**The Middle Wall of Separation** *(Ephesians 2:11-18)*

**Introduction**

1. The temple of Herod the Great:
   1. **Temple itself** – Holy Place; Holy of Holies.
   2. **1st court outside the temple** – *Court of the Priests* (Altar of Burnt Offering).
   3. **2nd court** – *Court of the Sons of Israel.*
   4. **3rd court** – *Court of the Women.*
   5. **Temple and three courts around it formed a raised platform:**
      1. "From it you descended at various points down 5 steps and through gates in a lofty wall, to find yourself overlooking another large court--the outer court to which Gentiles, who desired to see something of the glories of the temple and to offer gifts and sacrifices to the God of the Jews, were freely admitted. Farther in than this court they were forbidden, on pain of death, to go. The actual boundary line was not the high wall with its gates, but a low stone barrier about 5 ft. in height, which ran round at the bottom of 14 more steps" (J. Armitage Robinson, D.D., Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, 59; see also Edersheim, The Temple, Its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ, 46).
      2. 1871 – Excavations of temple – pillar erected upon the ***“wall of separation”*** is found.
         1. Now in the Museum at Constantinople.
         2. Inscription – “no man of another nation to enter within the fence and enclosure round the temple, and whoever is caught will have himself to blame that his death ensues.”
         3. Middle Wall had to do in part with Paul’s imprisonment – **cf. Acts 21:27-29**
         4. **Now, Paul writes – while the physical wall still stands – that Christ *“has broken down the middle wall of separation.”***
2. Note before **Ephesians 2:11-18**:
   1. **Jews in church at Ephesus?**
      1. **Acts 19:10, 11, 17, 20** – Gospel preached to both Jew and Gentile.
      2. Primarily Gentile, yet still contained Jews who had converted to Christ.
   2. **Paul had made no distinction between Gentile and Jew up to this point in Ephesians.**
      1. **1:3-14** – Spiritual blessings in Christ.
      2. **1:15-23** – Prayer for their growth in knowledge and understanding.
      3. **2:1-3** – A look to their previous lost state. Who? Both Jew and Gentile. (**NOTE: *“among whom also WE ALL once conducted ourselves”* v. 3).**
      4. **2:4-10** – A reminder of how they were saved in Christ by grace through faith. Who? All, both Jew and Gentile in Ephesus.
3. The Middle Wall of Separation
4. Called Uncircumcision **(vv. 11-12)**
   1. **Called uncircumcision (v. 11):**
      1. ***“in the flesh,” “made in the flesh by hands”*** – a consideration of the physical circumcision, and the badge of honor and pride for the Jew which it became.
      2. ***“circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel” (Philippians 3:5*** – Paul).
      3. ***“called Uncircumcision”*** – by who? – The physically circumcised – the Jews – **TERM OF DERISION COINED BY THE JEWS:**
         1. Saul before death in battle w/ Philistines – **1 Samuel 31:4**
         2. **Manifestation of the mindset of the Jews which grew from a distorted view of their relationship with God as the nation of Israel compared to the Gentile world.**
         3. **Note: cf. Romans 2:25-29** – Their physical circumcision mattered not if they were rebellious – THERE WERE CIRCUMCISED GENTILES – IN HEART. **(EX: Cornelius)**
   2. **The Jewish thought about Gentiles (v. 12):**
      1. **Without Christ – the messiah – in what way? 🡪**
      2. **Aliens from commonwealth of Israel** – NOT AN ISRAELITE.
      3. **Therefore, strangers from covenants of promise:**
         1. **John 4:22** – salvation of Jews – how? – not to Jews only **(v. 21, 23)** – CAME THROUGH JEWISH NATION – CHRIST.
         2. **Covenants of promise (Plural)** – **Genesis 12:3** (*Abraham*); **Genesis 26:3-4** (*Isaac*); **Genesis 28:13-14** (*Jacob*).
      4. **Therefore, having no hope and without God:**
         1. **JEWISH PERSPECTIVE** – missed the point of seed promise – ***“all nations.”***
         2. Even Peter did not fully comprehend – ***“promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off” (Acts 2:39); “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him” (Acts 10:34-35).***
         3. **Seed promise was THROUGH Israel, but INCLUDED GENTILES.**
         4. **Gentiles completely without God?** – Regarding physical nationality, but not spiritually.
            1. However, that is how the Jews regarded them – see Jonah.
            2. **Jonah 1:1-3; 3:4, 10; 4:1-3** – God wanted to save Gentiles, but Jonah wanted them destroyed despite their repentance.
            3. ***“The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here” (Luke 11:32).***
5. Brought Near by Christ **(vv. 13-18)**
   1. **BUT NOW – brought near by blood of Christ (v. 13):**
