

Jesus our Courtyard Exodus 27:9-15

In light of the recent Jewish massacres in Israel, someone asked, "Which was worse, slavery or the Holocaust?" That's a great question and I think the sermon today, among other things, answers that question.

First: Israel and Foreigners

Israel entered Egypt as approximately 70 people from Abraham's family but, when Israel left Egypt as 2-million people, a "mixed multitude" went with them.

Exodus 12:33-38 - *The Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead."³⁴ So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their cloaks on their shoulders.³⁵ The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing.³⁶ And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.³⁷ And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.³⁸ A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds.*

This "mixed multitude" = *Erev Rav* = "many foreigners" =

Nehemiah 13:1-3 - *On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people. And in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God,² for they did not meet the people of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them—yet our God turned the curse into a blessing.³ As soon as the people heard the law, they separated from Israel all those of foreign descent [erev].*

The mixed multitude probably consisted of Gentiles (there were many nationalities represented among Egypt's slaves) who married Jews, opportunists, Egyptian spies, etc. These are non-Jews.

Their presence created trouble for Israel throughout the wilderness wanderings as in the golden calf incident of Exodus 32:1-4.

Second: The Tabernacle and Gentiles

Picture - Large view Picture of Tabernacle –
<http://www.believersmagazine.com/bm.php?i=20081010>

The Tabernacle was 150 x 75 feet.

The Tabernacle had only one wall, the linen curtain that surrounded the actual Tabernacle and defined holy ground from the rest of the camp. It separated a righteous God from all humanity, Jews, and Gentiles, who were sinners, so it didn't matter if you were a Jew or Gentile proselyte.

We are all equally separated from God, and we are all equally saved only one way.

Numbers 14:13-16 - *Every native Israelite shall do these things in this way, in offering a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. ¹⁴ And if a stranger is sojourning with you, or anyone is living permanently among you, and he wishes to offer a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD, he shall do as you do. ¹⁵ For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before the LORD. ¹⁶ One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you."*

Throughout Israel's history, Gentiles lived amongst and proselytized to Judaism -

- Abraham's own household must have consisted of perhaps 2000 people just to be able to raise an army of 318 men to liberate Lot, Gen 14:14. Indeed, Abraham's chief servant (from Damascus) was clearly a believer and very devout as shown in Gen 24.
- Moses married a Midianite (Ex 2:16-21).
- Caleb, who represented and led the tribe of Judah was a Kennizite (Num 32:12).
- Rahab was a Canaanite (Josh 2:1, 2, Matt 1:5)
- Ruth was Moabite (Ruth 1:4 16, 17, Matt 1:5) – these last two make King David descended from foreigners (Ruth 4:13-16).
- Uriah was a Hittite (2 Sam 11:3)
- King David's elite personal regiment was Gittite, Philistines (1 Chron 18:17)
- The Rechabites were Kenites (Jer 35:1-19)
- Many other foreigners lived in Israel (1 Chron 22:2, 17, 2 Chron 30:25)

- In Esther's time "many of the people of the land became Jews" (Esther 8:17, 9:27)

But the Bible message is clear for everyone -

Acts 4:12 - And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Philippians 2:10-11a - ...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...

But, when Israel built the Temple, that changed.

Third: The Jerusalem Temple

(See notes for more in-depth discussion.)

- 1 – Mosaic Tabernacle in the Wilderness
- 2 – Solomon's Temple – First Temple
- 3 – Zerubbabel's Temple – Second Temple – (after Babylonian captivity)
- 4 – Herod's Temple – (additions to Zerubbabel's Temple) The NT Temple of Jesus

Herod's Temple had 4 different courts separated from one another for different people groups:

Picture of Temple - <https://www.biblestudy.org/biblepic/interior-diagram-of-temple-in-jerusalem.html>

- 1 – Court of the Gentiles – all non-Jews

- a) Discuss
- b) Exchange money
- c) Buy sacrificial animals.

