

EPHESIANS 2:11-18 THE BARRIER IS BROKEN

INTRODUCTION: GOD'S PLAN OF THE AGES FOR JEWS AND GENTILES

There is a definite break from where we have been as we go into a new section. The object of the whole epistle of Ephesians is the plan of the ages, the purpose of God. Eph 1:10 is the summary verse of the book. The church is being put together. It is all done by God's great power as He astonishes us in that He would take people like us and put us into His church with all sorts of people through the ages from countries all over the world. He breaks down all barriers to do that.

The problem is man in his sinful heart builds barriers. Throughout history, free men looked down on slaves and did not even treat them as human beings. Women were looked down upon as they too, were seen as inferior. The Greeks were so proud of their heritage they believed they were superior to all other people. They saw two kinds of people. One was Greeks, and the other was barbarians. They always were warring against each other. Even in the church, there have been all sorts of walls. 1 Cor 3:1,3, 1:11-13 The disunity of the Ephesians was mostly because of the difference between Jews and Gentiles.

God sovereignly chose the Jews to be His special people. They were to get His blessings but also were to be a channel of them to the Gentiles. Israel never fulfilled that role and instead chose to condemn the Gentiles instead of witnessing to them. Peter had to be corrected on this attitude in Acts 10. The church was to go into all the world

Why did God make Israel distinct? 1. He wanted the world to see them and that they didn't live like other men. 2. He wanted them to be so distinct that they would never amalgamate with other people.

The Jews had bad attitudes with the Gentiles. Jonah typified this attitude toward the Gentiles. Jonah did not want to share this gracious God with anyone else. So it goes for the whole nation. When a Jew would enter the homeland they would shake the dust off their sandals so they would not corrupt the land with Gentile dust. You would go out of the way to avoid Samaria when you would travel. If a Jew would marry a Gentile, the Jewish family would have a funeral service to symbolize the death of their child as far as Religion and race was concerned. Acts 15 explains the first church council and the Jewish legalism that was to be abolished.

There were two main obstacles standing between the Ephesians and their coming to God. One was their condition in sin. A second one was their position in the economy of God. It was tremendous that they should have ever come to Christ. When they realize this, they understand the greatness of God's power.

1. ONCE ALIENATED FROM CHRIST **A. EXTERNAL OUTCASTS**

VV 11-12

Uncircumcision / Circumcision—Circumcision was merely a sign externally, of a spiritual inward state. That is what it was meant to be.
The separation of Jews and Gentiles was symbolized by this.
The Jews saw them as outcasts
Flesh—emphasis is on externals, purely physical—Nationality, birth, family, blood, ---- Jewish boasting---blind to the true meaning

In our times we have so many divisions. Denominations, age, race, education, job, family heritage, dress, abilities, communion, baptism
Pride is the main cause of everything that divides people.

B. SPIRITUAL ALIENATION

1. Separate From Christ

No hope of a savior

The Gentiles had no purpose, plan, nor destiny. They were unaware of God's judgment. Pagan idolatry is repulsive. It thrives on fear and despair rather than hope and trust because its demonic gods are wicked
They are profoundly pessimistic. The only comfort is Nirvana or escape
From this world, a whole series of reincarnations. You have to get out of this world.
There is no hope. The poet sits, listens, and meditates, and what does he hear? The still, sad music of humanity. Vanity of vanities Death is but the end of man

2. Excluded From the Commonwealth

Commonwealth---a number of people constituted into a community
God made His chosen people into a theocracy. He blessed Israel, protected and loved them. He gave them His covenants, His law, promises, guidance.
Psalm 147:20, Amos 3:2, Deut 32:9-14, Isa 63:7-9
Gentiles were outside that circle in which God is particularly interested.
They didn't belong to the covenant people. They were outside the dominion of God.

C. NO COVENANT PROMISES FROM GOD

God made a covenant with Abraham and agreed to bind Himself to carry out Promises to His people, to redeem them from sin and bless them forever.
Gen 12:2-3, 17:7, 26:3-5, 28:13-15, Jere 31:33

D. NO HOPE

True hope can only be based on a true promise. Hope is a blessing that gives Meaning and security to life. Death only brought nothingness or despair.
Psalm 146:5, Jere 14:8, 17:13
No hope without Christ

E. WITHOUT GOD (atheos)

They had many gods but not the true God.
Gal 4:8, 1 Thess 4:13

2. BROUGHT NEAR

VV 13-18

Far Off—far away from the true God Isa 57:19, Acts 2:39

They were Gentiles who had been brought to Christ.

Near—spiritual intimacy with Christ

Blood—John 1:29, Heb 2:9, 9:14, 13:20, 1 Jn 1:7

A. PEACE

Peace only comes because of Christ. Self has to die to have peace and the only

place self dies is at the foot of Calvary.

Isa 9:6, Jn 16:33

Barrier of the dividing wall---This alludes to the separation of the Court of the Gentiles from the rest of the Temple. There was a sign that read," No Gentile May enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and the enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death."

The original separation made by God Isa 5:1-7, Mt 21:33 The purpose was For redeeming both groups not for saving the Jews alone.

Court of the Gentiles Mark 11:17

The greatest barrier---Ceremonial Law—Acts 10:9-16, 11:17-18 This dealt with foods, washings

Abolished (Katargeo)-invalidate, make of no effect

Reconcile (Apokatallaso)---turning from hostility to friendship—Rom 5:8-10

Col 1:19-20

B. ACCESS (Prosagoge)

Rom 5:2, Eph 3:12

John 10:1-14, Heb 4:16

Father—Rom 8:15