

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 23, New Community in Christ (Eph 2:11-22) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 23, New Community in Christ (Eph 2:11-22), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Darko's lecture, session 23 of his "Prison Epistles" series, focuses on Ephesians 2:11-22 and the concept of a new community in Christ. He analyzes Paul's message regarding the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles within the early church. Darko incorporates social science perspectives to explain the dynamics of identity, belonging, and intergroup relations. He highlights how Christ's sacrifice eradicated the divisions and hostility that existed between these groups. Ultimately, the lecture emphasizes the unified identity of believers as fellow citizens and members of God's household, built together in Christ through the Spirit.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 23 – Double click icon to
play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Prison Epistles).**



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3. Briefing Document: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 23, New Community in Christ (Eph 2:11-22)

Briefing Document: New Community in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22)

Executive Summary:

This briefing document summarizes Dr. Daniel Darko's lecture on Ephesians 2:11-22, focusing on the concept of a "new community in Christ." Dr. Darko emphasizes that salvation by grace should profoundly impact the church's understanding of community and relationships, particularly in light of the historical and social divides between Jews and Gentiles. He utilizes social science concepts to illuminate the dynamics of identity construction, belonging, and intergroup relations within the early church. The lecture highlights Paul's argument that through Christ's sacrifice, the dividing walls of hostility have been broken down, creating a unified body where believers are fellow citizens and members of God's household, transcending previous ethnic, religious, and social barriers.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Pre-Christian State of Both Jews and Gentiles:

- Dr. Darko reminds the audience of Paul's assertion that before salvation, all were "dead in our sins and trespasses" (Ephesians 2:1). They were "by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3) and lived in disobedience.
- He emphasizes that this state was universal, regardless of social standing.
- God's response was not punishment but mercy and love, culminating in salvation by grace through faith.

1. The Impact of Salvation on Community and Relationships:

- The lecture focuses on how salvation should challenge and transform the church's understanding of community, particularly in the context of diverse backgrounds (Jews and Gentiles).
- Dr. Darko introduces social science perspectives on identity construction, highlighting three key dimensions:
- **Cognitive:** How we think about who we are.
- **Affective:** Our sense of belonging to a group.

- **Evaluative:** How we differentiate "us" from "them."
- He argues that individual social identities, shaped by factors like upbringing, ethnicity, and social interactions, can either strengthen or cause trouble within a community.

1. **Ethno-Race Relations and Social Stereotypes in the Early Church:**

- Dr. Darko posits that the church in Ephesus, composed of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, would have faced ethno-social stereotypes.
- He identifies four indicators in ethno-race relations evident in the text:
- **Ethno-social stereotypes:** Preconceived notions about different groups.
- **Verbal constructions or labeling:** Using language to demarcate "us" and "them" (e.g., Jews calling Gentiles "the uncircumcision").
- **Religious status or religious demarcations:** Distinctions based on religious affiliation (e.g., Jewish versus pagan practices).
- **Citizenship:** Differences in belonging to the commonwealth of Israel.
- He notes the surprising dynamic where the Jewish minority in Ephesus stereotyped the Gentile majority, highlighting their circumcised status and their perceived closeness to Jesus.

1. **Paul's Challenge to Division and the Creation of a New Community:**

- Dr. Darko analyzes Ephesians 2:11-12, where Paul reminds the Gentiles of their former state: "Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh were called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision... Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."
- Paul emphasizes the radical transformation brought about by Christ: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13).
- Christ himself is "our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility" (Ephesians 2:14). This includes abolishing "the law of commandments expressed in ordinances" to create "one new man in place of the two, so making peace" (Ephesians 2:15).

- Dr. Darko highlights that Paul's aim in Ephesians is to construct a "third race" where Jewish and Gentile identities merge into one in Christ, granting equal standing and privileges. This contrasts with Romans, where Gentiles are described as being "drafted" into God's household.

1. **Reconciliation to God as the Foundation for Interpersonal Unity:**

- Dr. Darko points out that in Ephesians, Paul focuses on the reconciliation of both Jews and Gentiles *to God* through Christ's sacrifice on the cross: "[And] might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility" (Ephesians 2:16).
- He argues that true unity within the community of faith stems from a shared relationship with God. If individuals have a strong understanding of their identity as beings made in God's image and their belonging to one heavenly Father, then social frictions based on ethnic or racial differences would diminish.
- "In other words, our social frictions within the community of faith would not exist if we all had a good relationship with God."

1. **The New Identity: Fellow Citizens and Members of God's Household:**

- Through Christ, believers are "no longer strangers or aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).
- This new identity transcends previous social and national categories.
- Dr. Darko emphasizes the significance of the Holy Spirit in fostering this unity, as the shared experience of the Spirit unites believers.

