

Ephesians

Horizontal Atonement: The Cross and the Church

Lesson #5 for July 29, 2023

Scriptures: Ephesians 2:11-22; Romans 3:31; 7:12; Isaiah 52:7; 57:19; John 14:27; 1 Corinthians 3:9-17.

1. Ephesians 2 is famous for its statement about breaking down the barriers between Jews and Gentiles.

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] You are a Gentile, a Greek, who has learned to treasure the God of the Jews. In fact, you have left your worship of many gods and have embraced the one true God. As you make your way through the beautiful courtyards and fluted columns of the Jerusalem temple, the sounds of worship call forth your praise. Just then, though, you find yourself confronted by a stone barricade four feet high. Engraved every few feet in Latin and Greek is this message: "No foreigner may enter within the barrier and enclosure around the temple. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death." In that moment you feel shut out, alienated, and separated.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, July 22.‡

2. Our focus in this lesson will be on the last half of the second chapter of Ephesians.

Ephesians 2:11-22: ¹¹ You **Gentiles by birth—called "the uncircumcised"** by the Jews, who call themselves "the circumcised" (which refers to what men do to their bodies)—remember what you were in the past. ¹²At that time you were apart from Christ. You were foreigners and did not belong to God's chosen people. You had no part in the covenants, which were based on God's promises to his people, and you lived in this world without hope and without God. ¹³But now, in union with Christ Jesus, you who used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies. ¹⁵He abolished the Jewish Law with its commandments and rules, in order to create out of the two races one new people in union with himself, in this way making peace. ¹⁶**By his death on the cross Christ destroyed their enmity; by means of the cross he united both races into one body and brought them back to God.** ¹⁷So Christ came and preached the Good News of peace to all—to you Gentiles, who were far away from God, and to the Jews, who were near to him. ¹⁸It is through Christ that all of us, Jews and Gentiles, are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of the Father.

¹⁹ **So then, you Gentiles are not foreigners or strangers any longer; you are now fellow-citizens with God's people and members of the family of God.** ²⁰You, too, are built upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus himself. ²¹**He is the one who holds the whole building together and makes it grow into a sacred temple dedicated to the Lord.** ²²In union with him

you too are being built together with all the others into a place where God lives through his Spirit.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Ephesians 2:11-22). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].^{†‡}

3. What do these verses mean for us in our situation?
4. Are we looking forward to the day when we will be living side-by-side with people from all nations and all time periods since the days of Adam and Eve? Will we be able to get along with all of them? Some people even have trouble getting along with their spouse!
5. In Ephesians 2:1-3 and Ephesians 2:11-12, Paul contrasted the situation of the Jews and the Gentiles. He first admitted that all humans are sinners and are far away from God's plan for mankind. The Jews had been given God's plan while the Gentiles did not even know about it. In some ways, each group despised the other. The Jews despised the Gentiles for being uncircumcised while the Gentiles despised the Jews for being circumcised.
6. Paul reminded both Gentiles and Jews who were church members from where they had come. However, Paul proceeded almost immediately to describe the solution. **Through Christ, both groups were to be brought together as brothers and sisters in the church.**
7. How does that work? How does the death of Jesus bring both Jews and Gentiles—which includes most of us—nearer to God?
8. Does the fact that the rift between Jews and Gentiles can be resolved by both groups becoming Christians apply to other kinds of rifts that might exist today? So, as individuals, from where have we come? What did Jesus redeem you of? Or, from? From time to time, is it important to look back to see where we have come from? History is important!
9. Do these questions apply only to those who have recently become Christians? Or, even Seventh-day Adventists? Or, do those who grew up in Seventh-day Adventist homes need to ask themselves the same questions? Do we ever use the term *outsider*? Or, *insider*? What do these terms mean? Is that an "us" *versus* "them" situation?
10. Read Ephesians 1:7-8; 2:13-14,16; 4:32; 5:2,25.
11. Paul began by stating that the blood of Christ sets us free. That is, our sins are forgiven.
12. What does it mean to say that by *the blood of Christ* or by *the cross*, our sins are forgiven? Did God the Father refuse to forgive sins until Jesus had been crucified? What is the effect of the crucifixion and forgiveness of our sins in the 21st century, millennia later?
13. To many Christians, the death of Jesus was necessary to "pay the price" for sin. Did Jesus somehow pay the price to assuage the Father's wrath because we had turned away from His plan for our lives by sinning? Would it be correct to say that Jesus Christ understands us better after having grown up and lived that life here on earth? If we say that, are we saying that God the Father is not omniscient or all-knowing?

