



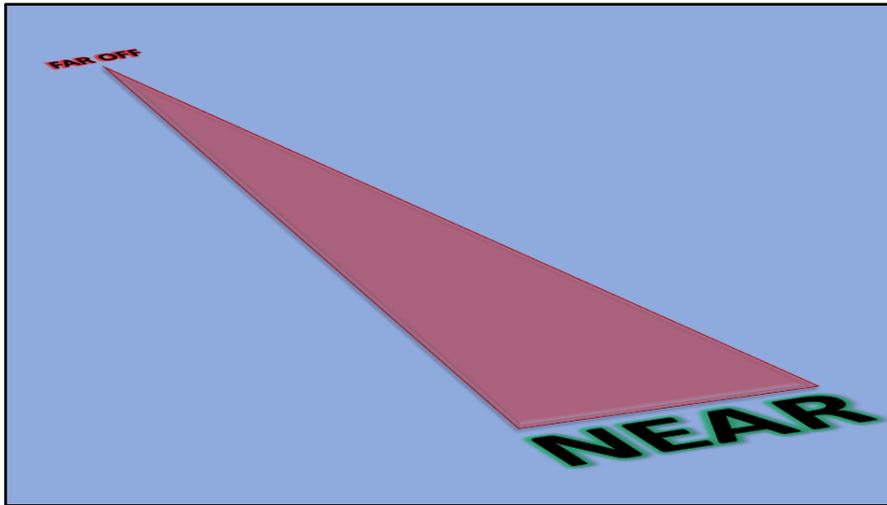
(Theme Slide)



2

When we find a turtle on top of a fence post, it is reasonable to assume that he didn't get there by himself.

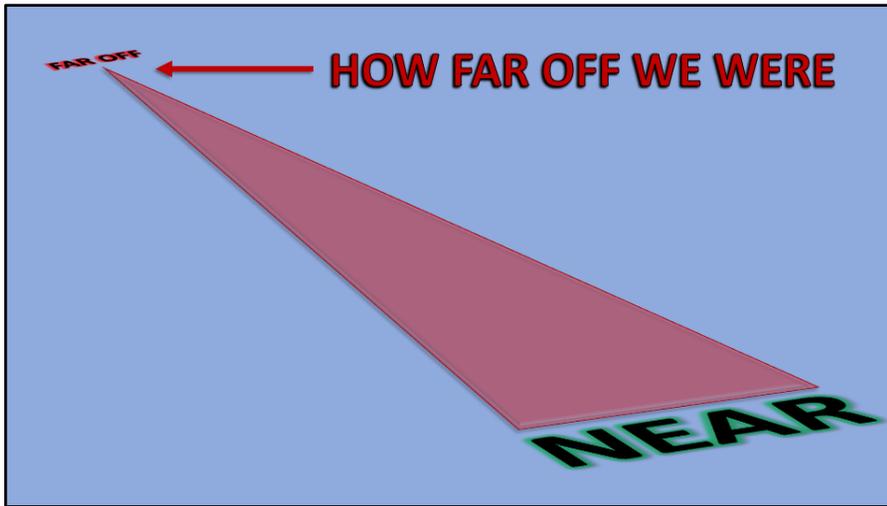
TR: And when we find people who were . . .



3

. . . far off from God now brought near . . . it is reasonable to assume that they didn't get themselves there.

TR: Except many people actually do assume that they did get there by themselves. That people who are biblically illiterate think that is conceivable, but what about those who know at least some of the Bible?

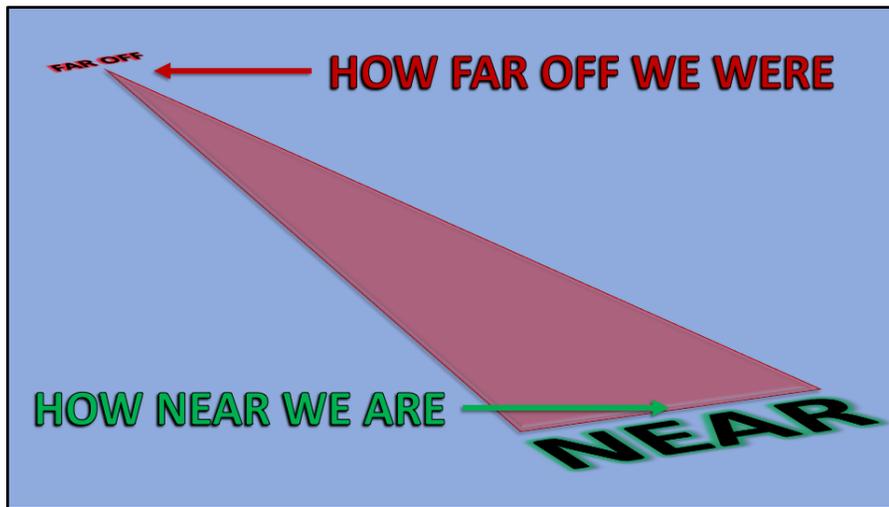


4

The only way that we could imagine that we were responsible for the movement from far off to near would be if we forgot . . .

READ SLIDE

TR: Or, if we did not grasp . . .



5

READ SLIDE . . . to God.

**TR: Or perhaps the eyes of our hearts have been darkened,
confused or calloused to . . .**

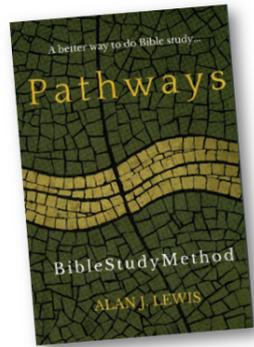


6

READ SLIDE

-- Hopefully you have taken the opportunity to study our text this week, even working through it together within your small group.

