallasso](#)) them both ([amphoterous](#)) in one ([heis](#)) body ([soma](#)) to God - In this passage we see the

second purpose of Christ abolishing or rendering inoperative the Law in Eph 2:15. The first purpose just expressed was to create the two into one new man and now the purpose is to reconcile both groups to God. **Both** of course is Jews and Gentiles. Paul is giving us God's "Master Plan" for the Church of Jesus Christ. Although the two groups were made one (Eph 2:14) or created one new man (Eph 2:15), clearly the order is that they first had to be reconciled to God. Imagine a triangle and at the top of the triangle is God and either of the two arms on the sides being Jew and Gentile. As they each were reconciled to God, what happens? They each grow closer to the other and ultimately they would "meet" at the apex of the triangle in oneness with God (Christ) and oneness with each other (body of Christ). **One (heis) body (soma)** means united as one, so not only does the Cross of Christ effect reconciliation between Jew and Gentile but also both groups 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."

Reconciliation takes someone who is hostile towards someone else, and changes that into a friendly relationship. This word means to change thoroughly. As explained below the double use of prepositions as prefixes (**apo, kata**) emphasizes the totality of the reconciliation. 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. Here we see Christ bridge the gap between Jew and Gentile. This was a miracle.

**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 full message Romans 5:9-10 Reconciliation)

**Barnes** writes that **reconciliation** "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." ([Ephesians 2 Commentary](#))

**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.**" ([play](#)) Occasionally, in order to stress the fact that it is not God Who needs reconciliation but man who needs reconciliation – you'll notice the text in verse 16 says "and that he might reconcile both unto God," – we changed the first line of the hymn, "**To God I'm reconciled, his pardoning voice I hear.**" I think that's much more harmonious with Scripture. ([Made Nigh by Christ's Blood](#))

As **Dr Johnson** states above, it is important to emphasize that God does not need to be reconciled to man because He has 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?

[\(Charles Wesley - play hymn - beautiful chorale version\)](#)

**Might reconcile** (604) (**apokatallasso** from **apó** = from or state to be left behind + **katallasso** = reconcile <> from **katá** = an intensifier + **alláso** = 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 **Enemy To Amity! Vincent** remarks that "The verb contains a hint of restoration to a primal unity." **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.

There are only 2 other uses of **apokatallasso** in the NT, Colossians 1:20 and 1:22 - Colossians 1:18+ 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.

**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 **katallasso** Vincent says) "The verb (**katallasso**) 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](#))

**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. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used by permission)

**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.

**Uses of soma in Ephesians** - Eph. 1:23; Eph. 2:16; Eph. 4:4; Eph. 4:12; Eph. 4:16; Eph. 5:23; Eph. 5:28; Eph. 5:30;

**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)." ([Ephesians 2 Word Pictures in the New Testament](#))

**Related Resource:**

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

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**QUESTION - [What is alienation? What does it mean that we are alienated from God?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Alienation is the state of being withdrawn or separated from a group, person, or situation to which one was formerly attached. *Alienation* is another word for *estrangement*. Ephesians 4:18 describes unbelievers as "darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart" (ESV). The word *alienation* comes from the root word *alien*, which means "foreigner or stranger." So, to be alienated from God means that we have made ourselves strangers to Him because of our sin.

God created human beings to live in close fellowship with Him (Genesis 1:27). We were designed to be more like God than any other created being, yet we have free will to choose whether we want to have the Lord as our God or whether we will be our own gods. That choice determines our standing with Him, whether we live as aliens or as His beloved children (John 1:12). We are born with a sin nature, and that nature makes us enemies of God's holiness (Romans 5:12). Our sin natures make it impossible to have fellowship with God or to please Him in any way (Romans 8:8). We live in a state of alienation from Him, regardless of how good we try to be because His standard is perfection, and none of us can meet that standard (Romans 3:10, 23; 6:23).

Jesus Christ came into the world to be our peace (Ephesians 2:14), to reverse that alienation from God. He came to reconcile us to God (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18). Our alienation from God involved a debt we could not pay. The only just payment for high treason against our Creator is an eternity in the lake of fire (John 3:16–18, 36; Romans 6:23; Matthew 25:46). Hell is the place of ultimate alienation with no hope of ever being reconciled to God or to those we love. In the final judgment, Jesus' verdict against those who are alienated from Him will cement that alienation for all eternity: "I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (Matthew 7:23).

