

**ONENESS**

**IN JESUS CHRIST**

**The struggle for unity between Jews and Gentiles**

Prepared by

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**LESSON #1: THE JEWS: GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE**

1. What promises did God give to Abraham? Genesis 22:15-18
2. Read Genesis 22:1-18. On what occasion were these promises given?
3. Read Genesis 13:14-15. What promise was made to Abraham on this occasion?
4. To what two men were these promises repeated? Genesis 26:1-4; Genesis 28:10, 13-14
5. What promise did God make to the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai? Exodus 19:5-6
6. This promise was conditional. What was necessary if Israel was to be blessed in this way? Exodus 19:5
7. At Sinai God gave the law. Why was it given? Galatians 3:19
8. What purpose did the law serve? Galatians 3:24-25
9. What could the law not do? Galatians 3:17

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10. The nation divided after the death of Solomon. Give Elijah's description of the nation of Israel. 1 Kings 19:9-10.

11. What did Micah say of the nation of Judah? Micah 3:11

12. Yes or no. Were the people of Israel chosen for unconditional salvation?

Were they chosen as the people who would bring the Christ into the world?

13. There were those among the people who were saved. What was characteristic of them?

## LESSON #2: ACCEPTANCE OF GENTILES FORETOLD

1. Who would be blessed through Abraham's seed? Genesis 22:18
2. According to Isaiah 2:1-2, who would flow to "the mountain of the Lord's house"?
3. **Research Question:** What other Old Testament prophet wrote these same words?
4. According to Isaiah 60:3, what would Gentiles (nations) do?
5. When Jesus was born, who came to see Him? Luke 2:8-20  
Where were they from?  
Would they have been Jews or Gentiles?
6. Who later came to worship Him? Matthew 2:1-2  
Where were they from ?  
Would they have been Jews or Gentiles?
7. What did Simeon prophesy concerning the child Jesus? Luke 2:32
8. In John 10:16 Jesus spoke of "other sheep ...which are not of this fold." Of whom was He speaking?
9. To whom were the apostles to preach? Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47
10. Consider Acts 2:39 and Ephesians 2:11-13. Peter in Acts 2 spoke of people "afar off" who would receive "the promise." Who were these people?

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11. **Thought Question:** Considering the fact that Jesus clearly sent the apostles to all nations, why did they not immediately go to preach to Gentiles?

### **LESSON #3: THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED TO GENTILES**

Up until Acts, chapter 10, the gospel had been preached rather widely, but to the circumcision only. Now in chapter 10, God sees to it that the Gentiles will hear the gospel also.

1. Choose one word to describe the character of Cornelius as described in verses 1-2 and 22.

2. List three things that God did in bringing Cornelius and Peter together. Verses 3-20

3. Who went with Peter?

Would they have been Jews or Gentiles? Verse 23

4. What had Cornelius done, both physically and mentally, in preparation for Peter's coming? Verses 24, 27, 33

5. What mistake did Cornelius make when Peter arrived?

What was Peter's response? Verses 25-26

6. What truth did Peter proclaim as he began to speak? Verses 34-35

7. In one word state a vital role given to the apostles as stated in verses 39-41.

8. What happened as Peter was speaking? Verses 44-46

9. Consider Acts 11:13-14. What would lead to their salvation?

Did the Holy Spirit, then, come on the Gentiles to save them?

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10. What did Peter command them to do? Acts 10:47-48
  
11. **Thought Question:** Why then did this outpouring of the Holy Spirit take place?
  
12. Consider Acts 11:1-18. When Peter later came to Jerusalem, what complaint was expressed against him?  
  
What did Peter tell them in response?
  
13. How did these Jewish Christians react? Acts 11:18

## **LESSON #4: PAUL, APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES**

1. Consider Acts 26:12-18. At what point in Paul's life did the Lord tell Paul He would "send" (apostle) him to the Gentiles?
2. Briefly summarizing Acts 26:18, state the purpose for his being sent to the Gentiles.
3. Consider Galatians 1:13-14. Why from man's viewpoint is it surprising that Saul of Tarsus, later called Paul, would be the man chosen to go to the Gentiles?

But what qualities had he already shown that made him such a good choice?

