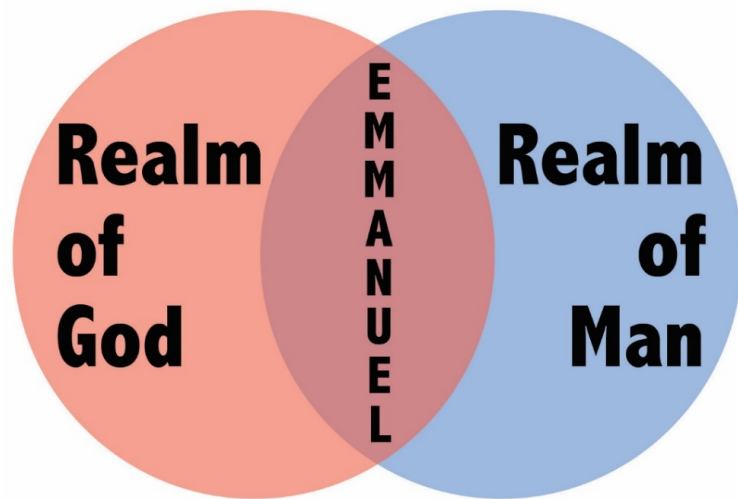


# DEATH OF CHRIST AND OUR NEW LIFE

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*He is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace. (Ephesians 2:14-15)*



The death of Christ (The Messiah) was all-inclusive. He tasted death on behalf of everything/everyone (Hebrews 2:9). On the cross, he fulfilled his mission as the cure for sin (John 1:29 *'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'*), empowered humans to live beyond the flesh (Galatians 5:24 *And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*), and destroyed the works of his enemy Satan (Hebrews 2:14 *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.*). However, just as certainly as his death ended the power of evil in the old creation, it served as a turning point in the universe to inaugurate the new creation. According to Ephesians 2:19-22 *So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone; in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.* He abolished in his flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that he might create the Jews and the Gentiles in himself into one new person. Christ, in being put to death, was working to create the one new person in him - in himself - Christ being the perfect One.

Christ's grand work of creation on the cross to produce the new person fulfills God's original intention in making humanity. In Genesis 1:26, *God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion"*. The text refers to the singular "man" with the plural pronoun "them". The purpose seems to be to have a collective, corporate man possessing in his nature the attributes of all mankind - collectively. Because the old race of Adam failed God and failed in their creative nature - sin, Christ came to create the new humanity out of all nations and people to fulfill God's initial (creative) design.

In Paul's thought, the new humanity is the most significant aspect of the church. On the most basic level, the church is the assembly of the called-out ones - called out of Adam into Christ. The church is the household of God, composed of all God's children who possess the life of their God (Ephesians 2:19). Even more, the church is the Body of Christ whose constituents, as members of Christ, are joined to Christ and are "of Christ" and well as "in Christ" (Romans 12:5 *We, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.* - 1 Corinthians 12:12 *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.* The new creation implies that

Christ is the life of the church. Christ is the life and the new person, which is fully expressed in and through Christ. Christ created the new person “in himself”, that is, “in” Christ. The use of parallelism in this verse is critical: He abolished the law of the commandments in ordinances “in his flesh”, and he created the new man “in himself”. He dealt with the segregating ordinances in his flesh that he might create the once divided Jews and the Gentiles into one new person in himself. The Greek word rendered “in” here can also have an elemental significance, meaning also “with” implying that the new humanity was created with Christ as its divine essence. Christ is the Creator of the new life; he is the sphere within which the new person is created, the means by which the new person is created, and the essence with which that new person is created.

Of course, the believing Jews and the Gentiles are the many components of this collective new man. Yet in this new creation, there is neither Jew nor Greek, but Christ is all and in all (Colossians 3:10-11). Christ is everything in the church. What the believers are in their natural constitution by heritage in the flesh is to have no part in the new life. Their nationalities, their cultures, their social status, their religious ordinances and all other things, which distinguish and divide them, have all been annulled in the death and resurrection of Christ. All of God’s redeemed, with their entire fallen being, have been co-crucified with Christ, and they have received Christ into their redeemed humanity as their divine life and essence (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:3-4) – hence they live raised to newness of life in Jesus their Lord. The substance of the new person is God’s nature at work in redemption to constitute one entity. The redeemed believers compose the outward physical frame of the inward Christ in his inward life, content and person. The new person is filled with the newness of God’s Spirit – the Spirit of Christ, who makes all things new (Revelation 21:5); the new man eventually consummates in the New Jerusalem – God’s home – Immanuel. Praise Christ for his new-man-creating death! The believers’ appreciation for Christ’s death greatly increases when they realize that his death not only meets their need for redemption, but also accomplishes God’s eternal intention to have a corporate new man to eternally express him and represent him.

### *Christ Dwelling in the Believers to Unite Them with God*

According to Colossians 3:5, Christ is the believer’s life. Christ came into the believers to be their life inwardly, that he might begin to dwell within them and gradually bring them into a complete union with God in Christ. The Lord Jesus prophesied concerning this mutual indwelling to be accomplished on the day of his resurrection: *“In that day you shall know that I am in the Father and you in me and I in you”* (John 14:20). Paul prayed that, based on this initial indwelling, Christ would go on to make his home in the believers’ hearts (Ephesians 3:17). In his epistles, Paul also frequently directed the believers to the indwelling Christ, with phrases such as *“Christ in you”* (Colossians 1:27), *“Christ is in you”* (Romans 8:10), *“Christ lives in me”* (Galatians 2:20), and *“Jesus Christ is in you”* (2 Corinthians 13:5), that through Christ and in Christ, the believers may be united into God (Ephesians 2:18; John 14:10; 17:21). The goal of Christ’s redemption is not merely to save fallen sinners from hell or perishing, but through the forgiveness of sin, but to impart life (Christ’s indwelling) by bringing us into union with the Triune God. In redemption, believers are regenerated with divine life (1 Peter 1:3) that they may be transformed in life (2 Corinthians 3:18), glorified through life (Philippians 3:21) and built up in the divine life into the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16). This comprehensive lifelong process cannot begin without the initial step of the redemption of Christ. 2 Peter 1:4 *In this manner he has granted us, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world through lust, and may become participants of the divine nature.*