

# One New Man (One New Humanity)

**What do you think about those who advocate a belief in Jews and Christians becoming “one new man”? This seems to be connected to groups who support Israel, but who consider the Torah to not be that important.**

The terminology that one commonly hears employed in the broad Messianic community of “one new man,” is intended more than anything else to spur on a sense of unity and camaraderie among mixed groups of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers. “One new man” has been used by evangelical Christian groups who want very little to do with their Hebraic Roots, and by others to emphasize the Hebraic Roots of Christianity as a necessary component of all Believers’ lifestyle practice. It would be inappropriate to categorize all people who use the term “one new man” as believing in this or that, when it is a term that has been taken directly from the Bible.

The only Scriptural reference to “one new man” appears in Ephesians 2:14-15: “For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace” (NASU). Among some of those who might use “one new man” terminology, but who think that God’s Torah is a relative thing of the past, an English surface reading of Ephesians 2:14-15 may seem to support their view. To be fair, some might emphasize studying the Torah for enrichment to one’s understanding of the Biblical story or history, but still think that any kind of Torah-keeping—even for Jews—is a part of the pre-resurrection era.

That Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) has made Jewish and non-Jewish people one in Him, is something that Ephesians 2:14-15 does clearly tell us. This is to be something regarded as new and unique in the post-resurrection era, as a direct result of the continuation of salvation history. But was it the Torah or Law of Moses which kept the First Century Jewish community separated from the nations at large? This is something that can be easily challenged.

The “dividing wall” referred to is not the Torah of Moses, but what the Greek calls *ton nomon tōn entolōn en dogmasin* (τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν), literally, “the law of commandments in dogmas.” The singular *dogma* (δόγμα) can be defined as “something that is taught as an established tenet or statement of belief, *doctrine, dogma*” (BDAG)<sup>1</sup> or “*that which seems to one, an opinion, dogma*” (LS).<sup>2</sup> It can relate to extra-Biblical laws or ordinances that contradict God’s Biblical law itself, which are instead human interpretations. Within the Second Temple in Jerusalem, there was a literal barrier wall that kept the inner sanctuary divided out from the Court of the Gentiles, including a warning that any non-Jew entering the Temple complex would be put to death (Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews* 15.417; *Wars of the Jews* 5.194). This barrier of a dividing wall, while intending to keep the Temple complex undefiled, in actuality kept outsiders away from the Temple which was to be a place of worship for all nations, **quite contrary to the Lord’s intention** (1 Kings 8:41-43; Isaiah 56:6-7). In the sacrifice of Yeshua, any man-made regulations—“the *religious* Law of commandments in dogmas” (Ephesians 2:15b, editor’s translation)—that would see to the erection of a barrier wall keeping people away from God’s presence, was to be reckoned as removed and inoperative.<sup>3</sup>

In His atoning work for all people, Yeshua the Messiah has eliminated the enmity between Jew and non-Jew, “so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace” (Ephesians 2:15, NASU). The

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<sup>1</sup> BDAG, 254.

<sup>2</sup> LS, 207.

<sup>3</sup> For a further review, consult the FAQ, “Ephesians 2:14-15.”

imperative of the work of Yeshua on behalf of all is to create “a single new humanity” (NEB, CJB). The inclusive language translation of “**one new humanity**” (NRSV) for *hena kainon anthrōpon* (ένα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον) is much clearer and is to surely be preferred than just “one new man,” as all nationalities and both genders compose it. Ephesians 2:15c is very much akin to Galatians 3:28, where Paul previously has said “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua.” The Lord God absolutely deals with both Jewish and non-Jewish persons who trust in Him via Yeshua *on the same terms*—as Yeshua’s atoning sacrifice has consequences that affect the entire human race.

Many theologians have thought that this “one new humanity” is “the Church,” as opposed to a Commonwealth of Israel maximized by Israel’s Messiah—as the alienation of the nations from Israel was a, if not the, principal cause of their God-lessness (Ephesians 2:12). Yet if “the Church” is in view here as the “one new humanity,” then why does the mission of this “Church” ultimately come from the imperatives that God gave to Ancient Israel? Has “the Church” superseded Israel? Or, is God’s original plan through Israel *now empowered to its fullness* via the work of His Son? The need for today’s Messianic movement to make sure that it is accomplishing the Divine mandate originally given to Israel **cannot be overstated**.

The concept of the “one new humanity” being an Israel maximized does mean it *goes beyond* what Ancient Israel was to be in the Tanach, although it by no means is contradictory. The Messianic expectation given by the Prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 7:12-17) was intended to be, as King David testified, a *torat ha’adam* (תּוֹרַת הָאָדָם), a “law (for) humanity” (2 Samuel 7:19, editor’s translation) or “the charter for humanity.”<sup>4</sup> Israel has always had a role in which the world as a whole would be the beneficiary.

The current Messianic movement appears to have a long way to go in order to consider the full ramifications of Paul’s words. In His flesh, Yeshua has abolished the barrier that unnecessarily separated not just Jew from non-Jew (Ephesians 2:15), but all members of humanity from one another (Galatians 3:28). Knowing Him as Lord, a born again Believer is to have true peace or *shalom*. The reason this is difficult for many, even among those who emphasize equality between Jewish and non-Jewish Believers—is because the equality emphasized is most always just between Jewish and non-Jewish *male* Believers. **Just saying “one new man” is not enough.**

(For further consideration of this and related issues, consult the author’s commentary *Ephesians for the Practical Messianic*.)

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<sup>4</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 122.