

# The HOSTILITY They Could Not Shake

*... until they forgot*

“For he himself is our peace, **who has made us both one** and has **broken down in his flesh the DIVIDING WALL OF HOSTILITY**, 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**”  
(Ephesians 2:14-15).



The two houses of Israel fought against each other and built a **wall of hostility** that could not be broken, until—the house of Israel forgot their roots and the house of Judah forgot their brothers.

The break in the kingdom of Israel occurred two years into the reign of King Rehoboam. It was a matter of taxes that had become a heavy burden for the people, during the reign of King Solomon and the people were pleading for relief; they were asking for grace. The law enforcing royal family of Judah was unyielding and cruel threatening a heavier burden, one that stung like a scorpion. Jeroboam who was from the tribe of Ephraim led the rebellion and the kingdom split and has remained two separate houses to this day. The law-enforcing royal house of Judah and the grace-embracing house of Israel fought against each other, off and on, for hundreds of years, building a reinforced wall of hostility that became a salvation-blocking obstacle for both houses.

**THE HOUSE OF JUDAH:** After their captivity, the Jews repented and a few returned to their land to build the second temple and re-establish themselves. **The house of Judah was given the responsibility of preserving the oracles of God.** Diligently, they kept the scrolls. Tediously and carefully, they replicated the original writings, giving copies to their teachers and storing some for safe-keeping. The practising laws became the life blood for the Jews. **Salvation, they**

**believed came from their works, keeping their laws, circumcision—physical rituals and fasting.** By the time Christ walked among them, they had grown proud, as their elders had added more and more rules of their own—enforceable traditions that surpassed the Laws of God. These ‘traditions of men’ became burdens for the people, but for the religious leaders **these rituals became a public spectacle that elevated and glorified them before the people.** Soon, **these traditions took pre-eminence and turned the people away from the simplicity of the Law of God and they became unfaithful before God, as they serve themselves over serving God.** Their brothers in the ten tribes were out – forever; they determined. But, that was never God’s plan.

The hostility the Jews had towards their brothers intensified when it became known to them that Jesus came only to the lost sheep of Israel. The Jews would not accept their brothers return to the covenant family. So, they built the ‘middle wall of separation’ in the temple court to keep the converted Gentiles separated from them, for they had long ago added **the law that forbade Jews from associating with Gentiles,** including their brothers from the ten tribes. The wall of hostility by the Jews, prevented the converted Gentiles from learning and keeping the Law of God properly, for the Jews had added laws upon laws, rules upon rules, insisting **that ALL of their traditions were enforceable. The Jews caused the converted Gentiles to blaspheme against God** by confusing and keeping them from obeying the Law of God properly. They had **added to the Law of God creating road blocks in bringing the two houses together—back as ONE kingdom under ONE God. An important task for Christ was to remove the hostility between the two houses by making obsolete the added traditions of the elders and restoring the order of the Law of God.**

**THE JEWS WERE ENTRUSTED WITH THE WORD OF GOD:** “What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? **Much in every way!** First of all, they have been **entrusted with the very words of God**” (Romans 3:1).

**AS EXPERTS ON LAW, THE JEWS SOUGHT TO OBTAIN SALVATION BY WORKS—SOMETHING THEY CONTROLLED:** “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, **it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast**” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

**THE JEWISH PRIESTS ADDED LAWS UPON LAWS, RULES UPON RULES:** “Jesus replied, ‘And **why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?**’” (Matthew 15:3).

“‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. **They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men**’” (Matthew 5:8-9, Isaiah 29:13).

“‘**You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.**’” And he said to them, ‘You have a fine way of **rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!**’” (Mark 7:8-9).

**THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS BECAME A EXCEEDINGLY SELF-RIGHTEOUS AND SELF-GLORIFYING:** “‘Be careful,’ Jesus said to them. ‘**Be on guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees**’” (Matthew 16:6).

**THE HOUSE OF JUDAH BECAME UNFAITHFUL TO GOD:** “In spite of all this, her **unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but ONLY IN PRETENSE,**’ declares the LORD” (Jeremiah 3:10).

“I gave **faithless Israel** her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her **unfaithful sister Judah** had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery” (Jeremiah 3:8).

