

021 - The Barrier Broken Down - Ephesians 2:13-15 - 2014-10-12

Call to Worship: Romans 15:10-11

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 20:24-26

Sermon: "The Barrier Broken Down" Ephesians 2:13-15

Benediction: Romans 15:12-13

Ephesians 2:14-15 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, (15) having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace,

## INTRODUCTION

Last time, we introduced the truth will be the main them of the rest of Ephesians: One New Man in Christ Jesus. We saw that first we must understand ourselves as One New Man in Christ Jesus; then we must conduct ourselves as One New Man in Christ Jesus. We saw that we are to understand ourselves as One New Man in Christ Jesus individually and corporately. The past few weeks in the first part of chapter two we have see how to understand ourselves as One New Man in Christ individually. Today we work on having that understanding of ourselves as One New Man in Christ Jesus corporately, as the body of Christ, as the church.

In what sense are we one new man in Christ Jesus?

There was a middle wall of separation between Jew and Gentile, but the Lord Jesus Christ has broken down the wall that was the barrier separating us, so making Jew and Gentile one new man in Christ Jesus.

## TEXT

Ephesians 2:14-15

## BODY

- I. There was a middle wall of separation between Jew and Gentile
  - A. There was an enmity or hostility; the two were enemies
  - B. The apostle talks about it as a wall between them
    1. "middle wall"
    2. "separation" or "dividing" or "partition"
  - C. It was caused by "commandments in ordinances"
    1. understand what is meant by "ordinances"
      - a) not those matters of essential right and wrong called the "moral law" see Ephesians 4:28; 6:2
      - b) instead, those commandments that are to be done simply because the law-giver said so
    2. circumcision
    3. the temporary provisions of the old covenant
      - a) worship
        - (1) priesthood
        - (2) temple
        - (3) sacrifices
        - (4) holy days
      - b) distinctive ways of living
        - (1) dress
        - (2) food
  - D. It was shown by an actual wall in the temple, corresponding to the outer fence of the original tabernacle
    1. Israelite worshipers could go in
    2. Gentiles could not go in
- II. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself has removed the barrier between Jew and Gentile
  - A. it deserved to be removed
    1. it was never intended to be permanent
    2. it was deficient
    3. it was a load too heavy to bear
    4. He certainly had the right!
  - B. He removed it in Himself
    1. by fulfilling it in Himself --- types and shadows
      - a) passover
      - b) priesthood
      - c) sacrifice
      - d) atonement cover
    2. by nailing it to the cross Colossians 2:13-14
    3. by replacing it with a new covenant

- III. In removing the barrier, the Lord Jesus Christ has made of Jew and Gentile one new man in Himself
  - A. We are now the parts, the members, of one body, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself the head of the body
  - B. Understand this is not a loose confederation of two factions; it is not merely a peace treaty between two countries previously at war; no it is one new man in Jesus Christ
- IV. APPLICATIONS
  - A. Geneva Bible: whoever permanently establishes the ceremonies of the Law, makes the grace of Christ void and of no effect
  - B. See that ordinances have the effect of making a hostility, like a middle wall of separation between those who obey and those who do not; so we must be very careful regarding ordinances
    - 1. those instituted by God but now abrogated
    - 2. those instituted by Christ
    - 3. those instituted by Christ but warped by men into something else
    - 4. those instituted by men
  - C. See that maintaining a distinction between Jew and Gentile in God's church is failing to maintain the essential unity

VWS:

The participle has an explanatory force, *in that He brake down*

**middle wall of separation KJV: partition**

**-ESV, NIV: dividing wall of hostility**

Poole:

having taken away the ceremonial law, which was as a wall of separation between Jew and Gentile, as appears in the next verse. It seems to be an allusion to that wall of the temple which parted between the court of the people into which the Jews came, and the outmost court, that of the Gentiles, who, when they came to worship, might not come into the other court, and were excluded by this wall.

Geneva:

As by the ceremonies and worship appointed by the Law, the Jews were divided from the Gentiles, so now Christ, having broken down the partition wall, joins them both together, both in himself, and between themselves, and to God. From which it follows, that whoever permanently establishes the ceremonies of the Law, makes the grace of Christ void and of no effect.

Gill:

the ceremonial law, which was made up of many hard and intolerable commands, and distinguished, and divided, and kept up a division between Jews and Gentiles . . . a great difference and distance; and such there was between the Jew and Gentile, by reason of the ceremonial law; but Christ removed it, and made up the difference: the allusion seems to be to the wall which divided the court of Israel from the court of the Gentiles, in the temple, and which kept them at a distance in worship.

VWS:

The hedge was the whole Mosaic economy which separated Jew from Gentile.