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, veiling His glory and humbling Himself, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life**

of Christ would not have been changed.... In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father.—Ellen G. White, Letter 83, 1895, in *Manuscript Releases*,* vol. 21, 393.1; *That I May Know Him**€ 338.4.†‡

14. In the New Testament, we see much evidence about the differences between Jews and Gentiles. But, how long did those differences persist? And to what groups do they apply?
15. Was a barrier between Jews and Greeks a big deal to the people living in Ephesus and the surrounding territories? Paul also talked about the differences between Greeks and barbarians. Was that a problem? What about the differences between Christians and non-Christians? Many Jews had moved and were living in Asia Minor as businessmen.
16. When reading this letter, does it sound to you like the differences between Jews and Gentiles were a problem mainly within the churches in Asia Minor and Greece? Were the Jewish believers hesitant to associate with the formerly-pagan believers? (See Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8&10.)

[BSG:] In the context of our passage for this week, Ephesians 2:11–22, the Cross yields three great assets for believers: (1) Gentiles, who were “far” from God and His people, are “brought near” (*Eph. 2:13, ESV*) to both, being now sons and daughters of God and brothers and sisters of Jewish believers (*Eph. 2:19*); (2) the “hostility” (Greek, *echthran*, “enmity,” related to *echthros*, “enemy”) between Jewish and Gentile believers is itself “put to death” (*Eph. 2:16, NASB*). The cross of Christ removes what seemed to be the permanent state of hostility and war in which Jews and Gentiles were sworn enemies (*Eph. 2:17*); (3) in the place of hostility comes reconciliation. It was Christ’s purpose to “reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross” (*Eph. 2:16, NKJV; compare Col. 1:19–22*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, July 24.‡§

17. ***Will the reconciliation brought about by the cross make it possible for people of all nations and all ages to live together in peace in the world made new? How does it accomplish that peace?***
18. What do we mean by *reconciliation*?

[BSG:] What does reconciliation look like? How does it feel to be reconciled? Imagine severe estrangement between a mother and daughter, one that has settled in over a period of years. Imagine this rancor being dissolved in a wave of grace and forgiveness and the ensuing reunion between the two. That is reconciliation. Reconciliation is experienced in the moment when one church member lays aside whatever issue divides from another and acknowledges the other church member as a beloved brother or sister who accepts what has been offered. Reconciliation is not a mechanical or legal term but an interpersonal one that celebrates the mending of broken relationships. Paul dares to imagine Christ’s powerful work on the cross as impacting the relationships, between not just individuals but also people groups. He imagines it invading our lives and destroying our divisions, dissolving our quarrels, and renewing our

fellowship with and understanding of each other.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, July 24.[‡]

19. Another explanation might sound like this: If we all recognize that we are totally helpless in trying to earn our salvation, but also recognize that God has offered salvation to everyone on the same conditions, shouldn't we be thankful and willing to accept others?
20. In Ephesians 2:14-15, Paul talked about tearing down the "middle wall of the enclosure." What was he talking about?