The house of Israel craved the ways of the Gentile nations. They loved self-determination, self-elevation, and self-glorification. They rebelled against God, until He divorced them and deemed them faithless. The house of Judah however, over time, took a different path but to the same destination. They professed to keep the Law of God, but they added many ‘traditions’ that brought worship of themselves and self-determination, self-elevation, and eventually self-glorification—so, God deemed them unfaithful.

Self-righteousness is worse than unrighteousness.

“Then the LORD said to me, ‘Even faithless Israel is less guilty than treacherous Judah!’” (Jeremiah 3:11).

**AMONG THE ADDED LAWS, THE JEWS FORBADE ASSOCIATION WITH THE GENTILES:** “And he said to them, ‘You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean’” (Acts 10:28).

**PAUL UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ADDED TRADITIONS WERE DISPUTABLE MATTERS, BUT THE LAW OF GOD IS UNDISPUTABLE:** “So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good” (Romans 7:12) and “For in my inner being I delight in God's Law” (Romans 7:22).

“Accept him whose faith is weak, **without passing judgement on disputable matters**” (Romans 14:1).

Romans 14 was a response to disputes over eating meats offered to idols or being a vegetarian, which days to fast, and whether foods offered to idols were considered clean or unclean.

- **Meats offered to idols** was acceptable to eat, but judgement on those who refuse to eat meat offered to idols was condemned.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary explains it this way: ‘In 1 Cor. 8 the problem of the strong versus the weak brother, as regards diet, is also dealt with. The letter to the Corinthians was written less than a year before that to the Romans. It seems reasonable to conclude that in 1 Cor. 8 and Rom. 14 Paul is dealing with essentially the same problem. In Corinthians the problem is identified as the propriety of eating foods sacrificed to idols. **According to the ancient practice pagan priests carried on an extensive merchandise of the animal sacrifices offered to idols.** Paul told the Corinthian believers ... that inasmuch as an idol was nothing there was no wrong, per se,

in eating foods dedicated to it. ... Probably for fear of offending in this matter some Christians abstained from flesh foods entirely, which means that their food was restricted to 'herbs,' that is vegetables (see Rom. 14:2) (vol. 6, pp. 634-635)."

<https://lifehopeandtruth.com/bible/biblical-laws/clean-and-unclean-animals/romans-14/>

- **Fasting is not part of the Law of God, rather an added tradition.** Jews traditionally fasted twice a week on the second and fifth day of the week. When their brothers returned to the faith, they chose to fast on the fourth and the preparation day. The days chosen for dedication to God were not matters of the Law of God rather a matter of tradition.
- **Foods offered to idols—clean or unclean:** “Paul then goes on to explain that ‘there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean’ (verse 14). Note that the word translated “unclean” here is not akathartos, the usual word for unclean meats, but rather koinos, a word normally translated “common,” sometimes referring to that which had died of itself and had not been ritually slaughtered and bled. The context here is not of foods defined as common in the Bible, but of those foods judged to be common by the conscience of the individual Christian. ‘To him who considers anything to be unclean [koinos], to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food [broma, the general word for food, not the word for meat] the one for whom Christ died’ (verses 14-15)”. <https://lifehopeandtruth.com/bible/biblical-laws/clean-and-unclean-animals/romans-14/>

These are only a few of the traditions that brought confusion and constant division between the Jews and the converted Gentiles. Paul urged the people to “make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food” (Romans 14:19).

**THE JEWS CAUSED THEIR BROTHERS TO BLASPHEME AGAINST GOD:** “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (Romans 2:24).

The Jews through their pride in keeping laws, wandered off the narrow path of righteousness onto the broad self-determining, self-elevating, self-glorifying rocky road of death by adding laws that superseded the Law of God, taking them and the Gentiles who were looking to them for guidance away from God.

**CHRIST CAME TO RE-TEACH THE LAW OF GOD AND MAKE THE ADDED**

**ORDINANCES/TRADITIONS OF MEN OBSOLETE:** “The word ‘ordinances’ in these passages [Ephesians 2:15 and Colossians 2:14] **does not refer to God's laws.** It is translated from the Greek word *dogma* and refers generally to opinions, judgments, and decrees. Such ordinances could be public decrees by government officials or religious decrees by religious officials.”

