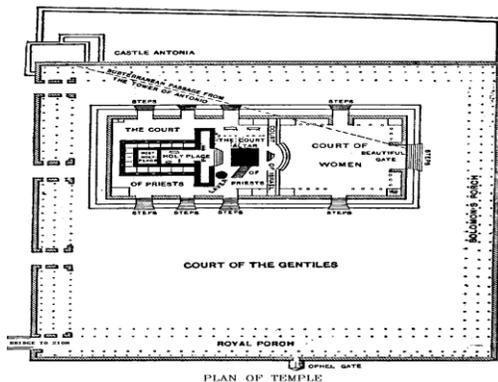


## IF WALLS COULD TALK JESUS TAKES AWAY THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION (Ephesians 2:14)

Jesus lived in the days when God's people offered their sacrifices at the temple. The temple was divided in different courts. There was the court where the priests offered sacrifices before the Holy and Most Holy places. Separate from this court was the court of the women. Separate from these two courts was the court of the Gentiles. Non-Jews were not allowed in the inner courts. The following was an inscription from the temple in the days of Herod as a warning to the Gentiles:

***“No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death.”***



Paul was accused of *bringing “Greeks into the temple and hath defiled this holy place” (Acts 21:28)*. The charge was false, but it shows the strong feelings of the Jews regarding the Gentiles or those of foreign nations. The separation between Jews and the Gentiles were manifested in other areas of life during this time. The Jews would not come into Pilate's house, for they would have been defiled (*John 18:28-29*). Peter, a Jew, said to Cornelius, a Gentile, *“Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto on of another nation” (Acts 10:28)*.

When Jesus came to this earth to die for the sins of everyone, he also came to take away barriers that separated the Jews and Non-Jews (Gentiles) from one another. Paul speaks of a wall of partition which separated the Jews from the Gentiles when he writes, *“For He is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition...” (Ephesians 2:14)*.

### ***Oneness through reconciliation***

God's plan of peace through Christ first demanded that all be first reconciled to God. Because all have sinned, the Jews needed to be reconciled to God as well as the Gentiles. Paul refers to this reconciling work of Christ when he writes, "*He came and preached peace to them that were far off (Gentiles), and peace to them that were nigh (Jews)*" (*Ephesians 2:17*). Through "*the blood of Christ*" and "*the cross*", individuals could now be "*made nigh*" (*Ephesians 2:13, 16*).

### ***Oneness through faith- end of the Law of Moses***

God's plan of peace brought an end to the Law of Moses, which could not justify man, but could only point out sins which created enmity between the Jew and God. Through death, Jesus "*abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances that He might create in Himself of the two one new man, so making peace*" (*Ephesians 2:15*). The Jews could be justified by faith just like the Gentiles and therefore become one with one another (*Romans 3:30*).

### ***Oneness in the church – God's spiritual temple***

God's plan also foresaw the church as the spiritual body where all men, Jews and Non-Jews (Gentiles) could be one. Through Jesus' death he "might reconcile them both in one body..." (*Ephesians 2:16*). This one body is the one church (*Ephesians 1:22-23*). The church was part of God's eternal purpose (*Ephesians 3:10-11*). Paul describes this spiritual body, the church, as a temple. Jesus is the reference point, "*in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord*" (*Ephesians 2:21*). The church is made up individuals whose bodies are to be kept pure, and together with other Christians they together form the one temple today. This spiritual temple has no barriers between Jew and Gentile. In Christ we see "*one man*" united in Christ, and justified before God.

With the Law of Moses fulfilling its purpose in defining our sins, and the blood of Christ paving the way for justification before God, reconciled man could now be one with one another. In the one body, the church, one's race, social status, or gender does not matter. Through faith in Christ we all are one man (*Galatians 3:28*).

### ***Racial Unity***

Souls being saved in Christ and united in the spiritual temple, the church, can manifest to the world the answer to racism. Christianity does not focus on if you are Arab, Indian, Chinese, or African, but on your soul, which is your most valuable possession (*Matthew 16:26*). All who have responded in obedience to the one gospel of Christ share in a common salvation which unites all (*Romans 1:16, Jude 3*).

## ***Gender Unity***

In Christ gender differences find unity. The husband is to recognize his wife's comparative "weaker vessel" and honor that difference with protection, not exploit it with abuse. He had better recognize himself and her "*as joint-heirs of the grace of life*" or his "*prayers will be hindered*" (I Peter 3:7). God has given the husband the responsibility to be head, but he is not to be a dictator satisfying his selfishness. In selflessness he is to love his wife as Jesus loved the church in giving himself up for his spiritual bride, and as he would cherish his own body (Ephesians 5:22-25, 28-29). At the same time, the wife is to submit to the authority of her husband as she offers this service unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:24). She is never to have dominion or teach over a man (I Timothy 2:12). She is to rule her household under the leadership and authority of her husband (I Timothy 5:14). In Christ the gender differences are recognized and honored. Unity is achieved because the battle over who will lead and who has authority in the family has been eliminated through God's revelation. The differences are always respected with honor, and carried out in obedience, not exploited in selfish disobedience.

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

1. What was the middle wall of partition in the temple?
  
2. What would a Jew not do with Gentiles?
  
3. Before man could be reconciled with man they first needed to be reconciled to \_\_\_\_\_.
  
4. How was this reconciliation accomplished?
  
5. Are we under the Law of Moses today?
  
6. How does Christ offer the answer to racism?
  
7. How does Christ offer the answer today's strife between the sexes?