

“We Are Family!”

1. Intro:

1.1. Other men see only a hopeless end, but the Christian rejoices in an endless hope.¹

2. HELPLESS, HOMELESS, HOPELESS! (11-13)

2.1. **ONCE HELPLESS!** (11,12a)

2.2. Gentiles were scorned by the Jews & called them *Uncircumcised*.

2.2.1. They were stating with pride here's what **you're not**, & here's what **we are against**.

2.2.2. It's what we Christians do when we say we're *against Homosexuals*, rather than saying we are *for marriage!*

2.2.2.1. We are **for union between a man & woman**.

2.3. **ONCE HOMELESS!** (12b)

2.4. **Aliens & strangers** – from separation to reconciliation.

2.5. **ONCE HOPELESS!** (12c)

2.6. **Having no hope** – Writers **H.G. Wells** and **George Bernard Shaw** were brilliant men, yet they rejected the message of Scripture. **They placed their trust in their own systems of belief, which were based on human reason.** Yet they could not find **lasting inner peace**, and they slowly lost confidence in what they believed. Wells' final literary work, for example, has been aptly called "*a scream of despair*." **And** shortly before Shaw died in 1950, he wrote, "**The science to which I pinned my faith is bankrupt. Its counsels, which should have established the millennium, have led directly to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once. In their name I helped to destroy the faith of millions. And now they look at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost his faith.**"

2.7. **First**, they were **w/o Christ**, not only personally (true also of many Jews) **but also** they had **no national hope** of the Messiah.

2.8. **Second**, they were **excluded from citizenship** in Israel. Though some Gentiles were admitted into Judaism as proselytes, Gentiles as a whole were excluded; thus alienated.

2.9. **Third**, as **foreigners to the covenants** of the promise, they were **deprived** of direct participation in God's covenants, and thus had no hope of future glory and blessing as Israel did.

2.10. **Fourth**, the Gentiles were **w/o hope**. Unlike Israel they had no expectation of a personal Messiah-Deliverer and the Messianic Age.

2.11. **Fifth**, they were **without God** in the world. The Gentiles were in a desperate situation. They had no meaning, hope, purpose, or direction in life

¹ Gilbert Beenken

- 2.11.1. Gk. *atheos* (atheist) - He described them as such, even though the pagans had many gods.
- 2.12. **NOW ENJOY NEARNESS!** (13)
- 2.13. **Once were far off** – These are the kind of people God **receives** & shows **mercy** to:
- 2.13.1. Those who are **Helpless** - He will **help!**
- 2.13.2. Those who are **Homeless** - He will **house** you!
- 2.13.3. Those who are **Hopeless** - **He is the Hope** of those who have no other confidence!
- 2.14. **Been brought near** – once excluded now included.
- 2.14.1. This is **reconciliation** – *to bring together*.
- 2.14.2. God not only **reconciles** us to **Himself**, but to **each other!**
- 2.14.3. Reconciliation = not a **process**, but an **act** by which we are delivered from *estrangement to fellowship w/God*.
- 2.15. Jesus shed **blood** that sees no color but **red** itself!
- 2.16. Those who were **separated from the covenant** have been **united**;
Those who were **alienated** have been **reconciled**; &
Those who were **far off** have been **brought near**.²
- 2.16.1. *Far off by sin, brought near by blood!*
- 2.17. Spurgeon, "I believe that the doctrine of **Jesus paying for my sins** is one of the surest proofs of **the inspiration of Scripture**, for who would or could have thought of the **just Ruler** dying for the **unjust rebel**?"

3. **1 WALL DOWN, 1 NEW MAN, 1 BODY, 1 SPIRIT! (14-18)**

- 3.1. **ONE WALL DOWN!** (14)
- 3.2. When I 1st visited up-state New York, what really stood out to me was that there was **no walls** or **no fences** between neighbors yards.
- 3.2.1. Though all walls aren't bad! – separation vs. protection.
- 3.3. Christ is that **bridge of Peace!**
- 3.3.1. We...were His **Peace Mission!**
- 3.3.2. He didn't only **make peace** but **He Himself is our Peace!**
- 3.4. **Canada** and the **United States** have long been the best of friends, justly proud of the undefended border between them. **It has not always been so.** During the War of 1812, between the United States and Britain, the Americans crossed the border and destroyed York, modern day Toronto. The British retaliated by burning Washington, D.C. Finally, on December 24, 1814, representatives of the two countries, who had been meeting in Belgium signed the **Treaty of Ghent**, which agreed on the details of an armistice. - **Unfortunately**, the news of the peace was

² Shepherd's Notes; pg.34

delayed, and, on January 8, 1815, unaware of the armistice, the two armies met in **the Battle of New Orleans**. More than 2,000 men lost their lives in a totally unnecessary battle, because they were **ignorant of the peace treaty**.