1. **The Church as a Holy Temple Built on Christ:**

- The new community is depicted as a building "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:20).
- The whole structure "being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:21), a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22).
- This imagery signifies the ongoing process of building unity within the church, where God's presence resides.

1. Practical Implications for Today:

- Dr. Darko connects these ancient issues to contemporary challenges in the church, emphasizing that divisions based on ethnicity, race, or social status contradict the unity Christ has established.
- He uses examples from his experiences in former Yugoslavia to illustrate the power of Christian unity in overcoming deep-seated ethnic hostilities. "I saw my brothers and sisters in Christ embrace me, and almost 100% of the time, I think they forgot that I am of a different race."
- He stresses that in Christ, distinctions based on nationality, tribe, or skin color are irrelevant. "We are all made in the image and likeness of God. We were all trapped and dead in sin and trespasses. He saved us to make us belong, to make us belong to his household."

Quotes:

- "We were all dead in our sins and trespasses, and in verse three, he said we were by nature children of wrath."
- "For by grace, you have been saved through faith."
- "Our identity as individuals always has a lot to play in how we belong to a community."
- "What makes us, and what makes them them?"
- "Paul was doing that in this verse. But before we get there, you know I want to get you going with some thinking."
- "I wish people could see Christ and feel a sense of belonging. But the reality is they look for the things I mentioned to you earlier."
- "Therefore, remember that at one time, you Gentiles in the flesh were called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands."
- "Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."
- "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

- "For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility."
- "Might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility."
- "So then, you are no longer strangers or aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."
- "Built on the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone."
- "In whom the whole structure being built together grows into a holy temple in the Lord."
- "In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."
- "In Christ, there's no distinction between the Igbo and the Yoruba... In Christ, those distinctions don't exist."

Conclusion:

Dr. Darko's lecture on Ephesians 2:11-22 provides a comprehensive understanding of Paul's vision for a new community in Christ. By examining the historical context of Jewish-Gentile relations and incorporating social science insights into identity and belonging, he illuminates the radical nature of the unity Christ achieved through his death and resurrection. The lecture underscores that true Christian community transcends social, ethnic, and religious barriers and is rooted in a shared reconciliation with God, where believers are united as fellow citizens in God's household, built together into a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. The implications for contemporary churches are clear: embracing this unified identity in Christ is essential for overcoming divisions and living out the peace that He proclaimed.

4. Study Guide: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 23, New Community in Christ (Eph 2:11-22)

Study Guide: Ephesians 2:11-22 - New Community in Christ

Key Concepts:

- **Pre-Christian State:** Understanding the condition of both Jews and Gentiles before salvation through Christ.
- **Gentile Exclusion:** Recognizing the historical and social separation of Gentiles from the Jewish people and their religious practices.
- **Breaking Down the Dividing Wall:** Examining how Christ abolished the barriers that separated Jews and Gentiles.
- **One New Man:** Comprehending the concept of a unified body of believers in Christ, transcending ethnic and religious divides.
- **Reconciliation to God:** Understanding that the primary reconciliation achieved through Christ is with God, which then impacts human relationships.
- **New Citizenship and Household:** Grasping the new identity believers have as fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household.
- **Foundation and Cornerstone:** Recognizing the roles of the apostles, prophets, and Christ in establishing the church.
- **Holy Temple and Dwelling Place:** Understanding the imagery of the church as a temple where God dwells by His Spirit.
- **Superordinate Identity:** The primary identity as a member of God's household that transcends other social identities.
- **Social Identity Construction:** How cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions shape individual and group belonging.
- **Ethno-Social Stereotypes:** Preconceived notions and labels applied to different ethnic or racial groups.
- **Verbal Constructions/Labeling:** The use of language to create distinctions and stereotypes between groups.
- **Religious Demarcations:** Divisions and prejudices based on religious affiliation.

- **Citizenship Stereotyping:** Forming opinions and biases based on a person's nationality or perceived belonging.

Quiz:

1. Describe the state in which Paul says both Jews and Gentiles existed before encountering God's grace, using the language he employs in Ephesians 2.
2. What were some of the key ways in which Gentiles were excluded and labeled by the Jewish community, according to Paul in Ephesians 2:11-12?
3. Explain the significance of Christ breaking down the "dividing wall of hostility" in the context of Jewish-Gentile relations in the first century.
4. What does the concept of "one new man" in Christ signify, and how does it relate to the previous divisions between Jews and Gentiles?
5. According to the lecture, what is the primary reconciliation that occurs through Christ, and how does this impact relationships within the Christian community?
6. In Ephesians 2:19, what new status and belonging does Paul declare for the Gentile believers in relation to the Jewish believers?
7. Explain the architectural metaphor Paul uses in Ephesians 2:20-22 to describe the church, identifying the foundation and the cornerstone.
8. What are the three dimensions of social identity construction discussed in the lecture, and how can these influence belonging within a community?
9. Provide two examples of ethno-social stereotypes that might have existed in the early church in Ephesus, based on the lecture's discussion.
10. How does understanding our "superordinate identity" in Christ help to overcome divisions based on other social identities, according to the lecture?