TR: If you have, the basic outline of the passage is probably familiar to you.



7

I also want to take a moment to encourage you not to give up.
-- For some of you this method is like having new hiking boots that haven't been broken in yet . . . and you're getting blisters.
-- Don't give up too easily and you will be rewarded with a view from the summit.
-- Keep making progress . . . even if we can't get it all perfect.

TR: Using your sermon notes page as a help, those who carefully read this passage several times probably noted the overall outline.

HOW FAR OFF WE WERE

Therefore remember that at one time Gentiles
in the flesh,
called "the uncircumcision"
by what is called the circumcision,
which is made in the flesh by hands—

¹² remember that we were at that time separated from Christ,
alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
and strangers to the covenants of promise,
having no hope
and without God in the world.

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus who once were far off
have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our PEACE,

who by his flesh
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.

¹⁵ and might reconcile us both to God in one body
through the cross,
thereby killing the hostility.

¹⁶ And he came and preached PEACE
to you who were far off

and peace to those who were near.
¹⁷ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁸ So then we are no longer strangers and aliens,
but we are fellow citizens with the saints
and members of the household of God,

¹⁹ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
in whom the whole structure,
being joined together,
grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

²⁰ In him we also are being built together
into a dwelling place for God
by the Spirit.

8

Using the ESV text, right-justified in small units of clauses and phrases, as found in our worship fliers, we see a 3-fold outline.
-- The top section tells us . . . READ SLIDE

TR: The bottom section . . .

HOW FAR OFF WE WERE

HOW NEAR WE ARE

Therefore remember that at one time **you Gentiles** in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

¹² remember that **you** were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, and without God in the world.

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus **you** who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself **is our** PEACE, who has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ and might reconcile **us both** to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

¹⁷ And he came and preached PEACE to **you** who were far off and peace to those who were near.

¹⁸ For **through him we both** have access in one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁹ So then **you** are no longer strangers and aliens, but **you** are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

²¹ in whom **you** also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

... tells us ... READ SLIDE

TR: And the powerful middle section tells us a lot more about how we went from being far off to being near.

Therefore remember that at one time ^{in the flesh,} Gentiles
 called "the uncircumcision"
 by what is called the circumcision,
 which is made in the flesh by hands—

¹² remember that ^{we} were at that time separated from Christ,
 alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
 and strangers to the covenants of promise,
 having no hope
 and without God in the world.

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus ^{we} who once were far off
 have been brought near ^{by the blood of Christ}

¹⁴ For he himself ^{is our} PEACE,
 who ^{by his own blood} has broken down ^{the} wall of hostility
 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.

¹⁵ and might reconcile ^{us both} to God in one body
 through the cross,
 thereby killing ^{the hostility}.

¹⁶ And he came and preached PEACE
 to ^{us} who were far off
 and peace to those who were near.

¹⁷ For ^{through him} we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁸ So then ^{we} are no longer strangers and aliens,
 but ^{we} are fellow citizens with the saints
 and members of the household of God,
 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
 Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
 in whom ^{the} whole structure,
 being joined together,
 grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
 in him ^{we} also are being built together
 into a dwelling place for God
 by the Spirit.

HOW FAR OFF WE WERE

**HOW CHRIST IS OUR PEACE,
 MAKING & PROCLAIMING PEACE**

HOW NEAR WE ARE

It tells us . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Let's take a moment a read through our text together.

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

ESV

11

The top part of the outline that tells us how FAR OFF we were reads . . . READ SLIDE

-- The THEREFORE connects our passage to the wonderful truth of what God did for us by His grace, making us alive together with Christ even though we were dead, dead, dead!

TR: Verse 12 comes back to the REMEMBER how FAR OFF we were

Ephesians 2:12-13

remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

ESV

12

READ SLIDE

-- Verse 13 could be the theme verse for this section, capturing both the FAR OFF and the BROUGHT NEAR.

TR: Verse 14 then moves to the middle section, telling us more about HOW we moved from FAR OFF to NEAR. We were brought near by the blood of Christ FOR . . .

Ephesians 2:14-15

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances,

ESV

13

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 15b

Ephesians 2:15b-16

that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

ESV

14

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 17

Ephesians 2:17-18

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

ESV

15

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 19 then goes on to tell us more about HOW NEAR we have been brought by this work of Messiah Jesus.

Ephesians 2:19-21

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

ESV

16

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 22 then describes the ultimate NEARNESS . . .

Ephesians 2:22

In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

ESV

17

READ SLIDE

TR: In our worship fliers, look at the highlights I've marked for us.

Therefore remember that at one time **you** Gentiles
in the flesh,
called "the uncircumcision"
by what is called the circumcision,
which is made in the flesh by hands—

¹² **remember** that **you** were at that time separated from Christ,
alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
and strangers to the covenants of promise,
having no hope
and without God in the world.

¹³ **But now** in Christ Jesus **you** who once were far off
have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

With an oval, I've marked the references to YOU.

-- you Gentiles

-- remember that you were separated

-- you who once were far off

TR: In the middle section, toward the end we read . . .

¹⁴ For he himself is **our PEACE**,
 who has made **us both** one
 and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of *hostility*
¹⁵ 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**,
¹⁶ and might reconcile **us both** to God in one body
 through the cross,
 thereby killing the *hostility*.
¹⁷ And he came and preached **PEACE**
 to **you** who were far off
 and peace to those who were near.
¹⁸ For through him **we both** have access in one Spirit to the Father.

. . . again of YOU who were far off.