[BSG:] Paul probably alludes here to the balustrade or fence that surrounded the court of Israel in Herod's Temple, with its death threat. Paul imagines this wall coming down and Gentiles being granted full access to worship God (*Eph. 2:18*). Any such wall, says Paul, is removed by the Cross. For there we learn that these two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, are really one.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, July 25.^{‡§} [See also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Warning_inscription][‡]

21. Ephesians 2:14-15 and a parallel passage in Colossians have been misinterpreted frequently by Christians.

[BSG:] Some believe that Ephesians 2:14, 15 teaches that the Ten Commandments, inclusive of the Sabbath commandment, are "abolished" or "set aside" by the Cross. However, in Ephesians, Paul demonstrates profound respect for the Ten Commandments as a resource for shaping Christian discipleship. He quotes the fifth commandment (*Eph. 6:2, 3*) and alludes to others (e.g., *the seventh, Eph. 5:3–14, 21–33; the eighth, Eph. 4:28; the ninth, Eph. 4:25; the tenth, Eph. 5:5*). This aligns with Paul's earlier assertions about the law (*Rom. 3:31, Rom. 7:12*). **He addresses the misuse of the law, but he honors the law itself and assumes its continuity.** Hence, to use these verses to abolish the Ten Commandments, especially in light of all the other verses in the Bible about the perpetuity of the law, is clearly a misinterpretation of Paul's intent here.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, July 25.^{‡§}

22. The scriptural references in this paragraph show clearly that Paul many times supported the essential nature of the Mosaic law or God's commandments.
23. So, what is the wall that Paul wanted to tear down?

[BSG:] The "law" in Ephesians 2:14, 15 is either the ceremonial aspects of the law that divided Jew from Gentile, represented in Paul's complex phrase "the law of commandments expressed in ordinances" (*ESV*), or it is the whole Old Testament system of law as it had come to be interpreted, augmented, and misused as a wedge to distance Jews from Gentiles.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, July 25.^{‡§}

24. Are there differences that are causing barriers between Seventh-day Adventists and other Christian groups? What should we do to try to reduce those barriers?
25. **Just before Jesus comes back, will there be animosity between different Christian denominations or groups when the issue of Sabbath versus Sunday becomes critical?** Reading again:

Ephesians 2:17-18: ¹⁷So Christ came and preached the Good News of peace to all—to you Gentiles, who were far away from God, and to the Jews, who were near to him. ¹⁸**It is through Christ that all of us, Jews and Gentiles, are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of the Father.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

26. If God cannot be successful in creating an environment of long-term peace in heaven and on the new earth, will the great controversy just start all over again?
27. Jesus talked a lot about peace. Such peace is not only the absence of conflict, but also includes the Hebrew concept of *shalom*. This includes the experience of wholeness and well-being, both in our relationship to God and our relationship to others, especially fellow church members. (See Romans 5:1.)

Ephesians 1:2: May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

Ephesians 6:23: May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give to all Christian brothers and sisters peace and love with faith.—*Good News Bible*.^{*} [Remember that the usual greeting in Hebrew is *Shalom* which means *peace*.][‡]

28. Comparison of Ephesians 2:14-16 and Romans 5:1 makes it clear that Christ brought us peace. An example of how Jesus preached peace is found in:

[BSG:] The Gospels contain examples of Jesus as a preacher of peace. In His farewell messages to the disciples, He promises them—and us—“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you” (*John 14:27, NKJV*). And He concludes, “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (*John 16:33, ESV*). After His resurrection, when He appears to the disciples, He repeatedly says to them, “Peace be with you” (*John 20:19, 21, 26, ESV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Wednesday, July 26.^{‡§}

29. Ephesians 2:17-19 make it clear that Christ intends for His peace to be a part of the message of the Christian church for all time. **Love is the most basic Christian teaching.**
30. Why was circumcision such a big deal in Paul’s day in places like Ephesus? The pagans exercised naked in the gymnasium. In fact, the first Olympics were all conducted in the nude! So, circumcision was obvious to all who attended or participated!
31. Are we preachers of peace? Or, do we establish barriers that keep other people out?
32. Paul used several different metaphors to describe the Christian church.

