

It is important to us to not only "Think Jewish," but include with that "Think Tabernacle," because of its primary place in the revelation of God. Sadly, Tabernacle study is neglected today.

## Are Gentile Believers Fellow Citizens With or Of?

By Roger W. Walkwitz

**I**N a previous article entitled *The Middle Wall of Partition*, it was clearly shown that the "Middle Wall" was the inner veil in the Temple, which יהוה<sup>1</sup> tore from top to bottom the instant Yeshua dismissed His Spirit. By so doing, He made both places into one place, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, and urges the true Believer in Yeshua to come boldly into His presence at the mercy seat, previously reserved for the high priest only on Yom Kippur.

This partition, or inner veil, kept the wrath of יהוה contained, lest it burst out against mankind (symbolic, of course.) Once sin (nature, root) and all sins (deeds, fruit) had been paid for by the shed blood of Yeshua, propitiating (completely satisfying) the wrath of יהוה, יהוה demonstrated that His justice was satisfied by tearing the inner veil, opening the way into the symbolized, yet real, Presence of יהוה. This is the essence of Ephesians 2:14ff.

Ephesians 2:11-3:6 is written to Gentile Believers so that they and Jewish Believers will recognize, among other things, that they are now fellow citizens, but of what country? All English translations of Ephesians 2:19 that I am familiar with give "fellow citizens with the saints." Something is wrong here...what country is being referred to? Citizenship relates to sovereign territory!

Ephesians 2:19 also says, "and of the household of God." What is the difference between being "fellow citizens with the saints" and "of the household of God"? Is this not saying the same thing twice? A gem is hidden here! Let's dig it out.

The word translated "saints" is *hagion*. It is a genitive plural adjective used as a noun. If it is in the masculine or feminine form, it is "holy persons" or saints. If it is in the neuter form, it is "holy places or things." The Greek genitive plural has identical endings for masculine, feminine, and neuter adjectives, so we can take our choice! The published versions

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew letters for the Tetragrammaton, the 4-letter covenant name for God, (YHWH).

have all chosen "with the saints," assuming the word is masculine or feminine. Let us choose the neuter, "of the holy places," for three good reasons.

First, genitive means "possessive," indicating of (belonging to), not with. The passage should read, **fellow citizens of the holy places**, the two places made into one by the tearing of the veil (middle wall) in the Temple, which followed the pattern of The Tabernacle! Jewish Believers and Gentile Believers are fellow citizens of The Tabernacle, a real place in heaven! (Hebrews 8:5 & 9:11, 24 etc.)

A second reason is the context from Ephesians 2:14-18, where both places in verse 14 is the only legitimate translation of the neuter both: "For He Himself is our peace, the One having made **both** places one, having broken the middle wall of the enclosure. He rendered inactive the alienation by His flesh, the law of the commandments in decrees, making peace in order that He might by Himself create two into one new quality man, reconciling **both** (Jew & Gentile) to God in one body through the cross. Having come and having slain the alienation by Himself, He brought good news, peace to you the ones afar and peace to the ones near, because through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father."

It is important to recognize that the basis of reconciliation is the blood of Yeshua and the proof of reconciliation is the torn veil, the middle wall inside the Temple building, or Tabernacle tent.

A third reason is the redundancy in Ephesians 2:19 if "saints" is used, covering up additional Truth that citizenship implies **territory**.

To be as accurate as possible, let's try 2:19 as, "Therefore then, you (Gentile Believers in Yeshua) are no more strangers and sojourners (aliens without hope or God, 2:11-12), BUT (Greek *alla*, a strong contrast) you are fellow citizens of the holy places (residence of יהוה, the Capitol of the territory, The Tabernacle in heaven) and **kinfolk** of The God (not just any god of the Gentiles).

Why "kinfolk"? The Greek has only one word, *oikeioi*, which means "members of the household or family" of the God. It seemed simpler to give a one word translation, so "kin-

folk" fits the bill nicely, eliminating "members of the..." However, if kinfolk seems too colloquial, then try, "Therefore then, you are no more strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens of the holy places and members of the family of God." The important point is to be sure that any translation makes it clear that our change in citizenship gives us the right to be in The Tabernacle in heaven at all times! This adds to the encouragement from Hebrews 10:19-22 to come with boldness of speech and proper reverence to the King of the Universe Who is also our heavenly Father. The intimacy that יהוה grants to us is fantastic, for Jew and Gentile, One in Messiah, One in Yeshua, One in the Good Olive Tree!

Having lived for 32 years as an alien in the Philippines helps me appreciate the benefits of citizenship. The Philippines is friendly to Americans, but other countries might make an alien feel vulnerable, trapped, "without hope." How wonderful of our יהוה to make it very clear that Believers in Yeshua, both Jew and Gentile, are fellow citizens of the actual, real Tabernacle in heaven, from which יהוה rules the universe. As many prayers begin, "Blessed are You, יהוה our God, King of the Universe..."

we joyfully accept our place as citizens of this Kingdom, with all its rights, privileges, and responsibilities! This is the gift of יהוה, not by works or heritage of any kind, so that no one can boast, but given by His grace, through our trust. Halleluyah!

We should be using our citizenship to the full! We should be constantly at the mercy seat, "praying without ceasing," receiving strength for the "orders for the day"! These orders include going back into a hostile world now as aliens, with the Good News that has changed our citizenship from this world's system to God's Kingdom.

Live it and explain it to all who will listen...both to the Jew first and also to the Gentile! MAKE DISCIPLES wherever you are and wherever you go! Remember, we have a "diplomatic passport" as Ambassadors of יהוה! And daily, feed on the Word, study the Word that you might be approved by יהוה, having faithfully and accurately represented Him.

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