TR: In the last section,

¹⁹ So then **you** are no longer strangers and aliens,
but **you** are fellow citizens with the saints
and members of the household of God,

²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
²¹ in whom the whole structure,
being joined together,
grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

²² In him **you** also are being built together
into a dwelling place for God
by the Spirit.

20

- . . . the emphasis on YOU comes back again . . .**
- YOU are no longer strangers and aliens**
 - YOU are fellow citizens**
 - YOU are being built together**

TR: Who is the YOU?

Ephesians 2:11 *page 1079 in handout Bibles*

Therefore remember that at one time **you** Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

ESV

21

Our opening verse makes that clear . . . the YOU refers to the Gentile believers whom Paul is addressing.

TR: This contrasts with the US BOTH we find repeated in the middle section

¹⁴ For he himself is **our** PEACE,
 who has made **us both** one
 and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of *hostility*
¹⁵ 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,
¹⁶ and might reconcile **us both** to God in one body
 through the cross,
 thereby killing the *hostility*.
¹⁷ And he came and preached PEACE
 to **you** who were far off
 and peace to those who were near.
¹⁸ For through him **we both** have access in one Spirit to the Father.

For he himself is OUR peace

-- made US BOTH one

-- reconciling US BOTH to God in one body

-- through him WE BOTH have access

TR: Who is the US, the WE BOTH? Back in chapter one we've already read . . .

Ephesians 1:12-13

so that **we who were the first to hope in Christ** might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him **you also**, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

ESV

23

. . . Paul was dealing with the huge gap, the horrid hostility between Jew and Gentile.

-- The US and WE BOTH of our passage today are all the believers in the church, whether of Jewish or non-Jewish heritage.

TR: For turtles on a fence post, so to speak, our first question is . .

.

HOW FAR OFF WE WERE

Therefore remember that at one time **you Gentiles**
in the flesh,
called "the uncircumcision"
by what is called the circumcision,
which is made in the flesh by hands—

¹² remember that **you** were at that time separated from Christ,
alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
and strangers to the covenants of promise,
having no hope
and without God in the world.

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus **you** who once were far off
have been brought near **by the blood of Christ**

¹⁴ For he himself **has** PEACE,
who **has** PEACE, **has** PEACE
and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ and might reconcile **us both** to God in one body
through the cross,
thereby **making** the PEACE.

¹⁷ And he came and preached PEACE
to **you** who were far off
and peace to those who were near.

¹⁸ For **through him we both** have access in one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁹ So then **you** are no longer strangers and aliens,
but **you** are fellow citizens with the saints
and members of the household of God,

²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
in whom the whole structure,
being joined together,
grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

²¹ In him **you** also are being built together
into a dwelling place for God
by the Spirit.

24

... HOW FAR OFF WERE WE?

TR: Zooming in to this first section . . .

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles
 in the flesh,
 called "the uncircumcision"
 by what is called the circumcision,
 which is made in the flesh by hands—

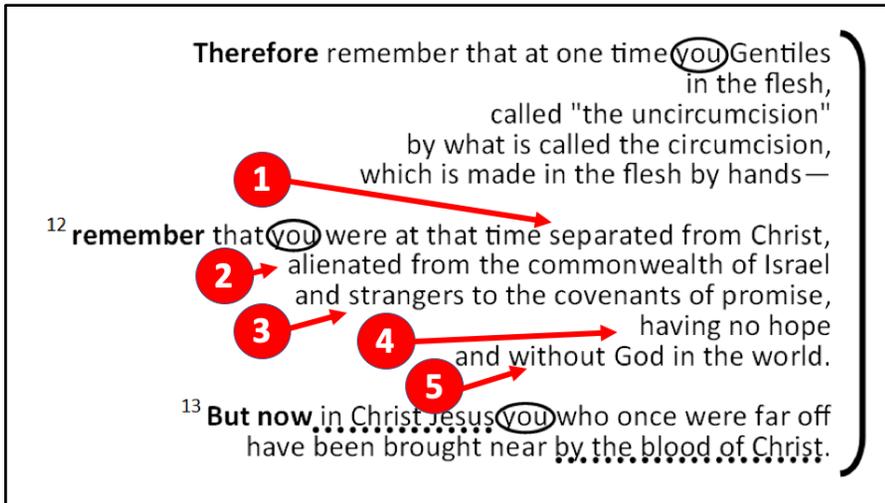
¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ,
 alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
 and strangers to the covenants of promise,
 having no hope
 and without God in the world.

¹³ **But now** in Christ Jesus you who once were far off
 have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

**. . . we see the appropriateness of looking at how far off we, as
 Gentiles, were . . .**

-- AND how near we have been brought by the blood of Christ.

TR: But, first, the HOW FAR OFF WE WERE in verse 12 . . .



... we are challenged to remember the five-fold measurements of the distance between us and God ... but also between us Gentiles and the covenant-people of God.

- We were separated from CHRIST – the Messiah**
- alienated from the covenant people of God, Israel**
- strangers to the various covenants of the promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12 and elsewhere**
- thus we had NO HOPE of a future**
- and we were WITHOUT GOD in our present existence.**

EX: Child's testimony based on this passage ... like an All-State commercial voice-over ... we think it is absurd for a 7-year old to say those things ... but it is not!

TR: Verse 13 talked to us about having been brought NEAR, but the specifics of that NEARNESS are given in the bottom section ...

Therefore remember that at one time **Gentiles**
in the flesh,
 called "the uncircumcision"
 by what is called the circumcision,
 which is made in the flesh by hands—

¹² remember that **we** were at that time separated from Christ,
alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
 and strangers to the covenants of promise,
 having no hope
 and without God in the world.