Quiz Answer Key:

1. Before God's grace, Paul describes both Jews and Gentiles as being "dead in [their] trespasses and sins" and "by nature children of wrath." Their lives were characterized by disobedience, and they were under God's impending judgment.
2. Gentiles were called "the uncircumcision" by those who were circumcised, highlighting a key religious and covenantal marker of difference. They were also considered separated from Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and

strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

3. The "dividing wall of hostility" refers to the Law of Moses and the accompanying ordinances that created separation and animosity between Jews and Gentiles. Christ, through His death in the flesh, abolished these legal and ritual barriers, creating a pathway for unity and peace.
4. The "one new man" signifies the creation of a unified body of believers in Christ, where the distinctions and hostilities between Jews and Gentiles are transcended. This new identity is rooted in their shared union with Christ, forming a single, reconciled entity.
5. The primary reconciliation achieved through Christ is the reconciliation of both Jews and Gentiles to God. The lecture argues that if individuals have a true and strong relationship with God, recognizing their shared identity as being made in His image, social frictions within the Christian community would diminish.
6. Paul declares that Gentile believers are no longer strangers or aliens but are now fellow citizens with the saints (all believers) and members of the household of God, signifying full inclusion and belonging in God's community.
7. Paul uses the metaphor of a building under construction to describe the church. The foundation is the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus Himself is the cornerstone (or capstone), providing stability and holding the entire structure together as it grows into a holy temple.
8. The three dimensions of social identity construction are cognitive (how we think about ourselves), affective (our sense of belonging and feeling loved), and evaluative (how we demarcate between "us" and "them"). These dimensions can either strengthen or hinder a sense of belonging and unity within a community.
9. Examples of ethno-social stereotypes in Ephesus could include Jewish Christians viewing Gentile converts as less religiously committed due to their lack of circumcision and former pagan practices. Conversely, Gentiles might have viewed Jewish Christians as exclusive or clinging to outdated traditions.
10. Understanding our "superordinate identity" as members of God's household emphasizes our shared relationship with God the Father and our belonging to one spiritual family. This primary identity in Christ overrides and diminishes the significance of other social identities that often lead to division and prejudice.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the social and religious barriers that existed between Jews and Gentiles in the first century, as described in Ephesians 2:11-12 and the accompanying lecture. Discuss how these divisions might have manifested within the early church in Ephesus.
2. Explain the significance of the phrase "one new man in Christ" (Ephesians 2:15) in the context of overcoming ethnic and religious divisions. How does this concept challenge traditional understandings of identity and community?
3. Discuss the role of reconciliation in Ephesians 2:11-22, paying particular attention to the distinction between reconciliation to God and reconciliation between people. How does the lecture argue that the former enables the latter?
4. Examine the architectural metaphors used in Ephesians 2:20-22 to describe the church. What do the foundation, cornerstone, holy temple, and dwelling place of God signify about the nature and purpose of the Christian community?
5. Drawing on the lecture's discussion of social identity construction and ethno-social stereotypes, analyze the potential challenges to unity in a diverse church today. How can the principles outlined in Ephesians 2:11-22 offer guidance for overcoming these challenges?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Gentiles:** In the context of the New Testament, generally refers to non-Jewish people.
- **Circumcision:** A religious rite practiced by Jewish males as a sign of the covenant with God. It became a point of distinction between Jews and Gentiles.
- **Uncircumcision:** A derogatory term used by some Jews to refer to Gentiles, highlighting their lack of participation in the covenantal sign.
- **Commonwealth of Israel:** Refers to the nation of Israel and the privileges and promises associated with their covenantal relationship with God.
- **Covenant of Promise:** The promises God made to Israel through Abraham and his descendants.