It was from the Court of the Gentiles that Jesus drove out money changers (John 2; Matt 21) and declared, "My house shall be called a house of prayer" (Matt 21:13).

- 2 – Court of Women – for Jewish women

- a) Poor boxes

It was in there that the Jewish widow offered her two mites (Luke 21:1-4).

3 – Court of Men – for Israelites (Jewish men)

4 – Court of Priests –

Non-Jews could enter the court of the Gentiles but were forbidden to go any closer to the actual Temple. Warnings were posted in both Greek and Latin warning foreigners and uncircumcised people not to leave the Court of Gentiles on the threat of death.

These courts existed to emphasize the difference/distance between God and people and to demonstrate the 2nd result of sin, how alienated people are from one another. (The 1st result of sin is alienation from God).

On Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, he was accused of taking the Gentile, Trophimus beyond the Court of the Gentiles

Acts 21:27-30 - *...the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, ²⁸ crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."²⁹ For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. ³⁰ Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. ³¹ And as they were seeking to kill him,*

Throughout the OT, many foreigners became part of Israel but were never fully integrated into Jewish culture or religion.

Fourth: Jesus as The Ultimate Temple

Remember that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Tabernacle.

John 1:14 – *And the Word became flesh and dwelt [eskenosen/tabernacled] among us...*

And, when we get to the New Jerusalem/Heaven, there won't be a physical Temple because Jesus will be the Temple.

Revelation 21:22 - *And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.*

So, what about Jews and Gentiles, what about divisions in Jesus? Are we still separated?

Teaching - **Ephesians 2:11-22** - *Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to 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 is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

Ephesians 3:1-11 - *For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—² assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you,³ how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.⁶ This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.⁷ Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things,¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Solomon's temple was 30 cubits high ([1 Kings 6:2](#)), but, according to Josephus (a first century historian), Herod had increased the height to 40 cubits. This means the veil, which was the thickness of a person's hand, was at least 60 feet high.

Matthew 27:50-51 - *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.
⁵¹ And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.*

Paul's teaching in Ephesians 2 & 3 means that when the veil separating people from God was torn in the Temple, it was not just torn for Jews but Gentiles alike; for all people.

Application - **Ephesians 4:1-6** - *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

Fifth: The Question and its Biblical Application

1 - In light of the recent Jewish massacres, someone asked, "*Which was the bigger event in history, slavery or the Holocaust?*" That's a great question and I hope the sermon today answers it.

The question segregates the victims of each atrocity as African Americans and Jews of many nationalities.

But the Bible teaches us that we are all one race, children of Adam and that Jesus has died to unite people to one allegiance – for Christ and his kingdom.

So, rather than try to answer a question framed in a nonbiblical worldview, I reframed the question in biblical terms -

"They were both demonstrations of our fallen nature. Grace makes us all the same. Our fallenness makes us think there's a difference between us. We treat people incorrectly because we think we are better than them. We are not. We are all sinners in need of a savior."

Rather than focus on our victimhood, the Bible calls us to focus on Christ, who is the Savior of sinners, who are Hebrew, Palestinian, Black, White, Democrat or Republican, etc.

Creation is a history of violence: Lucifer in Heaven, Adam toward Eve, Cain killing Abel. It is all the result of sin, and we are all united in our sin as sinners, separated from God.

By our nature, humans are dividers. I could say this is Adamic, but since it originated with Lucifer dividing himself and 1/3 of the angelic host from God, I can also say it is satanic. From the silliness of sports teams to the seriousness of discrimination, it is our inherent tendency to divide people into groups and take sides.

Jesus is the great Uniter of all people because he created all people from two people, Adam, and Eve and then redeems all kinds of people to himself.

For instance, in John's frame of reference, John 3:16s, "*For God so loved the world..*" he doesn't mean every single person on the earth. He means every kind of people – not all people without exception, but all people without distinction. That's his emphasis and it was revolting and revolutionary to his audience. (But even that falls short of its whole intent, which is to emphasize, the greatness of God's love and not the ruin of the world).