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus **we** who once were far off
have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself **has** made **PEACE**,
who by his own blood has broken 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**.

¹⁵ and might reconcile **us both** to God in one body
through the cross,
 thereby killing the hostility.

¹⁶ And he came and preached **PEACE**
to **us** who were far off
 and peace to those who were near.

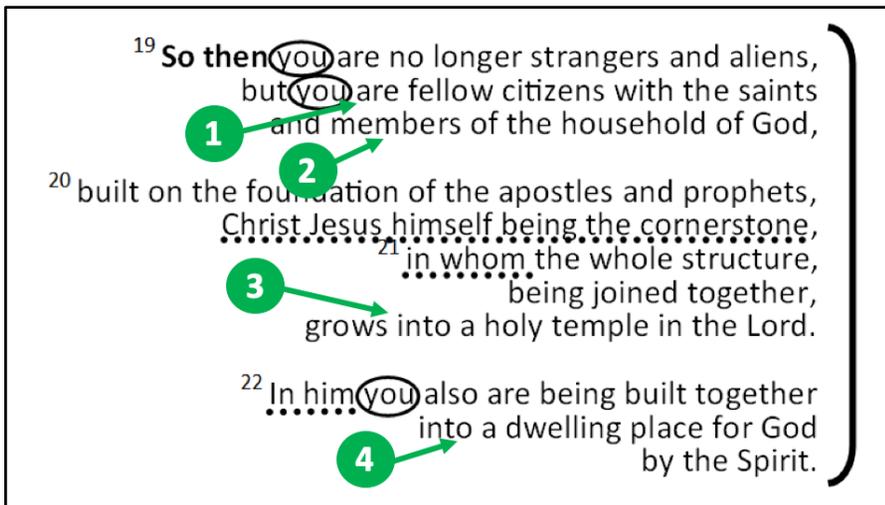
¹⁷ For **through him we both** have access in one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁸ So then **we** are no longer strangers and aliens,
but **we** are fellow citizens with the saints
 and members of the household of God,
 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
 Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
 in whom the whole structure,
 being joined together,
 grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
 in him **we** also are being built together
 into a dwelling place for God
 by the Spirit.

HOW NEAR WE ARE

... that gives us the RESULTS of what Jesus has done for us.

TR: I jump to there because that section picks up the emphasis on YOU Gentiles again.



You ARE NO LONGER strangers and aliens, which we read back in verse 12, but . . .

- **YOU ARE FELLOW CITIZENS** of God's kingdom, with the saints
- You are members of the family, the **HOUSEHOLD OF GOD**
- You are being joined together into a **HOLY TEMPLE**
- Then, building on the temple imagery, Paul crescendos with the greatest of all promises throughout the Scriptures, God will dwell with us . . .
- . . . You are being built together into a dwelling place for God

TR: Even as we look at the turtle on the fence post and ask, "How?" We now ask, how did this great movement from FAR OFF to being brought NEAR take place?

Therefore remember that at one time **you Gentiles** in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

¹² remember that **you** were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world.**

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus **you** who once were far off have been brought near **by the blood of Christ.**

¹⁴ For he himself **is our PEACE**, who **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.**

¹⁵ and might reconcile **us both** to God in one body through the cross, thereby **making the hostility.**

¹⁶ And he came and preached **PEACE** to **you** who were far off and peace to those who were near.

¹⁷ For **through him we both** have access in one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁸ So **then you** are no longer strangers and aliens, but **you** are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

¹⁹ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone**, in whom **the whole structure**, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

²⁰ in whom **you** also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

**HOW CHRIST IS OUR PEACE,
MAKING & PROCLAIMING PEACE**

The majority of the insights of how this could happen are found in the middle section.

TR: When I have outlined this passage before, I included verse 13 with the middle section because it starts answering how this great movement took place.

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles
 in the flesh,
 called "the uncircumcision"
 by what is called the circumcision,
 which is made in the flesh by hands—

¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ,
 alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
 and strangers to the covenants of promise,
 having no hope
 and without God in the world.

¹³ **But now** in Christ Jesus you who once were far off
 have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

I kept it part of the top section this time because of the pronoun YOU, which we already looked at.

-- But don't miss what I've tried to highlight with a dotted line in your notes . . .

-- it is IN CHRIST JESUS

-- it is BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, referring to His cross

-- Like verses 1-10, we have here a GREAT CONTRAST . . . in v. 4 it was BUT GOD. Here it is BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS.

TR: So verse 13 has provided the transition statement . . . we are to remember that we were far off BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS and BY HIS BLOOD we have been brought near.

¹⁴ For he himself is our PEACE,

who has made us both one

and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of *hostility*
¹⁵ 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,

¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body
 through the cross,
 thereby killing the *hostility*.

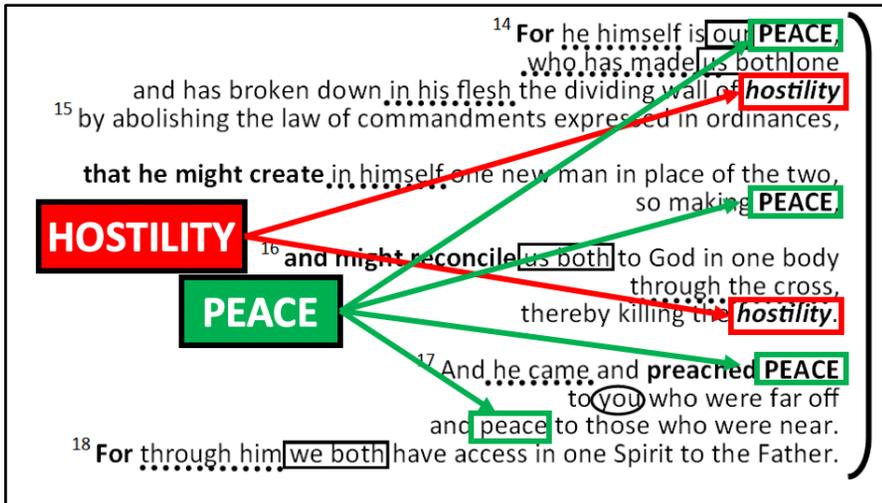
¹⁷ And he came and preached PEACE
 to you who were far off
 and peace to those who were near.

¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

**In the middle section, this FAR OFF and NEAR theme is continued,
 as we see in verse 17 . . .**

**-- peace to you who were FAR OFF and peace to those who were
 NEAR.**

**TR: But the means of our being brought NEAR emphasizes that
 the distance between us . . .**



. . . was one filled with HOSTILITY and that a PEACE initiative was desperately needed.

-- We may imagine that the HOW of FAR OFF to NEAR is a matter of TRANSPORTATION . . . but really it is a matter of RECONCILIATION, a MAKING OF PEACE.

-- Note the repeated emphasis on HOSTILITY and PEACE in this section, that speaks to us not just of “distance” FROM GOD but also FROM EACH OTHER.

-- This peace is peace with God and with fellow Christ-followers.

TR: With that contrast of hostility and peace in mind, this middle section keeps the focus on Jesus, our Messiah, the Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our PEACE,
 who has made us both one

and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of *hostility*
¹⁵ 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,

¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body
 through the cross,
 thereby killing the *hostility*.

¹⁷ And he came and preached PEACE
 to you who were far off
 and peace to those who were near.

¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Note the dashed underlining . . .

-- Jesus HIMSELF IS OUR PEACE

-- Jesus is WHO MADE us both one

**-- Jesus broken down the wall of hostility IN HIS FLESH, even as
 verse 13 told us it was through his blood**

**-- Jesus created IN HIMSELF one new man, with the result of
 peace**

**-- It was THROUGH THE CROSS of Jesus that we both can be
 reconciled to God in one body, which kills the hostility**

-- It was Jesus Who CAME AND PREACHED peace

-- IT is THROUGH JESUS we have access to the Father

**TR: Our bottom section continues this highlighting that it is God's
 gracious work through Jesus that we have been brought near . . .**

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,
but you are fellow citizens with the saints
and members of the household of God,

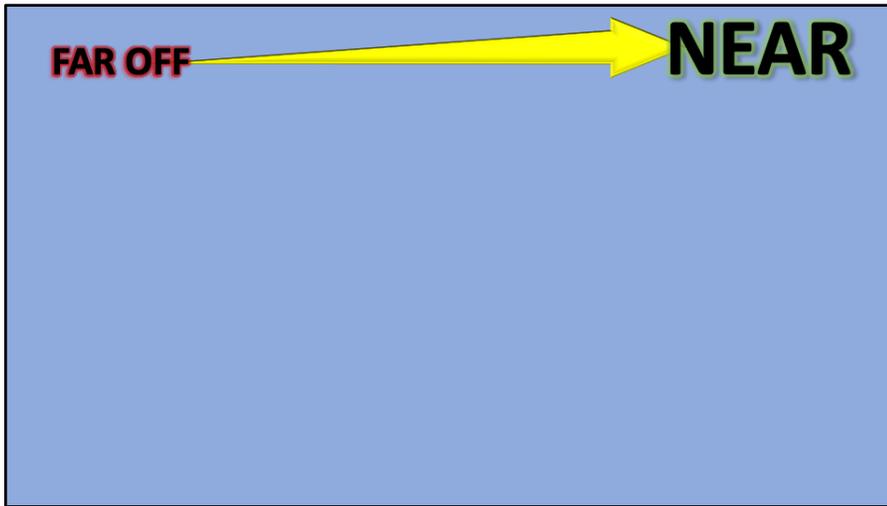
²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
²¹ in whom the whole structure,
being joined together,
grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

²² In him you also are being built together
into a dwelling place for God
by the Spirit.

In verse 20, it is CHRIST JESUS HIMSELF Who is the cornerstone -- it is IN JESUS that the whole structure of the holy temple of God's people is being joined together and growing -- It is IN HIM that even Gentiles are being built together by the Holy Spirit into a place for the dwelling of God.

EX: A church building, what I refer to as the Ministry Center, is not where God dwells . . . He dwells by His Spirit in the one new man, the body of Christ, the holy Temple of His people.

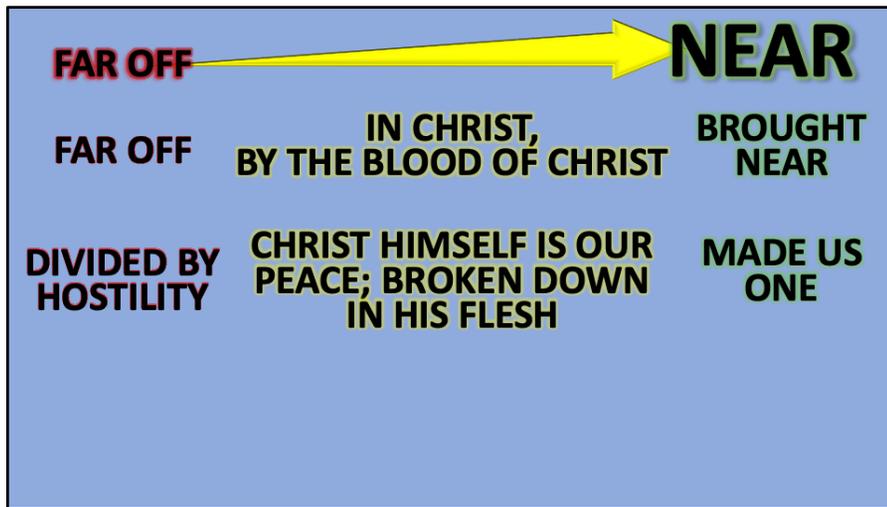
TR: This is all such great news, let's take a moment to reflect on it again . . .



