

## Introduction

- *Every text has a context!!*
  - ...to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. (Eph 1:10)
  - God's big purpose!
  - one way of looking at chapter one is exploring Christ's victory over the spiritual powers ("in heaven")...
  - and then chapter two is exploring Christ's victory in human affairs - bring reconciliation with humanity
  - last week, in vs.1-10 we explored this reconciliation in personal terms - what God has done for each of us: **as for you... but now!!**
- In vs.11-22 Paul turns to the reconciliation Christ's victory has effected corporately:
  - **sorting the division between Jew and Gentile, spiritually speaking the key fracture line in the ancient world**
  - that's the particular issue he addresses in his own context
  - and as we "look over his shoulder" we can learn for our own divided world
  - **what is the reality of this dividedness? What difference does Jesus make to it? And what does that now mean for both Jew and Gentile?**

## Where we are going...

- 3 paragraphs - vs.11-13, vs.14-18, vs.19-22
  - **vs.11-13: formerly, but now** - describes the incredible transformation: **then and now**
  - **vs.14-18: explanation** - of how the transformation has been achieved through the Cross: **how and why?**
  - **vs.19-22: result** - for us now in Christ: **so what?**
- Text is working at two levels:
  - first, and most obvious, Paul addressing the historical issue of his own day - Jew Gentile divide
  - second, this **dividedness** is a reality for all human beings at every point in human history - and we are all in some form of alienation from one another, and some form of alienation from God. For **all** these alienations, Paul says - v.14 - **"Christ is our peace"**
  - this is the heart of the passage

## Then and Now

- Addresses **Gentile** readers - audience in Ephesus
  - Paul highlights chasm that existed in his world between Jew and Gentile
  - remember what you were - before came to Christ...
  - not that they would have at the time been aware, but now looking back realise that this is what you were
- Paul puts his finger on 5 negative aspects of their life before Christ, 5 deficiencies or deprivations:
  - separate from Christ, the Messiah of Israel - Israel's by expectation
  - citizenship of Israel - outside these people to whom and through whom God was bringing his blessing
  - foreigners or strangers to the covenants, the promises of God - didn't know, even though those covenants were ultimately for their benefit!
  - without hope - no share in the positive hopeful expectation that Israel had of a coming Saviour, deliverance, a promised age of blessing and peace...
  - finally, without God
- A catalogue of deprivation
- Note how focus is not on Gentile's sin or wickedness, as it is in some other places
  - here focus is simply **separation**

## **Eph 2:11-22 United through the death of Christ Fintry, 13/5/2007, pm**

- note this is just the Gentile's fate, but the fate of all who live today without God, the spiritual reality of our neighbours...
- Paul wrote this to the privileged inhabitants of a major, wealthy metropolis - **you are missing out, you are separated...**
- just as true today

### **BUT NOW...**

- That was where these Gentile believers started - alienated
  - but now **v.13** God has wrought a staggering transformation
  - in Christ, the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, those who were far off have been brought near to God
  - this is the work of the gospel
  - separated are connected, alienated are now reconciled, the distant brought close, outside brought in, those far from God brought home...
  - this is a picture of change, God moving people close to himself
  - meeting what is a basic human need, to belong, to be in...
  - (worst loneliness is when everyone else is included and you are not...)
- This is what God has done in Christ - brought us close, included us

## **How and Why?**

- Paul has already said that this **amazing reconciliation** happens **in Christ** (v.13) and **by his blood**
  - ie to do with Jesus being the Messiah, and to do with his death on the Cross
  - but how?
- Answer revolves around word at heart of this passage: **peace** (vs.14,15,17)

### **Christ is our peace (v.14)**

- He himself is peace - cf truth, life, salvation, etc in John
  - a personification - not just that he **gives...**
  - knowing him, relationship with him
  - need peace, need Jesus

### **Christ has made/achieved peace (v.15)**

- Remember context: Paul speaking about the great gulf, divide - between Jew and Gentile, and between both of them and God
  - divide of hostility...
- There are three steps here in this conflict resolution:
  - **(1)** he has abolished the barrier that divides us (**v.14**) (ie the Law) Law here is not +ve revelation of God, but -ve as the dividing factor between Jew and Gentile
    - it had become a matter of pride and prejudice - eg circumcision - cf something like a Scottish Saltire flag carrying both +ve messages, but also being a symbol of the alienation between Scotland and England. In that -ve sense Law was abolished on the Cross - it is no longer relevant; Christ has dealt with sin, whether we have or seek to obey the Law is of no relevance in coming to God!
  - **(2)** united the two into one, a new humanity - notice, not Gentiles becoming Jews
    - starts fresh - no longer Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, rich and poor - and any other distinction we can dream up - Fintry and non-Fintry, ethnic European and ethnic anything else...
  - **(3)** then Christ presents this new united humanity to God (**v.16**) - so the vertical (God/human; sin) divide is healed as much as the horizontal (human/human; I'm better than you) divide
- Christ has made peace

### **Christ came and preached peace to those far and near (v.17)**

- Not during Jesus' lifetime!!
  - but in the preaching of the apostles...
  - so as we explain Jesus to others Christ is preaching his peace through us!
- **Through the Cross, that which separates us from one another has been dealt with and abolished**

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- Through the Cross, that which separates us from God has been dealt with and abolished
- And therefore we have peace: with one another, with God, because Jesus himself is our peace!

### **So What?**

- So now united:
  - with God's people
  - with him - in particular, the peace Jesus (God the Son) has made for us with his God (the Father) comes about as the God the Spirit dwells in us
- Changes how we live: our citizenship
  - founded on the Scripture's teaching - apostles and prophets
  - in step with the Spirit within us
  - and all of that is something corporate