

Christ Jesus Offers Peace to All
International Bible Lesson
Ephesians 2:11-22
Sunday, December 9, 2012
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“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Ephesians 2:17, 18—KJV).

“So Christ came and preached the Good News of peace to all—to you Gentiles, who were far away from God, and to the Jews, who were near to him. It is through Christ that all of us, Jews and Gentiles, are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of the Father” (Ephesians 2:17, 18—GNB).

“So Christ Jesus came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father” (Ephesians 2:17, 18—NRSV).

Our world consists of Jews and Gentiles (all who are not Jews). Paul described the Jews as “the commonwealth of Israel” and those who possessed “the covenants of promise.” He wrote that without Christ Jesus the Gentiles had “no hope” and were “without God in the world.” From the Bible and the record of human history, we know that these two groups have had hostile relations for more than four thousand years.

To bring peace to and between these two groups, God the Father sent His Son into the world. In Christ, God brings Jews and Gentiles together in peace. Paul wrote that Christ Jesus “is our peace.” He came and proclaimed peace to the Gentiles; that is, “to you who were far off” and to the Jews; that is, “to those who were near.” In Christ Jesus, Gentiles and Jews can come together in peace, and many have done so over the past two thousand years. In Christ Jesus, they both now have access to God the Father, and the Holy Spirit now indwells them. The Holy Spirit guides and empowers both groups in their relationship with God and one another. In Christ Jesus, Jews and Gentiles are no longer “strangers and aliens,” but “citizens with the saints” and “members of the household of God.” They can build their lives together upon “the foundation of the apostles and prophets,” and joined together they “grow into a holy temple in the Lord,” and are “built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God” (Ephesians 2:20-22).

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Thinking Further

1. What are some of the differences it makes for someone to live each day without Christ?

2. What are some of the differences it makes for someone to live each day with Christ?

3. What are some of the ways Christ brings peace to those who love and trust Him?

4. How do people have access to God the Father?

5. What difference does it make when a follower of Jesus Christ learns that he or she is growing with others into a holy temple in the Lord?