35

... capturing what God's Word tells us about us being FAR OFF and being brought NEAR

TR: Verse 13, what could be labeled the theme verse of this section, told us that ...



37

READ SLIDE

- Note that in verse 15 that this is **ONE NEW MAN**, it is not just that we Gentiles were absorbed into the nation Israel.
- This new work of God is part of what manifests the wisdom of God.

TR: Remember back in chapter 1 . . .

Ephesians 1:9-10

making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, **to unite all things in him**, things in heaven and things on earth.

ESV

38

. . . that God has made known to us His will, His purpose, His plan for the fullness of time.

-- Which is to UNITE ALL THINGS in CHRIST.

-- This includes the unity of the Church, no matter what their heritage is or is not.

TR: Jesus has made us one new man by . . .

Ephesians 2:14-15

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵**by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances,**

ESV

39

. . . abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances.

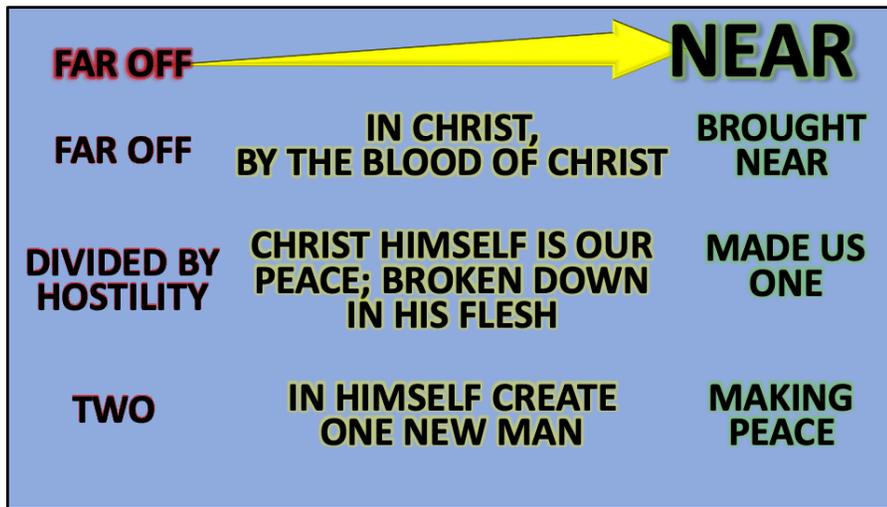
-- The dividing wall, perhaps a reference to the literal wall in the temple square, has been broken down.

-- This is referring to the Mosaic Law, which we looked at this summer and concluded that we are no longer under.

-- It has much to teach us, but the separation that it caused between Jew and Gentile has been abolished.

-- In the OT, a person would need to become a Jew, a proselyte. But now, under the New Covenant, we ALL must by faith become part of the One New Man, the body of Christ.

TR: The end of verse 15 underlines this again for us . . .



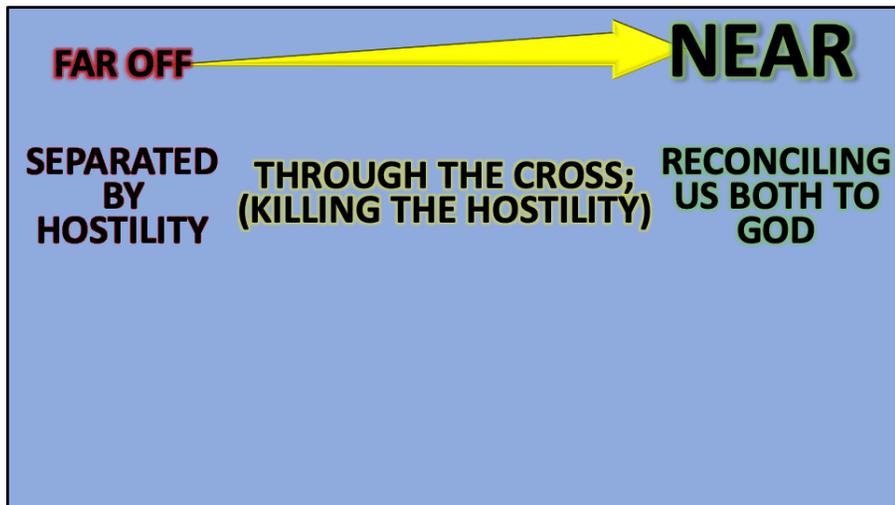
40

The TWO have been brought to PEACE.

-- How? By Jesus creating IN HIMSELF one new man.

**-- Jesus not only destroyed what divided, He created a new thing
... ONE NEW MAN ... a new society that we can be part of.**

TR: Verse 16 reminded us that ...



41

. . . even though we were separated from each other, especially Jew from Gentile, by hostility . . .

-- Jesus killed the hostility through his death on the cross . . .