4. Who was his teacher, according to Acts 22:3?
5. Barnabas was a great help to Paul in his early work. Acts 11:19-24 speaks of Barnabas' being in Antioch. Why was he there?
6. Whom did he bring to Antioch, according to Acts 11:25-26?
7. What two men were called by the Holy Spirit to go on a preaching journey? Acts 13:1-3
8. Consider Acts 13:42-43, 46-48; also Acts 14:1. What was the makeup of the churches established by them on their journey?
9. Consider Ephesians 3:1-8. What one word did Paul use in verses 2 and 7-8 to describe the blessing that he considered to be his in being the apostle to the Gentiles?



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10. How did Paul describe himself in verse 8?
11. **Think!** Paul rejoiced in his role as apostle to the Gentiles in spite of his suffering in fulfilling that role. List from your memory some specific occasions of suffering he endured.

**LESSON #5: GOD'S PLAN FOR UNITY  
BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE**

*Read Ephesians 2:11-22 and answer the following questions*

1. Summarizing verses 11-12, state in a word or two the condition of the Gentile world before Christ.
2. What transition had taken place as pictured in verse 13?
3. Consider the word "both" in verses 14, 16, and 18. To whom does the word refer?
4. What had to be broken down for these two to become one?
5. How was this accomplished? Verses 15-16
6. What else was done for both, according to verse 16?  
  
In how many bodies?
7. Verse 17 says that Jesus preached peace to both Jew and Gentile. Did He do this personally?  
  
How did He preach peace to them?
8. Consider all of verses 19-22. What is the Gentiles' present relationship with God? Give at least three answers.
9. **Review Question:** Looking back on verses 13-22, make a list of the things that were essential for Jews and Gentiles to receive the blessings spoken of in these verses.

## LESSON #6: THE MEETING CONCERNING CIRCUMCISION

*Answer the following questions from Acts, chapter 15*

1. What problem brought about this meeting?
2. Three arguments were made refuting the teaching that the Gentiles had to be circumcised. State briefly the argument each of the following presented.

Peter (verses 6-11):

Paul and Barnabas (verse 12):

James (verses 13-18):

3. James spoke of four things the Gentiles should abstain from. List them.
4. By what two means was the conclusion communicated to the church in Antioch? Verses 22-23
5. What is said in the letter that shows that the apostles in Jerusalem were not the source of the problem in Antioch?
6. What in the letter states that the conclusion was not just the opinion of those who met?
7. What was the reaction of the people in Antioch when they read the letter? Verses 30-31

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8. Consider Acts 16:4-5. Was the church in Antioch the only one that learned of the truth that was presented in the letter?

What is said of the churches in verse 5?

9. Some have contended that this meeting in Jerusalem provides authority for denominational conferences and synods of our day. What differences do you see between the meeting in Jerusalem and the typical denominational conference?

## LESSON #7: PETER AND BARNABAS SEPARATE FROM GENTILES

*Answer the following questions from Galatians 2:1-21*

1. In the meeting concerning circumcision, who was taken as a “test case”?

What was the decision concerning him? Verses 1-5

2. In verse 5, “the truth of the gospel” is mentioned. What do you think the truth of the gospel is **as found in this context**?

3. Consider verse 6. What point of truth did the apostles in Jerusalem add to Paul?

4. In what way did they give Paul and Barnabas their endorsement? Verse 7-9

5. What action on Peter’s part resulted in a rebuke from Paul?

Who joined Peter in this action?

6. Look back to lesson #3, also to lesson #4, question #5. Why was the action of Peter and Barnabas so inexcusable and potentially harmful?

7. **Think!** If Paul had not immediately corrected their action and had word spread that Paul and Barnabas had refused to eat with Gentiles, what would have likely been the result?

8. Their action was not in keeping with the \_\_\_\_\_ . Verse 14

9. Summarizing verses 15-21, state the means by which one is justified.

The means by which one is not justified.



## LESSON #8: THE CORRUPTIVE INFLUENCE OF JUDAIZERS

One of the greatest hindrances to bringing oneness between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians was the teaching and influence of Judaizing teachers who insisted that Gentiles must be circumcised.

### **Their motivation and purpose**

1. Consider Galatians 2:4; Galatians 6:12,13. What was truly the motivation behind the teaching and actions of these Judaizers according to these verses? You should find at least three answers.

**Their tactics:** They tried to discredit Paul and his teaching, so that they could convince the people of their teaching. They tried to persuade the people that Paul was not an apostle equal to the other apostles, that he received his teaching from others rather than from the Lord, that he was a rather weak man in personality and teaching.