3.5. **ONE NEW MAN CREATED!** (15)

3.6. He rendered **the Law** abolished/inoperative in believers' lives.

3.6.1. **Jews** sought to keep the Law *with its commandments and regulations*, **Gentiles** were unconcerned about them.

3.6.2. This **difference** was like a **barrier** between them. But now the Law is inoperative, "*Christ is the end of the Law*".

3.6.3. Some translations give the idea that **the Law** was the **enmity**, but that is wrong; **the Law was the cause of the enmity**.

3.7. **One new man** - The word new means **new or fresh in character or quality**, **rather than** new in the sense of *recent in time*.

3.8. **One new man, one new body, one new church!**

3.9. **ONE BODY THROUGH THE CROSS!** (16)

3.10. Officer **Peter O'Hanlon** was patrolling on night duty in northern England some years ago when he heard a **quivering sob**. Turning in the direction that it came from, he saw in the shadows a little boy sitting on a doorstep. With tears rolling down his cheeks, the child whimpered, "I'm lost. **Take me home.**" The policeman began naming street after street, trying to help him remember where he lived. When that failed, he repeated the names of the shops and hotels in the area, but all without success. Then he remembered that in the center of the city was a well-known church with a large white cross towering high above the surrounding landscape. He pointed to it and said, "Do you live anywhere near that?" The boy's face brightened. "Yes, take me to the cross. I can find my way home from there!"

3.11. **ONE SPIRIT WHO GIVES ACCESS!** (17,18)

3.12.

4. 1 NATION, 1 FAMILY, & 1 BUILDING UNDER GOD! (19-22)

4.1. **ONE NATION!** (19a)

4.2. God's new society.

4.3. **ONE FAMILY!** (19b)

4.4. (19) This does not mean that **Gentiles** are incorporated into **Israel**, but that **believing Jews** and **Gentiles** are incorporated into **one new family**.

4.4.1. Now, can you imagine if we could do that with denominations, & with all our "ism's" that separate us?

4.4.2. **Q:** What new walls & barriers have we erected since that 1st century in churchianity?

- 4.5. **ONE BUILDING!** (20-22)
- 4.6. 1 Pet.2:5 "...you also, as **living stones**, are being built up a **spiritual house...**"
- 4.7. (20) Note both the foundation(apostles & prophets) & cornerstone(J.C.).
- 4.8. **Cornerstone** - Christ Jesus Himself is the chief Cornerstone, that is, He is part of the foundation.
- 4.8.1. In ancient building practices "*the chief cornerstone*" was carefully placed. It was crucial because the entire building was **lined up** with it.
- 4.8.1.1. The church's foundation, i.e. the **apostles** and **prophets** needed to be **correctly aligned with Christ**.
- 4.9. The goal of this temple is to become a **dwelling in which God lives!**
- 4.9.1. Who cares what a house **looks like**, if you can't **live in it!**
- 4.10. (22) **A dwelling place for God to reside** –
- 4.10.1. **Wow** – "*Peace, access, one, one new man, Hope, nearness, fellow citizens, members of the household of God, part of His holy temple, & a dwelling place of God.*"
- 4.11. Remember this is all "**of God**"(from vs.4)

A Parable from the Land of Lego's (from Eph.2:11-22)

Once in the land of **Lego's** a builder decided to construct a house to dwell in, using only **blue blocks**. It wasn't that he didn't like the **other colors**, matter of fact he longed for **each & every color** to desire to be a part of his home. When the **blue building** was complete the builder moved in. But quickly some of the **blue blocks** decided they enjoyed their former freedom & decided to not be a part of the **blue house** any longer. Others complained of it being **too bright** once HE moved in. Others left as they wanted to form their own little house... a little less warm, & a little more religious. The house became a **house full of holes**, rather than a **holy house**. This eventually caused it to topple.

The builder came up with a **new design**. He used **blue blocks** that wanted to be a part, but he also chose from **every color** of block. There was one difference this time, he took block by block & painted them a **beautiful deep red**. That was the one requirement to be a part of his new home.

Grace was the nozzle which sprayed each block red. **Faith** was used as the mortar to put each in its perfect place. The **1st stone** placed was called *Stone of the Corner*, which lined up the rest of the entire house.

The builder then **moved into** his new house, **as** that's what houses are for.

And this time it became not only a house, but a home; & not only a **home**, but a very "**Holy Homey Home**".

Sometimes we have to let go of the past in order to enjoy the present, and be able to dream of the future. (A Hallmark Card)