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HOW THE WALL CAME TUMBLING DOWN ONCE AND FOREVER

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 20
EPHESIANS 2:13-15

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EPHESIANS 2:13-15 "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;"

In all the New Testament there is not a more beautiful picture of the sum total of Christ's work of redemption than is found here. Here we have before us a picture of the work of Christ on the cross and how, in his own person, in his own flesh, he died for the sins of all mankind and thus once and forever broke down the barrier which separates man from God.

EPHESIANS 2:13 "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." The words "Are made nigh" is an aorist, passive, indicative of the word "ginomai." It means to become something you were not before. This means you have crossed through the barrier by faith in Christ and you have received salvation as a free gift from God. "By the blood of Christ" means by the instrumentality of the blood of Christ.

Before the cross occurred historically, the meaning of the cross had to be taught, and the means by which this was done was animal sacrifices. The animal had to be without spot or blemish. This perfect animal was taken to the altar, was killed physically and died by the shedding of blood. LEVITICUS 17:11 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." "The life is in the blood" refers to animals only. Read the context of this verse and you will soon discover that the writer is speaking of animals only. The animal had its throat cut and died by the shedding of blood. This pictures the historical Christ but it does not point to the physical bleeding of Christ on the cross. It refers rather to the spiritual death of Christ where our sins were poured out on him and judged. The animal was innocent and died physically, but Christ was perfect and died spiritually. The animal was judged and didn't deserve it. Christ was judged and he didn't deserve it. Our sins were poured out on Christ and judged and the blood of Christ doesn't refer to his actual physical blood, but rather to his spiritual death on the cross for us. That is what we call a representative analogy, in which we have an analogy between something literal and something historical or actual. A representative analogy has the literal blood of the animal represent the actual spiritual death of Christ. Christ did not bleed to death on the cross. Christ died twice on the cross. He died spiritually for our sins, then he died physically so he might rise again and become the first fruits of the resurrection and thereby make it possible for us to rise again when we die. After Christ was dead a Roman soldier plunged a spear into his side and out came water and blood, or blood as it was coagulating. His physical life blood came out after he was already dead physically. Repeat: Christ did not bleed to death on the cross. When the Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" it is referring to spiritual death, not physical death.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

We often sing "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins." That is a great and good song, provided we know what we mean when we sing it.

Every time an animal was slain on the altar he was judged by physical death. When Christ died on the cross he was judged by spiritual death. The blood of the animal was representative of his life and when the blood of the animal ran out it was his very life and it was a literal death. The real physical death of the animal portrays the actual spiritual death of Christ for our sins.

1. THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE BASIS OF REDEMPTION.

1 PETER 1:18-19 "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"

EPHESIANS 1:7 "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"

Here is the concept of redemption. We were all born in the slave market of sin and at birth we possess an old sin nature. We were born with an old sin nature, born physically alive but spiritually dead. Jesus Christ came into the world through the virgin birth, so he came into the world outside the slave market of sin. He was a free man therefore he was qualified to purchase slaves. He came to the cross and there he was judged. Every sin of the whole human race was poured out on him and the Father judged him. Redemption means that Christ paid for our sins by being judged for them so we can go free. Redemption means that our sins have already been paid for, our freedom has already been purchased. Salvation comes when by faith we walk through the door and put our trust in Jesus Christ. So the blood of Christ is the basis of our redemption. 1 Peter 1:18-19 mentions the crucifixion and compares it to the lamb on the altar without spot or blemish. The animal lamb died physically, Christ the Lamb of God died spiritually and then died physically.

2. THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE BASIS OF JUSTIFICATION.

ROMANS 5:9 "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

We are justified through his blood. Justification always means vindication. Justification always looks at salvation from the standpoint of God. His righteousness is credited to our account at the point of salvation. That's called imputation. Imputed to us at the point of salvation is what we call "Plus Righteousness." God the Father has "Plus Righteousness" and now God looks at our "Plus Righteousness" and says "Vindicated!" Now that's justification by faith. God looks at you through the righteousness of Jesus Christ and says, "Justified!" In God's sight you are now just as good as Jesus Christ is and God says, "Justified--Vindicated!" Now how can we have the righteousness of God at the moment of our salvation? It is possible because on that cross every sin of ours was poured out on Christ and judged and at that second God credits us with Christ's perfect righteousness.

3. THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE BASIS OF CLEANSING FROM SIN.

HEBREWS 13:12 "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

REVELATION 1:5 "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Our sins, up to the point of salvation, were judged by Christ on the cross. But we are going to commit many sins after our salvation. What about them? Well, those sins are cleansed also, but they are judged under another system and that is 1 John 1:9. But these sins are also based on the blood of Christ. When you accept Christ every sin of your past is blotted out. That is Revelation 1:5. They are wiped away. But the sin of every Christian is also covered by that blood. He judged our past sins and our future sins. They were all judged at the cross.

4. THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE BASIS FOR FORGIVENESS OF ALL THE SINS YOU COMMIT AFTER SALVATION.

1 JOHN 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

This "us" refers to Christians. When in confession we name our sins to God, God is always faithful and he forgives us the sin right then and there. We are not forgiven because we are sincere, because we beg, because we cry, because we have a great emotional outburst, because of our sins. We are forgiven because those sins were paid for on the cross. So the blood of Christ reaches back and pays for the sins we have committed prior to the time of our salvation, and also reaches forward and pays for all the sins we will commit after our salvation. Pre-salvation sins and post-salvation sins are all handled by the blood of Jesus Christ. In this verse quoted above, the blood of Jesus Christ is used to indicate this truth.

5. THERE IS NO SALVATION APART FROM THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.

HEBREWS 9:22 "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

No payment, no remission! The animal blood in the animal sacrifice was literal and real and the animal died physically. The animal was actually judged. The animal did nothing to deserve the death. When we read the term "The life is in the blood" it refers to animals only. The animal bleeding to death on the altar represents Christ being judged on the cross, and it connects the cross with the animal sacrifices which simply pictured the coming cross. The physical death of the animal represented the spiritual death of Christ.

6. THEREFORE THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST REPRESENTS HIS WORK ON THE CROSS.

1 PETER 1:2 "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

HEBREWS 13:20 "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,"

COLOSSIANS 1:20 "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

HEBREWS 10:19 "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,"

EPHESIANS 2:14 "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;" Here we are to study the removal of the barrier between a saved Jew and a saved Gentile. (And the truth is universal--It applies to all men of all races and stations in life.)

The Jews had allowed false distinctions to divide them from others. Naturally there was a great cultural distinction between Jews and Gentiles. However, the ritual of circumcision never did save a single Jew, just like the lack of circumcision never did form the basis of condemnation for any Gentile. When a Jew was saved he entered into union with Christ. When a Gentile was saved he entered into union with Christ. "For he is our peace" means that in Christ all the barriers are down. This is a proleptical pronoun and should read, "He, and only he, keeps on being our peace." The word for "our peace" and the phrase "Peace on earth good will toward men" do not refer to the lack of war on the earth. That is not what this verse says. It rather says, "Peace in man with whom the God is well pleased." God is well pleased with only one person and that person is the one who believes in Jesus Christ. So peace is the removal of the barrier between man on the one hand and God on the other. Peace means man is reconciled to God. There is no way to get man back in touch with God except this one way. So the barrier is gone between man and God and Jesus Christ did it by his work on the cross. He, and only he, keeps on being our peace. "Who hath made" is an aorist, active, participle of "poieo." He did the work and only He did it. Both, means Jew and Gentile. Around the Temple in Jerusalem was a wall inside which no Gentile could enter. Gentiles could come into the outer court but they couldn't go beyond that wall. This wall was called "The middle wall of partition." The Jews could go in, but the Gentiles could not.