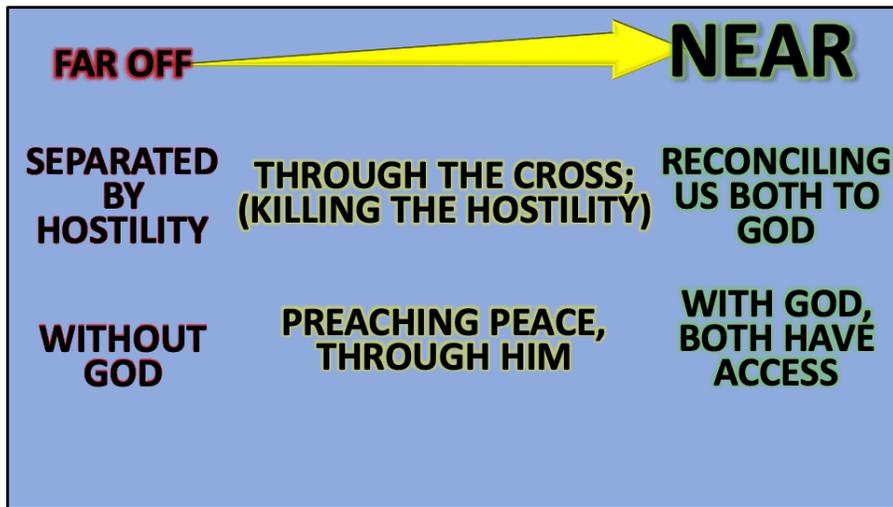
-- . . . making possible for us BOTH to be reconciled to God . . .

-- AND to be reconciled IN ONE BODY.

-- Note again that the reconciling work is both with God AND each other.

-- If you wonder why I make such a big deal about our relationships with each other . . . you need look no further than this passage.

TR: Verses 17-18 speak of Jesus' preaching peace . . .

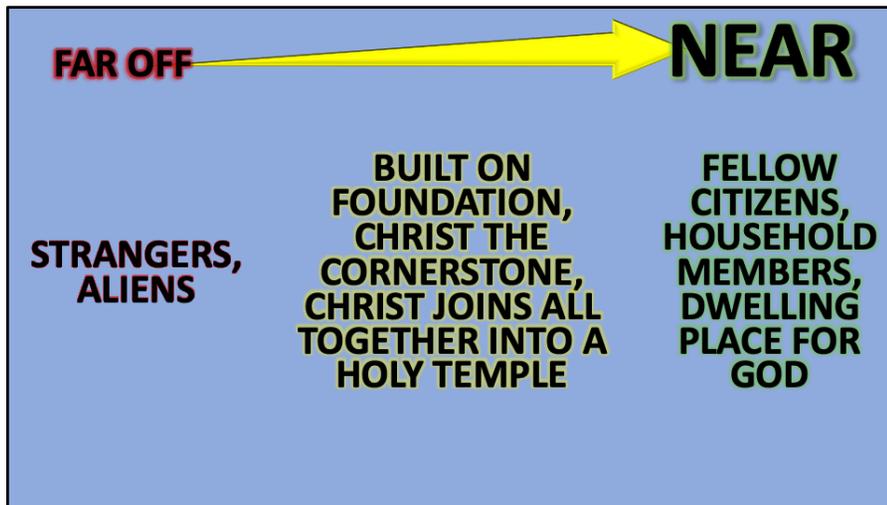


42

... and that **THROUGH HIM**, as verse 18 says, we have **ACCESS** to the **FATHER** through the Spirit.

-- This access is for all believers ... as the **WE BOTH** makes clear.

TR: The bottom section of the passage, verses 19-22, pick up on the strangers and aliens' idea from verse 17.



43

We used to be FAR OFF, that is, OUTSIDERS.

-- But now, we have been brought NEAR as fellow citizens of the kingdom, as members of the family household, as the very dwelling place of God.

-- All this was and is accomplished through Jesus.

-- He is the cornerstone, the most critical foundation of the building.

-- His gospel is what the Apostles and Prophets preached, in a real sense, Jesus preaching through them.

-- It is IN CHRIST that we, as living stones, are joined together.

-- It is IN HIM that we are built together into a dwelling place for God, a holy Temple.

TR: I don't think it is hard to see how this passage gives us a firm foundation to stand on as we seek in the next three years to be . . .

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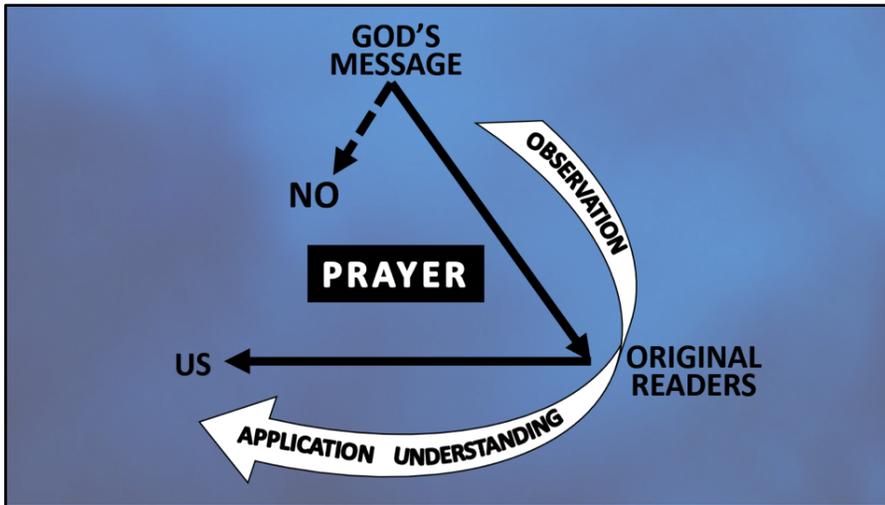


44

READ SLIDE

- It is in Jesus that we have been and are being built together.
- Our prayer for the next three years especially is that we will be who Jesus has made us to be.

