

## REVISITING THE BELIEVER'S POSITIONAL RICHES IN CHRIST

### Part XXI: Applying The Truth That Believers Are Of The Household And Family Of God (Ephesians 2:19)

#### I. Introduction

- A. The sense of hopelessness about one's future is a painful state of mind, one that can arise from a variety of factors. The decay in religious, government and business institutions, the deterioration of marriage and family life coupled with the unfulfilled dreams of one's youth can cause one to experience a sense of hopelessness.
- B. However, one positional truth a believer possesses the instant he trusts in Christ as Savior is that he is part of the household and family of God, what provides enormous, fulfilling hope regarding his future. (Lewis S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. III, "Soteriology," p. 252-253) We view this truth in its context where it is revealed in Ephesians 2:19 for our edification regarding this need (as follows):

#### II. Applying The Truth That Believers Are Of The Household And Family Of God, Ephesians 2:19.

- A. To appreciate what Paul meant when he declared the believer was "of the household of God" in Ephesians 2:19, we view issues his readers faced their lives at Ephesus (as follows):
  1. Prior to faith in Christ, Paul's readers were classified simply as "Gentiles in the flesh," Ephesians 2:11.
  2. In that state, they were alienated from intimacy with God's people, without hope and without God, v. 12.
  3. Living then in Ephesus and being alienated from God could have produced very painful hopelessness:
    - a. A meteor had once fallen at Ephesus that was thought to have come from the god Jupiter, cf. Acts 19:35.
    - b. This event had led the people there to worship a fertility goddess named Diana whose religion became a key part of the financial welfare of Ephesus, Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., vol. Two, p. 326; Acts 19:26-27.
    - c. The temple of Diana was so grand that it was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and Ephesus boasted "the largest of all Hellenic open-air theaters" that seated "50,000 spectators." (E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, Ephesians and Colossians (New International Commentary), p. 15)
    - d. Yet, by Paul's time, deforestation and its resulting erosion had caused the city's harbor to start to fill with silt, threatening the city's trade and thus its future welfare, Ibid., Z. P. E. B. p. 324-326; Acts 19:27-34.
    - e. Accordingly, for Paul to say these Gentile believers at Ephesus had been without God and without **hope** was an understatement in view of the city's current harbor situation and its threat to the city's commerce.
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    - e. Accordingly, for Paul to say these Gentile believers at Ephesus had been without God and without **hope** was an understatement in view of the city's current harbor situation and its threat to the city's commerce.
- B. However, by faith in Christ, these "far off" Gentiles had become members "of the household of God" in ways that addressed their alienation from Israel and their city's troubling problem of a threatened future:
  1. The enmity that had once existed between them and the descendants of Abraham was removed at the cross, Eph. 2:13-15a. Christ had formed of both parties a new kind of man -- a "Christian," Eph. 2:15b!
  2. Now, both former Hebrews and former Ephesian Gentile pagans could claim God as their spiritual father, and both were equally and intimately a part of the same family and household of God, Ephesians 2:16-19:
    - a. The Greek term *paroikos* rendered "foreigners (KJV) or "aliens" (NIV) in Ephesians 2:19a pictured a "proselyte from Gentilism" to Judaism, one who was accepted to a degree but not viewed by other Jews as a full Jew, Ibid., Simpson and Bruce, p. 65, fn. #31.
    - b. Thus, Paul labored to say that the new birth in Christ makes Gentiles far more than what they could have ever become as proselytes to Judaism: **Christian** Gentiles are fully spiritually "born" into God's family, becoming *intimately* identified with God and His family along with Hebrew believers in Christ!
  3. All these believers belonged to a temple that far exceeded in glory the great temple of Diana at Ephesus -- they were part of the Church with the foundation of the apostles and Christ as its Cornerstone, Eph. 2:20.
  4. In place of the **threatened** future of the Ephesian temple and city with its harbor problem, these Ephesian Gentile believers were part of a spiritual temple that was **growing** as a **lasting** habitation of the **Eternal Creator God** (Eph. 2:21-22) Who would take them to an **eternal home** in **heaven**, Ephesians 1:1-6, 13-14.

***Lesson:*** *In place of feeling "left out" of God's family and its hope for future happiness due to their town's setting, God gave the Ephesian Gentile believers hope of intimately belonging to His own family that, as a temple with a great future, was growing as His lasting dwelling place. That God also offered them an eternal home in heaven.*

***Application:*** *(1) If we feel alienated from other believers from having an alleged "imperfect" or "undesirable" background or heritage, may we focus on our position in Christ as members of the household and family of God. This position offers full spiritual unity with all other believers and intimate identity in a family that has a blessed*

*future as God is its head, giving one cause for joy and peace. (2) If we are concerned about the deteriorating state of our society, nation or world, may we focus on the blessed future we have in the Lord as part of His household.*