On the unsaved side of the barrier there are many kinds of men but none of them are equal. Every person is different, different in background, different in culture, different in mental ability, different in potential. So here are these vast barriers. The Jews said to the Gentiles-- "Look, you Gentiles, there is only one way you can come in and that is you must be circumcised and become Jews as outlined in the Mosaic Law." But the truth was simply this--That Jew without Christ was unsaved and that Gentile without Christ was unsaved. They both were in the same boat, even though the middle wall of partition separated them. Both of them had sinned and both came short of the glory of God. In one second of time, God does what man is never able to do. In one second of time, God breaks down that middle wall of partition and at the point of faith enters that Jew and Gentile into union with Christ and both are saved.

Man can work a lifetime and can't break down that wall, but God does it in a second, the second a man puts his faith in Christ. Thus all the inequalities are removed, the wall comes down, and both Jew and Gentile are in Christ. This is the only place of real equality in the whole structure of life. There is no basis in Scripture for a man to believe that by social action he can change the social status of man. The only way to change men is by regeneration and in their regenerated state, the changes that God has designed for them will emerge. Man can't solve man's problems, only God can do this and he does it by regeneration. Mass panaceas do not solve man's problems. Welfare roles and all kinds of social reforms will never solve man's problems. Only regeneration can do this.

This is the age long problem of man. Man wants to design a plan whereby his problems will be solved, but God has already designed that plan, and that plan is regeneration. There is just one plan that works in the Devil's world and that is God's plan of regeneration. He alone can break down the wall. Notice that it says, "He hath broken down the middle wall." That aorist, active, participle means that in a point of time you enter into union with Christ by faith, and God picks up that point of time and divorces it from time and perpetuates it forever. The active voice means that God does it and he alone does it. The participle means that it is an accomplished fact and it will be just as true a million years from now, just as it is today. Only God breaks down that middle wall of partition and both Jews and Gentiles find that their distinctions are eliminated.

EPHESIANS 2:15 "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;" The words "having abolished" is an aorist, active, participle of "katargeo" and it means to render useless, to cancel, to abrogate. He cancelled the barrier, and to do this he had to become flesh and go to the cross. The cross provides the only way whereby a man can have relationship with God. This is the only way the wall can come down, and Christ accomplished this by becoming a man and by going to the cross in human flesh. This aorist tense is a universal aorist. God picked up that point of time and flung it all the way back to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and thereby made it possible for all who lived before the cross, when they believed, to be included in the plan of salvation. Then God picked up that point of time and flung it forward down to the end of time, to include all who put their faith in Christ who live on this side of the cross. So "having abolished" looks both backward and forward and deals with every sin of the entire human race. This was done "in his flesh." He had to become man to do this. He had to become a man in order to die. He had to become man, therefore, the virgin birth, therefore, the human life of Christ and it was in his human body that he went to the cross.

"The enmity" is described in Romans 5:10 "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

The enmity is the barrier that is between man and God.

"Even the law of commandments" form the basis of our condemnation. This refers to the Ten Commandments. These laws form the basis for our condemnation. The barrier is based on the fact that man cannot meet God's standard. It is a universal truth that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The purpose of the Ten Commandments is to prove that man is a sinner and is behind the barrier.

"Contained in the ordinances" refers to the sacrifices, the observance of the feasts and holy days and they all in some way picture how Christ removed the barrier between man and God.

"For to make in himself" should be translated "That he might create in himself."

Remember that Jesus Christ was the creator of the universe. He thought the universe into existence. He spoke and there it was. So we read, "That he might create in himself." This is the intensification of the angelic conflict and he is creating in himself a new kingdom, a new body and here it is called "Of twain one new man." So no matter who you were, once you believe, all distinctions are removed and you are now one new man. The word new is "kainos" and this means new in species.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

"In making peace" is a present, active, participle of "poieo" and it means that what he set out to do has now been accomplished. Christ has succeeded at the thing he set out to accomplish. He is not going to lose the battle.