

Episode #1015 Ephesians 2 Part 4-The Middle Wall Broken Down

I. The purpose of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians is to tell us what God's present purpose is in all His work today. This includes His work in the world and in the individual believer. Ephesians is the book of God's present purpose, the book of being "in Christ," and the book of God's grace.

II. In Ephesians 2:11-12, we were discussing those who were "nations in the flesh," called a crude term for uncircumcised by those who were circumcised. We were discussing that the Jews outside the land at the time had a significant disadvantage over the Jews living in the land, since those in the land could keep the law and those outside the land could not.

III. Ephesians 2:12. Aliens, strangers, no hope, without God.

A. There was a very real wall between Jews inside the land and Jews outside.

1. Jews outside the land practiced Abrahamic circumcision. Genesis 17:9-14.
Jews inside practiced Mosaic circumcision. Leviticus 12:1-8. The real difference was the dedication afterwards.

2. Because the Jews outside the land could not finish the ritual for infants, the Jews inside the land called them *akrobestia*. Even though they were physically circumcised! The point was they were not real lawkeepers.

B. Christ's coming only made things worse for those outside the land, Matthew 10:5.

IV. Ephesians 2:13-18. Far off: Daniel 9:7. Gentiles didn't care if they were far off.

A. Verse 13. Christ's blood erased the difference between being in the land and out of it!

B. Verse 14. Peace = Greek *eirene*, a true union. The nation of Israel is united once again, regardless of location. This is because Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between them. What was this?

C. Verse 15. Christ made them one new man by annulling the law of the precepts in the decrees. These were God-given decrees, yet they benefited those in the land and cursed those out of it. They were necessary when Christ was on earth. No longer necessary now in the dispensation of grace.

D. Verse 16. The cross slays the enmity by removing the law, which favored those Jews in the land. Now, with the law out of the way, all Jews, whether in the land or out of it, are united through their common faith in Christ in one body and one man. The enmity between them is killed through the cross.

E. Verse 17. Peace was proclaimed to those afar off, as well as those near!

F. Verse 18. Both now have access, not through the temple and priesthood, but through the Spirit unto the Father.

V. Ephesians 2:19-22. The result. No longer any divisions in Christ.

A. Verse 19. Citizenship is now restored for these foreign-born Jews, not in the land of Israel, but in God's household.

B. Verse 20. They are all built together on the foundation of the apostles, the prophets, and Jesus Christ Himself as the capstone of the arch.

C. Verse 21. His people are now one building, and one holy temple.

D. Verse 22. God now dwells among them, no matter where on earth they are.

VI. Conclusion: While Ephesians 3 tells us that the wall between Jews and Gentiles is broken down, Ephesians 2 is telling us that the wall between Jews inside the land and Jews outside is also broken down. This was a very real wall in the past, now removed in Christ. God now dwells with all Israelites, no matter where in the world they may happen to live.