

Ephesians
Prince of Peace
Ephesians 2:11-18
March 23rd, 2025

I. Introduction

What God is doing in and through Christ Jesus is a cosmic work. He is gathering together into one all things in Christ, both things which are in heaven and things which are on earth (Eph. 1:10). Paul unpacks this cosmic work by drawing out God's purposes on the world stage. What God is doing in Christ Jesus concerns not merely the family or the local community, but all the nations of the earth. It is good news, not just for Israel, but for all the peoples. For Jesus is set as King over all kingdoms (Dan. 7:14). The Gospel is no merely private matter. It is public. It is political, for the kingdom of heaven shall rule over all, and all the nations of the earth shall bring their glory and honor into it (Rev. 21:26).

II. The Text — Eph. 2:11-18

11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself—Jesus—is our peace, who has made both one—both the Gentiles and the Jews—and [He] 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, 16 and that He [God] might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

When God set Israel apart for Himself, He made their separation clear through divine ordinances and ceremonies. These were symbols that testified to this separation saying that these are the people of God, and all of those are not. But this separation was not to be _____. In the fullness of time God would prove good on His promises to them, namely the promise He made to Abraham that He would bless the nations in him. The people of Israel were to be a conduit of blessing, for through them He would prepare salvation for the whole world.

Christ made Israel one with all the nations by breaking down the wall of _____ in His flesh. He fulfilled all righteousness, and so did away with all the ceremonies and rites that set Israel apart from the rest of the nations. He did away with dietary laws. He removed the Jewish Sabbath. He put an end to sacrifices. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. Circumcision was done away with. And in the place of this separation stood Christ.

In Christ God did away with this wall of separation and called all the nations to come to Him, and have _____, for the Lord would now be the God of all the peoples. He tore down the wall that separated them from one another, and more significantly, God tore down the wall that separated all people—both Jews and Gentiles—from _____.

III. A Paradigm For Peace

God took the most difficult rift among the nations—the one between Israel and every other nation—and He made provision for peace. And the peace that could bridge this chasm is the peace that can be brokered between all nations. What God wrought in Christ between Israel and the Gentiles is like what the prophet Elijah did during his showdown with the prophets of Baal (see 1 Kings 18). God made this peace harder for Himself. He Himself set up barriers between Israel and every other nation. He Himself set up a wall between them and gave commandments and ordinances and ceremonies that removed any semblance—or any hope—of peace between the Jewish people and the rest of mankind. He did it, and why did He do it? So that when peace was brokered, it would be clear to all that it was the Lord alone who accomplished it.

IV. The Peace of the Cross

How did God make peace between Israel and the nations, and how is He continuing to make peace in our day? There are two main aspects of this peace that is centered on the _____.

First. At the Cross, both Jew and Gentile learn that we all together stand condemned before God. We are made one in our _____. The Cross is our judgment. Jesus did not shed His blood merely for the Gentile-sinners, but the Jews, too stood condemned. All have sinned. All stand condemned.

Every tribe and nation and language is guilty of rebelling against God. And at the Cross, we are all laid low. We all have sin. While nations might go and express their rebellion in different ways, it's still rebellion. So God makes peace between the nations, by pointing out that none of the nations has peace with God. No, not one. Not Israel, despite all the ways God has blessed them. Much less any Gentile nation which is left to grope in the darkness, without God and without hope in the world. God is against all of us, in whatever route we might take in our rebellion. God is against us, and so we have to make peace with Him.

Secondly. At the Cross, God declares His _____ to make peace with us. He makes provision for us to come to Him, to come under His reign, to come into His kingdom—to, in short, lay down our rebellion and come home. At the Cross, the nations are welcomed into the kingdom of God, with atonement already made. But our return comes with a condition. You do not get to come into the Kingdom of God and continue _____. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and the Kingdom wherein He reigns is a Kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). All are welcomed in, but all must lay down their feuds. God is happy to make peace with anybody through Jesus Christ—but in order for us to make peace with God, we must make peace with one another. We have to put aside our little squabbles. See Isaiah 2:1-4.

We make covenant with the Lord. We take Him to be our God, and He takes us to be His people. And as we come into covenant with Him, we commit to live at peace with Him and at peace with one another, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). If we aren't careful to do this, then we grieve the Spirit. We disturb the peace, and we run afoul of the law of the Kingdom which we have been graciously welcomed into. In so doing, we risk coming under the judgment of King Jesus. See 1 Tim. 6:3-5.

V. Come & Welcome to Jesus Christ