[BSG:] Reviewing Ephesians 2, we recall that verses 1–10 teach that we live in solidarity with Jesus, while verses 11–22 teach that we live in solidarity with others as part of His church. Jesus’ death has both vertical benefits in establishing our relationship with God (*Eph. 2:1–10*) and horizontal ones in cementing our relationships with others (*Eph. 2:11–22*). Through the Cross, Jesus demolishes all that divides Gentile believers from Jewish ones, including the misuse of the Law in order to widen the gulf (*Eph. 2:11–18*). Jesus also builds something—an amazing, new temple

composed of believers. Gentiles, once excluded from worship in the sacred places of the temple, now join Jewish believers in becoming a new temple.... [It is a Christian temple, not a Jewish temple or a pagan temple like the one they celebrated in Ephesus.] We all become part of God's church, "a holy temple in the Lord" (*Eph. 2:19–22, ESV*) and are privileged to live in solidarity with Jesus and our brothers and sisters in Christ.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, July 27.*†§

33. Read Ephesians 2:1-19. In these verses, Paul made it very clear that it is by God's grace that we have been saved through faith. It is not the result of our own efforts; it is God's gift so that no one can boast about it.

34. He concluded by saying (as we read again):

Ephesians 2:19-22: ¹⁹ So then, you Gentiles are not foreigners or strangers any longer; you are now fellow-citizens with God's people and members of the family of God. ²⁰You, too, are built upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus himself. ²¹He is the one who holds the whole building together and makes it grow into a sacred temple dedicated to the Lord. ²²In union with him you too are being built together with all the others into a place where God lives through his Spirit.—*Good News Bible.** [Were the Gentiles anxious to join Jews?][‡]

35. Remember that Paul grew up and was trained as a Pharisee. A Pharisee loved nothing more than to boast of his own righteousness. Imagine how much Paul's thinking had changed! Read 1 Corinthians 3:9-17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; and 1 Peter 2:4-8. These passages make it very clear that Peter and Paul spoke of Jesus Christ as the one and only foundation. In fact, no other foundation can be laid. And Jews and Gentiles alike are building blocks in that Christian temple.

36. **We need to notice that this talk of reconciliation did not apply to accepting pagans and pagan ways into the church!** See 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.

37. ***Can Christians and the Devil agree? Can pagan ideas ever become a part of God's temple?***

38. Paul understood very well what was going on in Ephesus. Just about every evil that one can imagine was carried on in the temple of Artemis/Diana. Any criminal who managed to reach the temple was protected from the law because it was believed that whatever happened in the temple would be approved by the "gods," especially by Artemis.

Paul was talking about a different kind of "temple"; a temple that is growing and is living. See also:

1 Peter 2:4-8: ⁴ Come to the Lord, the living stone rejected by people as worthless but chosen by God as valuable. ⁵**Come as living stones, and let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple, where you will serve as holy priests to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.** ⁶For the scripture [Isaiah 28:16 in Greek] says:

"I chose a valuable stone,
which I am placing as the cornerstone in Zion;
and whoever believes in him will never be disappointed."

⁷This stone is of great value for you that believe; but for those who do not believe:

“The stone which the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all.”

⁸And another scripture [Isaiah 8:14] says:

“This is the stone that will make people stumble, the rock that will make them fall.”

They stumbled because they did not believe in the word; such was God’s will for them.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

39. Notice that Peter did not make any claims to being the *rock* or *stone* on which the church is built. **Paul concluded by stating that whereas once Gentiles were kept out of the inner portion of the court of Israel at the temple in Jerusalem, they were to become building materials for a new temple.** Thus, we notice that the new Christian church is a very different place from the temple of Artemis/Diana and even from Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem! God wants to build a living church, otherwise called a *living temple*. He wants to build a temple of living stones and living sacrifices. (Romans 12:1-2)
40. In Ephesians 1:7-9 and Ephesians 3:7-9, we see that Paul’s vision for a reconciled church was much larger than just Jews and Gentiles. **Paul believed that the day must come when all of God’s faithful people from this earth plus all the beings in the rest of the universe will live together in the kingdom of God.** This might seem difficult for some people to understand. Peter recognized that:
- 1 Peter 1:12:** God revealed to these prophets that their work was not for their own benefit, but for yours, as they spoke about those things which you have now heard from the messengers who announced the Good News by the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. **These are things which even the angels would like to understand.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}
41. ***Is it possible that the reconciliation taking place between peoples on this earth within the Christian church could be an example to teach lessons to the onlooking universe? (See Ephesians 3:9-10.)***
42. Consider some other biblical principles such as ethnic relationships?
43. None of us can make any claims to righteousness except that righteousness which comes by a faith relationship with Jesus Christ. So, we must recognize that we will all be on equal ground in the kingdom to come.
44. **If we cannot resolve our differences now between two races or groups that live in the same country and speak the same language, how will we get along with people in heaven from every race, tribe, nation, language, and era?**
45. Are there simmering differences between different groups in your church or organization?
- [BSG:] In Ephesians 2:1–10, Paul paints an incredibly beautiful and uplifting picture of how God operates in the salvation of an individual person. Being saved means being called by the Messiah, being resurrected with the Messiah, ascending with the Messiah, and being exalted with the Messiah. But this description was usually applied to the Jews who were eagerly waiting for their Messiah-Savior. In the Jewish interpretation, when the

