

**THE CHURCH ON OFFENSE IN  
CONFLICTED DAYS  
FALL/WINTER 2020/2021  
“TEARING DOWN WALLS AND MAKING PEACE”  
DECEMBER 09, 2020  
EPHESIANS 3:11-18 and other selected support Scriptures**

*I. PAUL'S PREPARATION OF THE EPHESIANS*

- A. He held back nothing that was PROFITABLE v. 20*
- B. He testified that the gospel was about REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD and FAITH TOWARD THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. That means that they would have to change their mind about who the Sovereign One was and put their trust in the Son of the Sovereign One, the Lord Jesus Christ v. 27*
- C. He testified of the GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD v. 24*
- D. The main focus of his preaching was PROCLAIMING THE KINGDOM OF GOD. v.25*
- E. He declared to them the WHOLE COUNSEL (WILL, PURPOSE, INTENT, DESIRE) OF GOD.*

*He trusted God with them, encouraging them to guard themselves against the FALSE TEACHERS and FALSE TEACHING that was going to come.*

*II. PAUL TESTIFIES TO THE WONDER OF THE GRACE OF GOD IN CHRIST; THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD and THE ALIENATION OF THE GENTILES (FROM THE SEPARATION AT THE TOWER OF BABEL)*

- A. The Jew-to-Gentile alienation **described** v. 11*
  - 1. From the tower of Babel separation (Genesis 11:8-9; Deuteronomy 32:7-8) God had separated the nations from Himself but had given them members of the divine council to guide them to their new lands, teach them the ways of God (Psalm 82:1-5) and the way back to God (Acts 17:26-27)*
  - 2. Subsequently, He had chosen Israel for Himself (Deuteronomy 32:9) and given them a special love that no other nation or nations would share with Him. He gave them His covenants, promises, prophets, and blessings. The other nations He treated with indifference since they cared little or nothing for Him.*
  - 3. This privileged exceptionalism of the Jew gave them an arrogance that perceived themselves better than the other nations*

*and peoples. That was reinforced by God's forbidding them to marry them or learn their ways. It looked like God hated them so there was no problem with the Jewish people hating them. Of course, the nations responded with disdain for the Jewish people with a deep alienation and disgust*

*B. The God-to-Gentile alienation **defined** v. 12*

- 1. Because of their rejection of God at the Tower of Babel, God had divided up the ethno-linguistic groups He had created with the language confusion among the members of His own divine heavenly council. He then scattered them around the world. They would develop cultures independent of one another all over the world. Smaller subcultures of their own people would develop when conditions would get too crowded or when God created a climate change that made living together impossible. Each of those subcultures would form cultures and similar languages to the parent tribe but with dialect differences.*
- 2. They also began to make images of the members of the divine council given to guide them back to God and worshipped those images. They built legends and myths around their "gods" aided by the stories their "gods" were giving them. This blasphemy is highly offensive to God. Acts 17 tells us that God winked at this ignorance but now, after the resurrection of Christ, was commanding all men everywhere to repent*
- 3. But the proof of the alienation of the nations from God was that they were without Christ, being alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. That is tragically hopeless!*

*C. The new condition **declared** v. 13*

- 1. The new condition **MUST** be in Christ Jesus. God has wrapped all of His redemption **IN** Christ Jesus. He is the wrapping in which all enclosed have been cleansed, redeemed and reconciled to Himself and to God. He has absorbed all the world's corruption into Himself and cleansed it. He can present it to His Father as fully cleansed as He presents himself to the Father as pure and clean.*
- 2. Now, due to this purifying, redemptive, and reconciling work of Christ all those once far off are made near, right in the presence of God. This is accomplished by the blood of Christ, the offering of His life in the stead of ours, in our place.*

3. *We are no longer alienated from God because we are in Christ Jesus. He is in the presence of God and we are in Him.*

D. *The new condition **delineated** v. 13c-18*

1. *Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Christ Has shed His own life's blood in our place so that our sins and, even more, our sinfulness is paid for in full. So our sin debt to God is paid for in full; our account is paid completely; He has purchased our lives not merely paid for some misdeeds*

2. *He has not merely purchased our peace but made His own person our peace. He is the living peace that cannot be forgotten since He ever lives.*

3. *He has taken the two groups of people of the world, the Jew and the Gentile, and made them as one person, a new creation. This new creation is created in righteousness and true holiness. Individually, he is the new man. Corporately or collectively, he is the church.*

4. *He has broken down the middle wall of partition, the fence that divided the Jew and the Gentile, called here the enmity (a deep-seated dislike or ill will). It was the covenant by which God made Israel His special prized possession. This created an animosity between the Jew and the Gentile in the way in which it was applied. The Jew applied it as that which gave him superiority over the Gentile. The Gentile saw it as a set of narrow, limiting regulations of privilege that made the Jew THINK he was better. Jesus broke it down by fulfilling or completing it. He rendered it non-functional or annulled since it was completed and no longer needed.*

5. *Unlike the creation of Adam which happened by the hands of God fashioning dust OUTSIDE of Himself and of the earth, this new man is created IN Christ Jesus so there is no opportunity for misuse or abuse. This new man is without sin and is unable to sin for he is born of God (1 John 3:9) This new man, being in Christ, is at peace with God and has the peace of God*

6. *Christ has reconciled both the one with whom the covenant had been made but who had broken it and the one who never had a covenant but was still guilty of sin. Since both were guilty, He could take the guilt of each and apply His own death to them as full payment for the guilt. On the cross then, He could take the two guilty men, guilty of sin, in Himself and die in their place.*

*Now both could be declared justified by the same savior and the same death.*

7. *Now we come to a problem verse in verse 17. It says "He came and preached..." Who is this "He"? The subject almost has to be the Lord Jesus Christ given the context of the passage. But Jesus was never in Ephesus! We have the same problem in chapter 4 verses 20-21. Once again the subject must clearly be the Lord Jesus Christ. He had never been in Ephesus yet Paul says the Ephesians had learned Christ having heard Him and having been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus. We offer a couple of thoughts here:*
  - a. *Both situations may be scribal errors. The textual evidence is too strong for the text as there are no variant readings to it. So we rule that one out.*
  - b. *There is a mystical connection between the speaker and the Christ established when Jesus or the gospel is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit without adulteration it is actually Jesus who is using the voice and the speech of the speaker. Believers are said to be the body of Christ, the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ in His absence on earth during His presence in heaven. Those who are abiding in Christ are speaking by Christ and it is Him who is speaking the message. This is the fullness of the Holy Spirit who is said to be the divine witness that is speaking through us; He is testifying of Christ*
  - c. *I think the second of the two is the correct one. Christ is said to be totally identified with us and has made us totally identified with Him. When Paul preached to the Ephesians He is representing Christ. When He spoke to the Corinthians he said he was speaking Christ and him crucified; what they believed from this encounter was revealed by the Spirit of God. It was as if Jesus is speaking through him. I think He was.*
  - d. *When Paul brought them the Gospel, they were hearing both Paul and Jesus, since Paul was so closely identified with Christ and His message. Jesus was Jewish and brought the gospel to the Jew first and now, through Paul, He is bringing the gospel to those who are far off.*
- E. *Now through Christ, who has made the two into one, both men have access to the Father by the Holy Spirit. Both have the same privilege and honor. No difference*