As such, the Bible speaks to, and solves a critical issue of the day concerning oppressors and the oppressed, colonialists and the colonized.

We are all oppressed by sin, a far greater oppression than any inflicted by humans. We are all trespassers on God's planet and have ruined it beyond comparison.

Romans 5:10-11 - For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

So this is our message to Jews and Palestinians, Browns, Blacks, Whites, Straight people, Gay people, Democrats, Republicans, BLM, LBGTQ?, Baptists, Catholics – whatever false division you assume to separate yourself from the mass of other sinners so that you can think you are different than or better than others. Our message is the same for all people because, biblically speaking, all people are the same. We are all outside the wall.

Thank God, that Jesus came outside the wall for us –

Hebrews 13:12-14 - So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³ Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. ¹⁴ For here we have no lasting city [citizenship, allegiances], but we seek the city that is to come.

As a result.....

2 Corinthians 5:16-20 – *From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh [false divisions]. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

2 – By creation and redemption, Christ lays claim to your allegiance and fidelity above and beyond any earthly claim. You are a Christian, not a sub-category of Christian.

This means you are not an American Christian but a Christian American. Palestinian Christians are Christian Palestinians. Jewish Christians are Christian Jews. African Christians are Christian Africans. European Christians are Christian Europeans. In Jesus we become a new person and a new people. Our national allegiances are secondary to Christ's Lordship. Christ and his culture, Christ and his country become our highest allegiance and priority. "What courtyard are you in?" There are no courtyards, i.e., no divisions, in Christianity. Jesus is my courtyard!

Christ claims exclusivity as Lord of your life and Christians are primarily defined by their Christianity.

Conclusion/Bottom Line:

1 – **Church** - May God save us from ourselves and the world, i.e., from thinking without the Bible and believing the world's lie about how to think about life.

2 – **Unbeliever** - There is no dividing wall in Heaven. There is only one courtyard, Jesus himself, and everyone who repents of self and trusts in Jesus is on the inside.

Community Groups

- 1 – Read the text
- 2 – Why did God tell Israel to build the Tabernacle?
- 3 – What have you most enjoyed about the Tabernacle?
- 4 – In what way do you most see Jesus in the Tabernacle?
- 5 – Explain what "mixed multitude" means in Exodus 12:33-38.

- 6 – How did the mixed multitude harm Israel in the wilderness?
- 7 – What does the linen curtain around the Tabernacle teach us?
- 8 – Name the various Temples in Jerusalem?
- 9 – Describe the four courts in the Jerusalem Temple
- 10 – Why did these courts exist?
- 11 – According to John 1:14 & Rev 21:22, how is Jesus the ultimate Temple?
- 12 – Detail what Jesus has done in Eph 2:11-22.
- 13 – According to Eph 3:1-11, what was the mystery that Paul revealed?
- 13 – In Eph 4:1-6, how does Paul encourage us to apply Eph 2:1-12 & 3:11-11?
- 14 – How do any other designations about differences between humans fall short of the Gospel?
- 15 – How does seeing all humanity as one people, race, etc., provide a cure for our fallenness?
- 16 – What is the message of reconciliation according to 2 Cor 5:16-20?

Daily Devotion

Mon, Oct 23rd. Read Ex 27:9-15 & James 4:1-2a. What was the purpose of the linen curtain around the Tabernacle? What Bible texts might you point to in order to prove all humans are sinners? Take time today to think about how the Fall, i.e., our sinfulness explains what is happening in Ukraine and Israel? If you haven't already, take time this week to memorize Ro 3:10 & 23.

Tues, Oct 24th. Read Ex 27:9-15 & Acts 21:27-30. Can you recount the four courts in the Temple? What was the purpose of these courts? Why were people so angry at Paul? Why is it unbiblical to define humans differently from one another? What do such divisions lead to? How is the human race divided? (Only from God but altogether in that division). Think about that biblical worldview. Contemplate it until it becomes your own and you can easily recall it to mind when people try to elevate one people group above or different from another? How would you counter that unbiblical view of humanity? Rehearse the concepts, words you would use.