Messiah would come He was expected to save and exalt the Jews and destroy and humiliate the Gentiles. However, Paul takes the exalting language used for describing the salvation of the Jews and applies it . . . to the Gentiles, too!—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 65.‡

46. We have touched on three major themes as quoted from the Bible study guide:

1. Christ Jesus saves [or heals] both the Jews and Gentiles equally, although God first called the Jews to the mission of proclaiming His salvation to the world.
2. The salvation offered to all by the Lord Jesus is universal because He died on the cross thus making provision of salvation for everyone who believes in Him (*John 3:16*), and thus the partitioning wall between the Jews and the Gentiles became irrelevant.
3. Jesus Christ not only destroyed the wall between the Jews and the Gentiles, but He also builds a new reality, a new temple of God, the church, wherein both the Jews and the Gentiles equally and together constitute the church.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 65.‡§

47. As we mentioned briefly earlier:

[BSG:] Some Christians mistakenly understand that, in Ephesians 2:16, Paul envisions peace between the Jews and the Gentiles by abolishing the Mosaic law. Consequently, these Christians see the Old Testament and the law as irrelevant to Christianity. However, this view is not only a misunderstanding of Paul's theology but also a conclusion contrary to what Paul wrote.

Two major observations are crucial to underline here. First, the immediate context of Ephesians 2:16 does indeed point to the idea that the Gentiles who wanted to join God's people were met with a wall that prevented them from doing so. This wall of separation was a tragedy because **God had called Israel through His grace and given them the mission to proclaim His grace to the world.** However, the Israelites confused their call to experience holiness, conferred by grace, with isolationism and elitism. Thus, they failed to deliver on God's mission for them.

Some tend to identify the problem of the enmity described here as generated solely by the Jews to keep the Gentiles from accessing God. The major implication of this view is that the problem would be solved by Jesus' simply abolishing the Jewish law and establishing a new religion. No doubt there was a lot of enmity displayed by the Jews against the Gentiles. However, **the Old Testament also witnesses to the enmity of the peoples of the ancient world manifested against Israel and Judah.**

Paul, however, does not engage here in a project of a traditional international reconciliation of two people groups, based on the identification of common ground, on compromises on both sides, and on the political decision of mutual toleration. Yes, Paul does say that both the Jews and the Gentiles are at fault, but he does not say that the main problem of these two people groups consists simply in their mutual animosity or in the lack of finding a way of cohabitation in the world. In the very context of Ephesians

2:14, Paul tells the Gentile Christians in Ephesus that they had been “dead in . . . sins,” not because of the Jews but because of succumbing to their own sinful nature and to Satan and because they were arrogant and thought they knew better how to save themselves (*Eph. 2:1–3; see also Rom. 1:21–32*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 66.†§

48. So, how did these animosities between Jews and Gentiles get started?

[BSG:] The problem of the Jews, on the other hand, did not consist of the pressure and the attacks suffered at the hands of the Gentiles; God had promised them His protection if they fully trusted Him. Nor did the problem lie in the fact that the promises, the covenants, and the laws and the ordinances of God were given to the Jews and not to the Gentiles. Also, the Jews did not become the enemies of the Gentiles because God instructed them to become so. The problem of the animosity between Jew and Gentile consisted of something else.