To save us from perpetual alienation from God, the Father sent His Son to pay the debt we could not pay and take the punishment we deserve (2 Corinthians 5:21). Because of Jesus' sacrifice, God can pronounce our sin debt "Paid in Full" when we come to Christ in repentance and faith (Colossians 2:14). "God . . . reconciled us to himself through Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:18).

Ephesians 2:18–19 says, "For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." Parents do not usually buy shoes and school supplies for every kid in the neighborhood. They might, simply because they are kind and have the resources, but they have no obligation to children who do not belong to them. So it is with God. When we live in a state of alienation from Him, God is under no obligation to hear our prayers, comfort us, or protect us from harm (Proverbs 10:3; 28:9; Psalm 66:18). But when He adopts us through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection, we become His beloved sons and daughters (John 1:12; Romans 8:15). Jesus made it possible that all of us who were once alienated from God, can now be [reconciled](#) as His children. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**QUESTION - [What is Christian reconciliation? Why do we need to be reconciled with God?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Imagine two friends who have a fight or argument. The good relationship they once enjoyed is strained to the point of breaking. They cease speaking to each other; communication is deemed too awkward. The friends gradually become strangers. Such estrangement can only be reversed by reconciliation. To be reconciled is to be restored to friendship or harmony. When old friends resolve their differences and restore their relationship, reconciliation has occurred. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 declares, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation."

The Bible says that Christ reconciled us to God (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:20-21). The fact that we needed reconciliation means that our relationship with God was broken. Since God is holy, we were the ones to blame. Our sin alienated us from Him. Romans 5:10 says that we were enemies of God: "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

When Christ died on the cross, He satisfied God's judgment and made it possible for God's enemies, us, to find peace with Him. Our "reconciliation" to God, then, involves the exercise of His grace and the forgiveness of our sin. The result of Jesus' sacrifice is that

our relationship has changed from enmity to friendship. "I no longer call you servants ... Instead, I have called you friends" (John 15:15). Christian reconciliation is a glorious truth! We were God's enemies, but are now His friends. We were in a state of condemnation because of our sins, but we are now forgiven. We were at war with God, but now have the peace that transcends all understanding (Philippians 4:7).([What does it mean to have peace with God?](#) [GotQuestions.org](#))

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#### Related Resources:

- [What is the ministry of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5:18? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about estrangement? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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**THROUGH THE CROSS BY IT HAVING PUT TO DEATH THE ENMITY: dia tou staurou apokteinas (AAPMSN) ten echthran en auto:**

- 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

### THE ALMIGHTY CROSS OF CHRIST

**Through the Cross, by it having put to death the enmity**- The preposition **through** (*dia*) speaks of the Cross of Christ as the instrument through which death of enmity was effected or brought to pass. The irony of Christ's death killing enmity. It is **through** the working of the cross in the lives of individuals that God transforms them from being enemies to friends with each other (and of course with Him).. The response that we have to that is the response of gratitude expressed beautifully in Isaac Watts timeless hymn...

[When I Survey the Wondrous Cross](#)  
([play this powerful vocal version by Kathryn Scott](#))

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 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)

## **CHRIST'S DEATH ENABLED DEATH BLOW TO ENMITY**

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](#))

**Having put to death** (615) (**apokteino** from **apó** = intensifies meaning + **kteino** = 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). Matt 10:28; 14:5; 16:21; 17:23; 21:35, 38f; 22:6; 23:34, 37; 24:9; 26:4; Mark 3:4; 6:19; 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; 12:5, 7f; 14:1; Luke 9:22; 11:47ff; 12:4f; 13:4, 31, 34; 18:33; 20:14f; John 5:18; 7:1, 19f, 25; 8:22, 37, 40; 11:53; 12:10; 16:2; 18:31; Acts 3:15; 7:52; 21:31; 23:12, 14; 27:42; Rom 7:11; 11:3; 2 Cor 3:6; Eph 2:16; 1 Thess 2:15; Rev 2:13, 23; 6:8, 11; 9:5, 15, 18, 20; 11:5, 7, 13; 13:10, 15; 19:21

**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.

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### **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**