

214 Walls, good and bad

“We’ll build a wall!” cried Donald Trump during his campaigning for the US Presidency, a 2,000-mile wall between the USA and Mexico to keep out illegal immigrants. Should this wall ever happen, that is an awful lot of wall costing an awful lot of money – Mexican money as far as Mr Trump is concerned. We shall have to wait and see.

Walls mark out the presence of perceived difference between one side and the other. These walls may be physical and visible – the Great Wall of China, the Berlin Wall, or prison walls; or, just as real, “social” walls – such as over wealth, class, caste, race, gender, age, nationality or language; or, again just as real, spiritual and moral walls – as between different world Faiths and beliefs, or between notions of Right and Wrong, Good and Bad, Truth and Falsehood.

How people regard a wall often depends on which side of it they live! For some it is great, for others it is terrible, so there will always be a debate between pro-wallers and anti-wallers, whatever the issue may be.

We find all sorts of wall within God’s Word, each one included for our guidance and blessing. At creation there was no wall in the relationship between Almighty God the Creator on the one hand, and Adam and Eve and the rest of creation on the other – there being full and open fellowship just as the Lord God intended. But that openness between the divine and the human was a far cry from “same-ness” between them. Hence there existed that invisible wall around those two trees in the centre of the Garden, which was a quiet reminder as to “Who is Who” (Genesis 2.16 / 3.2-6, and 22). But our first parents (no wall between them and us! – I Corinthians 15.20-23) broke that wall down in disobedience,

thereby immediately forming the massive wall between Creator and creation which remains today at the heart of human existence (Genesis Chapter 3). There followed Adam's expulsion from Eden, with the way back in being guarded by a "cherubim-wall" (3.22-24).

There followed the Flood – the terrible expression of the wall that God has placed between righteousness and wickedness (Genesis 6-8). Then in His mercy God reached across the walls between Him and us as He called Abram and gradually formed His covenant people Israel. He led them out from the prison walls of Egypt, forming two walls of water with a dry path between them through the Red Sea (Exodus 14.22), and again, later on, through the River Jordan (Joshua Chapter 3). He gave them the Law on Sinai and the tabernacle in the wilderness, showing them, and via them the rest of us also, Who He is, who we are before Him, on what terms we can approach Him, and what He expects of us. He brought the Israelites into the long-promised land, (in which, against huge odds, they now dwell once more – highly significant). Throughout, God was breaking down the walls between Himself and His creation, using His covenant people as "visual-aids" as to what life should be all about, and ever pointing on to the Coming One.

The Coming One has come. On that dreadful day outside Jerusalem Jesus Christ took our place, taking the punishment due to us for our sinfulness, and settling the debt we owe but could never pay ourselves. The veil of the temple is torn away, for the sin-wall is breached, with a pathway opened up through it by the shedding of Christ's own innocent blood on our behalf (Matthew 27.51 / Hebrews 10.18-23 ... / Romans Chapter 5). Any who so wish may now pass through the sin-wall, back, as it were, into Eden, by simple faith in Christ (eg., Romans 10.9 / John 3.16 / Matthew 11.28-30 and 18.1-4). Oh praise Him!

The members of Christ's Church find that old walls of division are broken down (eg., Ephesians 2 / Galatians 3.22-29), as they follow together the Christ-pathway through life (Matthew 7.13-14 / and as in Isaiah 30.21 and 35.8).

And for all those "in Christ" by faith and belief, the best is yet to be, as the Book of Revelation makes wonderfully plain. The new Jerusalem will have great walls but open gates that will never shut, that all whose names are in the Lamb's book of life may enter in (Revelation 21, including vv 22-27).

For now we can lift a simple prayer - "Lord please enable us to honour those God-approved walls You have given for our blessing, and to knock down those God-disapproved walls that are thwarting Your will. For Jesus' sake. Amen".

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