- **Dividing Wall of Hostility:** A metaphorical barrier, understood by the lecturer as encompassing the Law of Moses and its ordinances, which created separation and animosity between Jews and Gentiles.
- **One New Man:** The unified body of believers in Christ, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, where ethnic and religious distinctions are transcended.
- **Reconciliation:** The restoration of friendly relations; in this context, primarily referring to the restoration of the relationship between humanity and God through Christ.
- **Fellow Citizens with the Saints:** Indicates that Gentile believers now share the same citizenship and privileges in God's kingdom as Jewish believers ("the saints").
- **Household of God:** A metaphor for the church as God's family, where believers from all backgrounds belong.
- **Apostles:** The original twelve disciples of Jesus, who were foundational in establishing the early church.
- **Prophets:** Individuals who spoke God's message to His people. In this context, likely refers to Old Testament prophets and early Christian prophets.
- **Cornerstone:** The chief foundation stone of a building, crucial for its stability and alignment. In this context, Christ Jesus is the essential foundation of the church.
- **Holy Temple:** A metaphor for the church as the dwelling place of God's Spirit, signifying its sacredness and God's presence within it.
- **Dwelling Place for God by the Spirit:** Emphasizes that the church is where God resides through His Holy Spirit.
- **Superordinate Identity:** A primary, overarching identity that takes precedence over other social identities. In this context, the identity as a member of God's household in Christ.
- **Social Identity:** An individual's sense of self derived from perceived membership in relevant social groups.
- **Ethno-Social Stereotypes:** Oversimplified and often negative beliefs or assumptions about people based on their ethnicity or social group.

- **Verbal Constructions/Labeling:** The use of language to define and categorize groups, which can lead to stereotyping and prejudice.
- **Religious Demarcations:** Distinctions and potential divisions based on differences in religious beliefs and practices.
- **Citizenship Stereotyping:** Preconceived notions or biases based on a person's nationality or perceived civic belonging.

5. FAQs on Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 23, New Community in Christ (Eph 2:11-22), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: New Community in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22)

1. What was the primary state of both Jews and Gentiles before salvation, according to Paul in Ephesians?

Prior to salvation through God's grace, Paul emphasizes that both Jews and Gentiles were in a dire spiritual condition. They were "dead in their sins and trespasses" and "by nature children of wrath." Their lives were characterized by disobedience, and regardless of their social standing, they were all subject to God's judgment.

2. According to the lecture, what three social-scientific dimensions influence an individual's sense of identity and belonging within a community?

The lecture highlights three key dimensions identified in social sciences that shape our sense of identity and belonging:

- **Cognitive:** This involves how we think about ourselves, often influenced by external affirmations and beliefs instilled in us.
- **Affective:** This relates to our emotional sense of belonging, the feeling of being loved, cared for, and accepted within a group.
- **Evaluative:** This is the process through which we differentiate ourselves from others, creating an "us vs. them" dynamic in constructing our identity.

3. What were some of the historical divisions and stereotypes that existed between Jews and Gentiles in the time of Ephesians?

Significant divisions and stereotypes existed between Jews and Gentiles. Jews often referred to Gentiles as "the uncircumcision," highlighting a key religious and covenantal distinction. Gentiles were considered separate from Christ, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, leaving them without hope and without the true God in the world according to Jewish standards. These were ethno-social, verbal (labeling), and religious demarcations.

4. How did Paul describe the transformation that occurred for Gentiles through Christ in Ephesians 2:13?

Paul states that Gentiles, who were once "far off," have now "been brought near by the blood of Christ." This signifies a radical change in their standing with God, moving from a state of distance and exclusion to one of closeness and inclusion through the sacrificial death of Jesus.

5. What did Christ accomplish by breaking down the "dividing wall of hostility" between Jews and Gentiles?

Through his flesh and by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, Christ broke down the "dividing wall of hostility" that existed between Jews and Gentiles. This act dismantled the barriers of separation, whether they were social, emotional, or evaluative, creating the possibility for them to become one new people in Christ and establishing peace between them.

6. How does Paul describe the new relationship and status that believers from both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds now share in Christ?

In Christ, believers are no longer strangers or aliens but are now "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." They have equal access to the Father in one Spirit, signifying a shared identity and belonging within God's family, transcending previous ethnic and religious distinctions.

7. What is the significance of the "foundation of the apostles and prophets" and Christ being the "cornerstone" in the building of God's household?

The "foundation of the apostles and prophets" signifies that the church is built upon the teachings and witness of these key figures in God's plan. Christ being the "cornerstone" (or capstone) indicates that He is the essential and unifying element of this spiritual building, providing stability and holding the whole structure together as it grows into a holy temple in the Lord, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

8. According to the lecture, where does true reconciliation occur, and what is its impact on relationships within the Christian community?

According to the lecture, true reconciliation, as Paul presents it in Ephesians, primarily occurs vertically, between humanity (both Jews and Gentiles) and God, through the work of Christ. This reconciliation with God is foundational. If individuals have a strong and true relationship with God, understanding themselves as created in His image and belonging to one heavenly Father, then the social frictions and prejudices that divide the community of faith will naturally diminish, leading to harmonious relationships among believers as brothers and sisters in Christ.