**having abolished**

Poole:

abrogated, taken away the power of binding men

Gill:

so as that it ought not to be, and so as that it is not  
of no use and service  
because

it was faulty and deficient

it was intolerable  
there was a change in the priesthood

### **in His flesh**

Poole:

before he mentioned his blood, and now his flesh, to imply the whole sacrifice of Christ

Calvin:

The Son of God, by assuming a nature common to all, has formed in his own body a perfect unity

Gill:

not by his incarnation, but by the sacrifice of his flesh, or human nature

Hodge:

“Having by his flesh, i.e. by his death, abolished the law.

Henry:

By his sufferings in the flesh, to take away the binding power of the ceremonial law (so removing that cause of enmity and distance between them), which is here called the law of commandments contained in ordinances, because it enjoined a multitude of external rites and ceremonies, and consisted of many institutions and appointments about the outward parts of divine worship. The legal ceremonies were abrogated by Christ, having their accomplishment in him. By taking these out of the way, he formed one church of believers, whether they had been Jews or Gentiles. Thus he made in himself of twain one new man. He framed both these parties into one new society, or body of God's people, uniting them to himself as their common head, they being renewed by the Holy Ghost, and now concurring in a new way of gospel worship, so making peace between these two parties, who were so much at variance before.

Trapp:

that is, by his death in the flesh (Col 1:22). At which time the veil rent, and the ceremonies died, only they were to be honourably buried.

### **the enmity**

Poole:

he so calls the ceremonies, which were the cause and the sign of enmity between Jew and Gentile . . . those ceremonial laws, which were the cause of the difference between them

Gill:

the ceremonial law

it was an indication of God's hatred of sin, by requiring sacrifice for it

it was the cause of enmity between Jew and Gentile

Hodge:

The middle wall which consisted in the hedge, which separated the two parties. What that hedge was is immediately expressed by the word ἐχθραν. It was the enmity subsisting between them. 'Having removed the middle wall, i.e. the enmity, or their mutual hatred.' By enmity, therefore, is not to be understood the law, as the cause of this alienation, but the alienation itself; because in what follows the removal of the enmity and the abolition of the law are distinguished from each other, the latter being the means of accomplishing the former.

### **the law of commandments in ordinances [G1378 *dogma*]**

Gill:

not until he had fulfilled it in himself . . . and then he abolished it

Calvin:

Paul is here treating exclusively of the ceremonial law; for the moral law is not a wall of partition separating us from the Jews

This passage affords the means of refuting an erroneous view held by some, that circumcision and all the ancient rites, though they are not binding on the Gentiles, are in force at the present day upon the Jews. On this principle there would still be a middle wall of partition between us, which is proved to be false.

Poole:

The ceremonies had their accomplishment in Christ, and so their abolishment by him.

see Col 2:14

This the apostle seems to add, to show what part of the law was abrogated by Christ, viz. nothing of the moral law, but only the ceremonial.

Colossians 2:14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Gill:

- the ceremonial law, which lay in divers ordinances and commands
- as a debt book, which showed and testified the debts of men
- God has blotted it out, Christ having engaged as a surety for his people, to pay off all their debts
- not to be seen or looked into as a debt book; abolished and done away
- the cross, where and when he bore the curse and penalty of the law for his people, as well as answered all the types and shadows of it
- it is nailed to the cross . . . that nothing can ever be produced from it to their hurt or condemnation

## **to create in Himself**

Trapp:

by regeneration, Gal 6:15

Poole:

by union with himself, as the Head, in which the several members agree

## **one new man the two**

Gill:

which explains what is meant before by making both one  
expresses the strictness of the union between Jew and Gentile  
Christ Jesus; he is . . . the head to which the whole body is joined

## **making peace**

Colossians 2:13-17 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, (14) having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (15) Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (16) So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, (17) which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Calvin:

he fastened to the cross our curse, our sins, and also the punishment that was due to us, so he has also fastened to it that bondage of the law, and everything that tends to bind consciences. For, on his being fastened to the cross, he took all things to himself, and even bound them upon him, that they might have no more power over us.

all those who still urge the observance of ceremonies, detract from the grace of Christ, as though absolution were not procured for us through him; for they restore to the hand-writing its freshness, so as to hold us still under obligation

Poole:

many ceremonial ordinances, to the observation of all which circumcision did oblige: this obligation interpretatively was as a handwriting which did publicly testify a man's native pollution, and was a public confession of his sin and misery, as washings did testify the filth of his sins, and sacrifices, capital guilt to them who lived under it, and did not perform

it; that they were accursed, Gal\_3:10,19, under a ministration of death, 2Co\_3:7,9; while by laying their hands on the sacrifices, they did as it were sign a bill or bond against themselves, whereby conscience of guilt was retained, Heb\_10:2,3, and a conscience of sin renewed, so that the heart could not be stablished in any firm peace, Heb\_9:9 10:1; but they did confess sin to remain, and that they did want a removal of the curse by a better sacrifice.

John 10:16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

Galatians 2:11-12 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; (12) for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

Galatians 3:13-14 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"), (14) that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:28

“God shall enlarge Japheth,  
and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.” (Gen\_9:27)