Paul insists that the main problem of their mutual animosity was that both groups equally sinned and rebelled against God (*Rom. 3:9–19*). While the Gentile path to salvation was always by works (or so they thought), the Jews received the revelation of God’s salvation by grace. However, by the time of Jesus, the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles was no longer grace (Jews) versus works (Gentiles); rather, now they were quarreling over whose works would attain salvation. While the Gentiles thought their heroic initiative, acts, and lifestyle placed them on the way to the salvation of humanity, the Jews thought that it was they who were on the path to salvation—their salvation—because, by their strict adherence to precept, they fulfilled the law that God had given them (*Rom. 9:31, 32; Rom. 10:3*).

The animosity, then, was superficial and artificial. Underneath the verbiage, both the Jews and the Gentiles were one and the same: sinful rebels against the grace of God (*Rom. 1:21; Rom. 2:4, 5*), **each group claiming they would be saved by their works**. The Jews and the Gentiles were fighting over a religion of works. In essence, the Jewish religion had become Gentile in nature; it was for this reason that Jesus, after a long scolding of the Jews for falling into legalism and misinterpretation of Scripture (*Matthew 23*), had to announce to the leaders that “Your house is left to you desolate” (*Matt. 23:38*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 66-67.†§

49. In this lesson, we have seen that Paul was calling for both Jews and Gentiles to recognize that their original condition was hopeless and that they needed Jesus Christ. Furthermore, they needed to see that each group was saved in the same way and lifted out of their sin by Christianity following Jesus Christ. So, he suggested that once we are reconciled to God, it will be much easier for us to get along with our neighbors. **“Vertical reconciliation”** with God must come before “horizontal reconciliation” with our neighbors.

[BSG:] If God were to reconcile humanity to Himself by abrogating His own law, the blood of Jesus and the cross would not have been necessary. The entire plan of salvation would not have been necessary. Rather, God reconciled both the Jews and the Gentiles to Him by calling them all back

to Him and saving them all through the same Christ and the same Spirit (Eph. 2:16, 18).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 68.†§

50. **What would be the purpose of the plan of salvation if all sinners, disobeying the commandments, would be free to enter heaven without making any changes because God “did away with” His law, the basis of His government of love?**
51. As Christians, have we erected any walls that keep others out of our fellowship? How can we remove those barriers?

[BSG:] Some Christians may note that the partitioning wall between the Jews and the Gentiles was erected by God Himself in the first place, especially when He directed the Israelites to separate themselves from the Gentiles. After all, Jesus Himself presented God as having installed “a fence around” Israel (*Matt. 21:33, NASB*). In addition, God strictly prohibited the Israelites to marry people from other nations (see, e.g., *Deut. 7:1–6*). Even Paul warns against marrying nonbelievers (*2 Cor. 6:14*). The majority of contemporary society seems to project a more inclusivist, nondiscriminatory outlook on religious intermarriage. Considering these observations, how would [you] ... explain Paul’s affirmation that Jesus tore down the wall between the Jews and the Gentiles when the Bible seems clear that it was God who built the wall around Israel?—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 69.†§

Matthew 21:33: “Listen to another parable,” Jesus said. “There was once a landowner who planted a vineyard, **put a fence around it**, dug a hole for the winepress, and built a watchtower. Then he let out the vineyard to tenants and went on a journey.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

Deuteronomy 7:1-6: ¹ “The LORD your God will bring you into the land which you are going to occupy, and he will drive many nations out of it. As you advance, he will drive out seven nations larger and more powerful than you: the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ²**When the LORD your God places these people in your power and you defeat them, you must put them all to death. Do not make an alliance with them or show them any mercy.** ³**Do not marry any of them, and do not let your children marry any of them,** ⁴**because then they would lead your children away from the LORD to worship other gods. If that happens, the LORD will be angry with you and destroy you at once.** ⁵**So then, tear down their altars, break their sacred stone pillars in pieces, cut down the symbols of their goddess Asherah, and burn their idols.** ⁶**Do this because you belong to the LORD your God. From all the peoples on earth he chose you to be his own special people.**”—*Good News Bible*.*†

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