      1. **Notice** – ***v. 12, “Christ”; v. 13, “Christ Jesus”***
         1. The man given the name Jesus was the Christ.
         2. **Most Jews rejected Him as the Christ.**
         3. Jesus preached – ***“And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 8:11*** – Jesus marveling at the Centurion’s faith).
      2. **Blood shed for all men, not just Jews** – ***“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29*** – John the Baptist).
         1. Jews viewed Gentiles without hope, completely separated from promises concerning the Christ.
         2. **Jesus, who is the Christ, died for the Gentiles as well.**
   2. **He Himself is our peace (v. 14a):**
      1. **Peace** – between Jew and Gentile.
      2. **How?** – made both one – **cf. Ephesians 1:10**.
      3. **HE HIMSELF** – Jesus is the peace between Jew and Gentile – **because He is the only way to the Father for all men 🡪**
   3. **Broken down the Middle Wall of Separation (vv. 14b-15):**
      1. **Middle Wall?** – The hostility from Jew to Gentile.
         1. This was brought about by their erroneous view of the law.
         2. **Law taken away, no reason for pride, and hostility toward those who aren’t under it 🡪**
      2. **(v. 15)** – Law abolished, because law brought enmity:
         1. **Enmity** – between God and man – **cf. Romans 7:12-13** – Law is good, but have not kept it.
         2. **Cf. Hebrews 8:7-8a, 13** – Need for a new law/covenant.
         3. **Cf. Colossians 2:13-14** – wiped out that which was contrary to us because of our sin.
         4. **Result?**
            1. **Create ONE NEW MAN from the two** – can’t happen through Old Law – pertained only to Jews.
            2. **Cf. Romans 9:30-33** – Seek righteousness by faith in Christ.
            3. **Thus, PEACE BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE** – because of peace with God, to which there is only one way FOR ALL (**cf. John 14:6**).
   4. **Reconciled to God in One Body (vv. 16-18):**
      1. ***“in one body:”***
         1. Not a reconciliation to God for JEWS, and a reconciliation to God for GENTILES.
         2. **A reconciliation to God for ALL in ONE BODY.**
         3. **Cf. Ephesians 1:22-23** – the body is the church – ***“there is one body” (4:4).***
         4. That body is Christ’s – Christ being the head.
         5. **Reconciled only through Christ.**
         6. **ENMITY BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE PUT TO DEATH – BECAUSE TOGETHER NOW IN CHRIST (ONLY WAY) – *“the whole body, [is] joined and knit together” (4:16).***
      2. **Peace preached to Jews and Gentiles (v. 17):**
         1. **Peace** – peace between God and man.
         2. **Implication** – in need of peace/without peace – in sin – WHO? – BOTH JEW AND GENTILE.
      3. **Access to God by ONE SPIRIT (v. 18):**
         1. Not HS through His revelation but…
         2. **Disposition as sons** – not the thought of national pride, **but humble submission to God’s requirements in Christ.**
         3. **Cf. Romans 8:15-17** – Spirit of sonship, children of God – through Christ.
6. So what? – Endeavor to keep unity!
   1. **Jewish pride** – as stated before – creates hostility among brethren.
   2. **Gentile pride** – **cf. Romans 11:19-23** – God favors us now? Don’t grow haughty, but fear. (*Also perhaps a bitterness toward Jews for mistreatment.)*
   3. **Cf. Ephesians 4:1-6** – Endeavor to keep the unity – list of ONES!
   4. **4:25-32** – Do not speak evil of, and hurt one another.
      1. ***“for we are members of one another”*** – IN CHRIST.
      2. This, despite the differences in nationality.
   5. **NO ROOM FOR SEPARATION – MIDDLE WALL OF SEPARATION BROKEN DOWN IN CHRIST JESUS, BY CHRIST JESUS!**
7. What Middle Wall of Separation?
8. Race, Social Status, Gender? – **Galatians 3:26-29**
   1. Age?
   2. Politics?
   3. Past?
   4. Family? (Congregations composed in great part of physical family.)
   5. Etc. – ***“all one in Christ Jesus”***
   6. ***“My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality” (James 2:1*** – such is antithetical to the nature of the faith).
   7. **Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:25** – no schism, but same care.
9. In Evangelism? – **Matthew 28:18-20**
   1. ***“all the nations”*** – this is universal.
   2. ***“In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34*** – Peter; neither should we).
10. **It is Christ’s desire to gather in one all things in Him – our attitude toward each other in the church should reflect such, as well as those in the world.**

**Conclusion – (1)** In Christ there is reconciliation to God, and between men because of the commonality in Christ. **(2)** There is no middle wall of separation – no cause for division in Christ whatsoever. We are called to live within this realm of truth.