<http://www.cgg.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Library.sr/CT/BQA/k/157/What-Are-Ordinances-Colossians-214-Ephesians-215.htm>

**"Don't ever think that I came to set aside Moses' Teachings or the Prophets.** I didn't come to set them aside but to make them come true” (Matthew 5:17).

“For I tell you truly, until heaven and earth pass away, **not a single jot, not a stroke of a pen, will disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.** So then, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do likewise will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but **whoever practices and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven**” (Matthew 5:18-19).

#### **SO, EPHESIAN 2:14-15 MORE ACCURATELY READS:**

“For he himself is our peace, **who has made us both one** [both houses: Judah and Israel] and has **broken down in his flesh** [Christ died and ended the old marriage covenant freeing the divorced house of Israel and allowing her to marry again—she is no longer an adulteress but a virgin] the **dividing wall of hostility** [the hostility between the Jews and the 10 tribes—divorced house of Israel known as Gentiles], by **abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances** [by abolishing the opinions, judgments and decrees that are not of God but of the Jewish elders], that he might create in himself **one new man** [through Christ, ONE new people – a covenant people **again** but this time filled with God’s Holy Spirit, living by the Law of God not by the decrees and traditions of men, whether from Jewish leaders or pagan gods] **in place of the two** [house of Judah and house of Israel], **so making peace**” (Ephesians 2:14-15).

How wonderful that will be when that time is fully realized.

**TO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY JEWS AND CHRISTIANS:** We live today in Hosea’s 3:4 “many days” without King or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idols. The many issues Paul addressed in his time have, today, become misunderstood. We have lived away from Judea for hundreds of years. Distance and time has kept us from remembering and understanding the roots of our past conflicts.

Today, the hostility between the two houses is gone because the house of Israel has forgotten her roots and the house of Judah has forgotten their brothers—like a chronic state of amnesia. Those who do remember, see a strong alliance between the two houses.

As prophesied, the house of Israel and the house of Judah will **overcome their hostility, repent and return to God**—this time in true sincerity. The house of Judah will accept Christ as their Savior. God will give Judah grace as He has given to repentant Israel. He will re-unite the two houses and they will bind together as one becoming a strong, unified kingdom—**towards the end of Jacob’s trouble.**

**THEY WILL OVERCOME THEIR HOSTILITY:** “Ephraim's jealousy will vanish, and Judah's enemies will be destroyed; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim” (Isaiah 11:13).

**THEY WILL REPENT AND RETURN TO GOD—TOGETHER:** "In those days and at that time," declares the LORD, "the **sons of Israel** will come, **both** they and the **sons of Judah** as well; they will go along weeping as they go, and it will be the LORD their God they will seek” (Jeremiah 50:4).

**THE HOUSE OF JUDAH WILL ACCEPT CHRIST, AS THEIR SAVIOR:** “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. **They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son**” (Zechariah 12:10).

**THE RE-UNITED KINGDOM OF ISRAEL WILL BECOME STRONG IN THE HAND OF OUR SAVIOR:** “I will bend Judah as I bend my bow and fill it with Ephraim. I will rouse your sons, Zion, against your sons, Greece, and **make you like a warrior's sword [a sword of truth]**” (Zechariah 9:13).

“The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore, I have drawn you with loving kindness. **I will build you up again [house of Judah], and you, Virgin Israel [house of Israel], will be rebuilt**” (Jeremiah 31:3-4).

The house of Judah will be built up again (never divorced – needed to be strengthened and corrected) and the house of Israel will be rebuilt (having been divorced – needed to start from the foundation).

God’s plan to bring the two houses of Israel together in a truly unified relationship will come into fruition—soon. The amnesia will be lifted and the descendants of Jacob will feel great shame for their sins against their Creator. The world will see their wickedness and witness their transformation. All of Israel will be saved and they will become a light to the world, properly obeying the Law of God with no one adding or taking away from God’s eternal Law of Love.

To the nations of the world, don’t wait for the national houses of Judah or Israel to repent. The price has been paid, the veil has been rent, repent now—keep the Law of God and love Him with all your heart, mind, and soul—He is **your** Creator.

*Compiled by Janette Andrejowich*