Wed, Oct 25th. Read Ex 27:9-15, Jn 1:14 & Rev 21:22. Mentally work your way from the linen curtain into the Holy of Holies and recount how many ways you see Jesus in the Tabernacle. How does Jn 1:14 view Jesus? What does this mean to you...your security, your joy, your confidence in God's overarching, progressive, undefeatable plan for salvation? How might it speak to any difficulty you are presently enduring? If someone today speaks to you about a challenge in life, use the Tabernacle and Jesus's incarnation to encourage them to have patience with God's plan for their life. And preach that to yourself also.

Thur, Oct 26th. Read Ex 27:9-15; Eph 2:11-22, 3:1-11 & 4:1-6. What do these passages say about humanity? What do they say about God's plan? What was the mystery Paul was revealing? What has Jesus done about our differences through the cross? List the ways Eph 4 challenges you to live in love toward every Christian, regardless of human distinction? If someone discusses the Israel/Hamas war with you, let your conversation center on the Gospel of sinners and Jesus.

Fri, Oct 27th. Read Ex 27:9-15 & 2 Cor 5:16-20. We are all the same and in the same predicament, on the outside of the curtain/wall. This message of reconciliation between God and all people is the challenge in Eph 4:20. The Israeli/Hamas war is a darkness waiting for that Gospel light. If someone discusses the war with you, interject the Gospel and all you have learned this week into the conversation.

Notes

1 - How many Temples were there and what were they like?

First there was the tabernacle, designed by God and built under the leadership of Moses.

At least four times in the Old Testament it says that the tabernacle was build "according to the pattern" that God gave to Moses.

Example: [Exodus 25:9](#)

*According to all that I show you, that is, the **pattern** of the tabernacle and the **pattern** of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.*

This idea is repeated twice again in the New Testament ([Acts 7:44](#), [Hebrews 8:5](#)) – again, that God gave Moses the pattern for building the tabernacle.

The tabernacle was the "temple" (so to speak) for Israel for about 500 years – from the time of Moses to the time of Solomon.

In the reign of King David, he decided to build God a temple – a permanent building instead of the tent (though it was a pretty nice tent – costing, in modern terms, up to \$13 million USD for the materials).

God said "no" to David desire to build a temple; David was a man of war, and God wanted a man of peace to build His temple. That man of peace was Solomon, David's

son – and in the reign of **Solomon, a magnificent temple was built** – what is called “Solomon’s Temple” or “The First Temple.”

However, it’s easy to forget that though Solomon actually built the temple, David did much of the preparation work. In [1 Chronicles 29:2](#) David said, *Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might.* Then, [1 Chronicles 29](#) goes on to describe all that David prepared for the temple – what he himself gave, and what the people gave for the building work. In many ways, Solomon simply assembled the temple that David prepared.

Solomon’s temple stood for about 410 years, until the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. There was no temple for about 70 years, then came what we call the second temple.

The second temple was built about 516 bc, under the leadership of Ezra and Zerubbabel after the Babylonian exile. They didn’t have the resources that Solomon had, so it was a much humbler building. However, that temple stood longer than Solomon’s – a total of 585 years. And, in the last 100 years of the second temple, a wealthy visionary named Herod the Great made huge improvements to the temple – so much so, that the second temple is sometimes called “Herod’s Temple,” even though it stood for more than 450 years before Herod did anything to it.

This is the temple that stood in the days of Jesus and the apostles – the temple that Jesus visited and taught in its courts. Everything in the New Testament that happened at the temple or the temple courts happened there.

After standing for 585 years, the second temple was destroyed by the Romans, under the command of Titus – this happened in ad 70.

<https://enduringword.com/how-many-temples-were-built-in-jerusalem-qa-with-david-guzik/>

2 - What Did the Temple Look Like in Jesus’s Time –

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/what-did-the-temple-look-like-in-jesus-time/>