

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 27 July: 10:30 AM.

Malcolm speaking

Sunday 03 August: 10:30 AM.

Malcolm speaking

Sunday 10 August: 10:30 AM.

Malcolm speaking

Sunday 17 August: 10:30 AM.

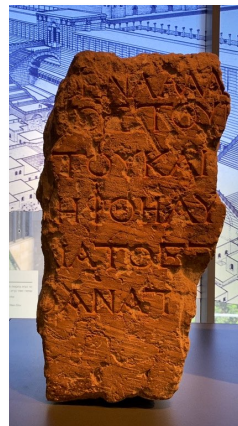
Osagie speaking

Sunday 24 August: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 31 August: 10:30 AM. Church service

Monday 1st September: Mentoring training

3-5 October: Young Professionals' retreat



It was one of many similar signs set into the partition around the Temple, which divided the area into two sections: one for all and one for the sanctified area, accessible only to Jews.

A first-century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, wrote about this practice in his 'Jewish War, V, v, 2':

"In this (balustrade) at regular intervals stood slabs giving warning, some in Greek, others in Latin characters, of the law of purification, to wit that no foreigner was permitted to enter the holy place."

Cross the line and you could be executed! This prohibition lies behind the events recorded in Acts 21.27-29:

"When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting, 'Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place.'"

We could reflect on the fact that the Scriptures accurately record the customs of their time. The Bible is a trustworthy historical record.

We might also consider how fortunate we are to be a new covenant people, for whom no barriers exist in accessing God. Jesus opened the way to everyone.

"Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called 'uncircumcised' by those

Dr Rolan Monje

I am delighted that my friend Rolan Monje is with us today. He is an author, minister, teacher and Hebrew expert.

You can visit his website at rolanmonje.com and his blogs on Facebook - @rolanmonjebooks and Instagram @rolanmonje.



Malcolm

Answers to last week's quiz

This fragmentary sign displayed in the Jerusalem Temple bears a warning, the full text reads,

"No foreigner shall enter within the forecourt and the balustrade around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his subsequent death."

Charity number : 1207942

The Three Counties Churches of Christ

who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.”

(Ephesians 2:11-18)

Reflection

Why not spend some time meditating on the passage above? Here are some questions you could pray through.

1. What was the status of Gentiles "formerly" according to verses 11–12? How does Paul describe their relationship to God, Israel, and the covenants?
2. What does Paul mean by the “dividing wall of hostility” in verse 14? How might this refer both to physical structures and spiritual or social realities?
3. According to verse 15, how did Jesus create "one new humanity"? What does this phrase suggest about Christian identity?
4. Have you ever felt like an outsider — spiritually, socially, or culturally? How does this passage speak to those feelings?
5. Are there any “walls of hostility” in your heart that Christ wants to break down? Between you and another person? A group of people?

Charity number : 1207942

6. How do you experience peace through Christ in your daily life? Is it more internal (peace with God) or relational (peace with others)?

7. In what ways do you need to be reminded that you have been “brought near by the blood of Christ” (v.13)? How might this change the way you approach prayer, worship, or relationships?

8. What would a “new humanity” look like in our church? What barriers (cultural, generational, racial, theological) might Christ want to remove?

9. How well does our church reflect the unity that Paul describes here? What could be done to make it more inclusive or peace-filled?

10. How can the message of reconciliation in this passage shape how we engage with a divided world?

Your brother, Malcolm

Watford Contribution Details

Church bank account: Three Counties churches of Christ HSBC

Sort Code: 401915

Account Number: 04759613

Watford Media