TR: The Pathways Method of Bible Study encourages us to . . .



Observe and seek understanding of what God's message was to the original readers.

-- In our day, the Jewish-Gentile tension is not what it was in the first century.

-- But, as has been said, Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week. The church is often tremendously divided and rife with conflicts.

-- Church unity has been more a matter of the homogeneity principle, "birds of a feather flock together" – rather than Christ-created-unity.

-- So, as we prayerfully go around the corner and consider the applications of this passage to us . . .

TR: Let me share a few from my journal.

Signs we are
forgetting:



46

The command to REMEMBER caused me to think about SIGNS THAT WE ARE FORGETTING what we are told here to actively remember, that is consider and act upon.

-- EX: Children's movie character about DORY who has short-term memory issue. She is ditzy. Perhaps even an airhead.

TR: It makes for a cute movie, but for a horrible church community, and hence, a horrible testimony of what Jesus has done for us.

Signs we are
forgetting:



Our stories don't "red-line"
Jesus very much, if at all.

47

A sign of spiritual dementia is when . . . READ SLIDE
-- The central truth and focal point of Ephesians 2:11-22 is JESUS!
EX: Counselor who listened to believers tell their stories of
heartache, suffering, conflict, pain . . . but they seem to almost
never mention Jesus.

TR: We may be slipping into forgetfulness when . . .

Signs we are forgetting:



Our stories don't "red-line" Jesus very much, if at all.



Our cold shoulders to new people reflect we think we "always" belonged.

48

READ SLIDE

-- When we look only to our own interests and our desire to connect with our friends, we may be forgetting that we were brought near by Jesus.

-- We haven't always been NEAR.

-- Even if we trusted Christ as a 7-year old, we were dead, dead, dead. We were strangers, alienated, separated, hopeless and Godless.

TR: Those who have been Christians for a while can slip into the temptation of the Jewish believers of the first century . . .

Signs we are
forgetting:



Our emphasis on “laws” that
divide “gives life” to hostility.

49

... and put ... **READ SLIDE**

-- When we make absolute what the Bible doesn't.

-- When we put ourselves under the Law even though Jesus
abolished the hostility by nullifying it ... by fulfilling it.

-- When we talk to each other about each other, saying, “I can't
believe they do that ... or don't do that!” --- we gossip legalism.

TR: Our spiritual dementia may actually be Alzheimer-like if our .

..

Signs we are forgetting:



Our emphasis on “laws” that divide “gives life” to hostility.



Our lives are marked by division and unresolved conflicts.

50

READ SLIDE

-- When we seem **UNABLE TO FORGET** the wrongs done to us, both real and perceived . . .

-- . . . but we forget that we have been brought near by the blood of Jesus, by the cross,

-- Do we keep getting into conflicts, at home, at church? We may blame others but when it keeps happening to us . . . we need to ask the Spirit to open the eyes of our hearts.

EX: Elderly person who continues to get into car accidents, but it is always the other person’s fault. Those on the outside can see it clearly, but the “forgetful” conflict prone just don’t see it. They have not **REMEMBERED**.

**TR: As I prayerfully asked the Spirit to help me apply the text
to myself today, He reminded me . . .**

50

Signs we are
forgetting:



We subtly divide the One New Man into the “haves” and “have-nots.”

51

READ SLIDE

-- Even though WE BOTH have ACCESS IN ONE SPIRIT TO THE FATHER.

-- There are no second-class citizens in the kingdom.

TR: And that includes me. When I say . . .

Signs we are forgetting:



We subtly divide the One New Man into the “haves” and “have-nots.”



We talk ourselves out of active participation because we’re “not good enough.”

52

. . . “who am I to do that, not out of humility but insecurity, then I may be forgetting and . . . READ SLIDE (top)

-- Even though we are fellow citizens and members of the household, even part of God’s temple, His dwelling place.

-- We are BUILT TOGETHER

TR: The Holy Spirit still didn’t let me go . . . He pointed out that I’m forgetting how Jesus the Christ has brought us from far off to near when I . . .

Signs we are
forgetting:



We act like the church is a man-made social group rather than Jesus' creation.

53

READ SLIDE

- This is not the Lion's Club, the Rotary, the Garden Club, or anything else that is of human working.**
- The church is Jesus new creation, His new society. It is the ONE NEW MAN.**
- It is His work that brings unity to even the most divided and hostile relationships.**
- It is only Jesus Who can make Jewish believers and Palestinian believers one new body!**

TR: And, finally, the One Who Comes Alongside, gave me this memory card . . .

Signs we are forgetting:



We act like the church is a man-made social group rather than Jesus' creation.



When being Built^UP Together becomes a slogan instead of a Christ-worked reality.

54

READ SLIDE

-- Our 3-year vision is from God, by God, for God.

-- It is not just a strategic manipulation.

-- It is part of the will of God to demonstrate His wisdom of uniting all things in heaven and on earth in Christ.

-- I don't know if any of these applications fit your life. I've jotted them down in the worship flier's inside back cover.

TR: But if we won't even stop and ask the Spirit to open the eyes of our hearts to the powerful truths in this passage . . .



55

. . . we are like the foolish turtle who looks down on others and says, “Just try harder, like I did, and you too can succeed.”

Cf. Story of 19 year old converted Marine . . . roommate at Naval Hospital . . . “John’s God must be a good God.”

Emphasis on HOW the great movement from FAR OFF to NEAR was accomplished.