2. What claim did Paul make in Galatians 1:1?
3. What claim did he make of his teaching in Galatians 1:11-12?
4. Consider Galatians 2:6. What did the other apostles add to his teaching?
5. What was Paul bearing in his own body? Galatians 6:17
6. Consider 2 Corinthians 10:10; 11:6. What did these false teachers say of Paul in their effort to discredit him?
7. Paul's answer to these Judaizers in Corinth is given in 2 Corinthians 11:22 - 13:6. Make notes of anything you observe as Paul's answer and/or be prepared to take notes during the discussion in class.

**Their corruptive influence**

8. What had happened to the Galatians, according to Galatians 1:6-7?
  
9. What further is said along these lines in Galatians 3:1?
  
10. What fear did Paul express concerning the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11:3?
  
11. Apparently the influence of Judaizers had been felt in Colossae. Consider Colossians 2:11-12. What type of circumcision had the Colossians submitted to?

When did this take place, according to verse 12?

**The consequences of their teaching**

12. Consider Galatians 5:1. With what would the Galatians become entangled if they submitted to circumcision?
  
13. Consider Galatians 5:2-4. List four consequences suffered by those who yield to the necessity of circumcision.
  
14. What does not avail, according to Galatians 5:6 and Galatians 6:15?

What two things avail according to these same verses?



## LESSON #9: PAUL'S EFFORTS TO BRING UNITY

Paul made considerable effort to bring unity between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, working especially among the Gentiles to that end.

### Paul's appeal in Ephesians, chapter 4

1. Paul takes up in Ephesians 4:1 where he had left off in Ephesians 3:1. Read both verses. To which group is he writing, Jews or Gentiles?
2. What words are used in Ephesians 4:2 to describe the spirit he wants them to have?
3. What were they to endeavor to keep? Ephesians 4:3
4. Of what seven things is there just one? Ephesians 4:4-6

### Money raised for the poor saints in Jerusalem

*Answer the following questions from Romans 15:25-31*

5. Why was Paul going to Jerusalem?
6. What indebtedness does he speak of in verse 27?
7. For what two things does he ask the Romans to pray, stated in verse 31?
8. **Think!** If money was going from Macedonia and Achaia to Jerusalem, it would be money from \_\_\_\_\_ Christians to \_\_\_\_\_ Christians.

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9. **Think!** Why would Paul think that this service might not be acceptable to the saints in Jerusalem?
  
10. The arrival of Paul and his companions in Jerusalem is recorded in Acts, chapter 21. How were they received, according to verses 17 and 20?

## LESSON #10: PAUL'S WARNING TO GENTILES

The Gentiles generally were more receptive to the gospel than the Jews were, but they needed to be on guard, lest they be cut off.

*Answer the following questions from Romans 9:30 - 10:4*

1. What had the Gentiles attained, according to verse 30? Your answer should be in three words.
2. What had Israel not attained, according to verses 31-32?

Why?

3. What sad thing is said of Israel in Romans 10:2?
4. What had they not submitted to? Verse 3
5. What was the true purpose of the law? Verse 4

*Answer the following questions from Romans 11:16-24*

6. In this passage, God's faithful people are seen as an olive tree, the Jews' being the natural branches. Verse 16 speaks of the "root" of this tree. **Think!** If the Jews are the natural branches, what would this root be?
7. To what kind of tree are the Gentiles compared?
8. Why were natural branches broken off?

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9. What enabled the wild olive tree branches to be grafted in?
  
10. What warning is given to these wild olive branches?
  
11. What good thing could happen to the natural branches that had been broken off? Verses 23-24
  
12. What two qualities of God do we see in the passage? Verse 22

## **LESSON #11: PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS**

Use the space between observations either to take notes during class or to write down thoughts in preparation for the class.

1. Cultural difference must be laid aside that unity may be gained in Christ.
2. We must not judge harshly those who have a hard time overcoming cultural differences.
3. It is not unusual for those with few advantages to “outshine” those of greater advantage. So it was with Gentiles “outshining” Jews.
4. Teaching that has a corruptive influence and causes people to be lost must be strongly opposed.

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5. Jesus died for all. The gospel is for all. Preach it to all, no matter their circumstances in this life.