

Theme: The church is God's nation, comprised of people from every nation and culture, and her primary allegiance is to God's kingdom rather than each member's preferred culture.

## I. Intro – Mosaic at Hagia Sophia

- A. Hagia Sophia - Church of Holy Wisdom
- B. Great church in Istanbul (Constantinople)
- C. Now a Mosque since captured by Muslims
- D. Awesome portrait of Jesus inside (Photo)
- A. Christos pantocrator - Christ the Ruler of All
- B. Actually a mosaic (photo)
- C. Mosaics make something beautiful from disparate parts
- D. In many ways the church is Messiah's mosaic

## II. Our Position: Clothed With Christ

- A. We are now sons of God through faith (Gal 3:26)
  - 1. Ephesians 2:11-13 - our former position
  - 2. We are now God's sons through faith (Gal 3:26)
  - 3. This is the Gospel - God's free gift of grace!
- B. We are clothed with Christ
  - 1. We are actually covered with Christ
  - 2. We are in union with Him!
  - 3. This is what we symbolize in baptism

## III. Our Identity - One In Christ

- A. Our new position - in Christ, clothed with Him
- B. Old identities no longer hold sway (Gal 3:28)
  - 1. Jew/Gentile; slave/free; male/female (v28)
  - 2. Three main items in Jewish male prayer (quote)
  - 3. Greeks had similar prayers (quote)
  - 4. We are still these things, but that is not our identity
  - 5. Our identity is found in Christ!
- C. Our unity in Christ (Gal 3:28)
  - 1. We are one in Christ
  - 2. Our unity in Him is greater than any other divide

## IV. Our Family - Abraham's Seed

- A. Belong to Christ, Abraham's seed (Gal 3:29)
  - 1. This is our new family
  - 2. True regardless of race, gender, economics, etc.
  - 3. If in Christ by faith - Abraham's seed
- B. Heirs of covenant promises to Abraham (Gal 3:29)
  - 1. We inherit promised God's covenant blessings
  - 2. This promise drives our present lives, future hopes
  - 3. This promise is central to our identity, hopes, mission

## V. The Multi-Cultural Nature of the Church

### A. Historically most religions wed to one culture

1. Each god wed to one people, land, culture
2. Religion expected to support civil, political order
3. Still true with many religions today
4. This is why conversion viewed as act of treason

### B. Christianity's inherent missionary drive

1. Gen 12:2-3 - all nations blessed through Abraham
2. Mat 28:18-20 - Go make disciples of all nations
3. Rev 7:9-10 - people from every culture
4. The church is commanded to go to every culture
5. The church can not be wed to any culture

### C. The difficulty of a multi-cultural Church

1. This has always been difficult for the church
2. Acts 6:1 - multi-cultural tensions threaten Church
3. Acts 15:1-2 - Culture undermining the Gospel
4. Gal 2:11-13 - power of culture to deceive
5. Gal 2:14 - Jewish custom undermining Gospel
6. This has been a challenge from the beginning!

## VI. Applying the Word

- ### A. Do we see the power of culture to subvert the Gospel?

1. We all love our own culture - can't escape this
2. Culture is in our blood - every part of us
3. Includes language, dress, music, politics
4. These things are important - but dangerous!
5. Example: evangelicals and Glenn Beck
  - a. Quote on Glenn Beck as a Christian
  - b. He is a Mormon!
  - c. This is completely wrong! Salvation by works!
  - d. This has placed politics, culture over the Gospel!
6. Am I more committed to culture than Gospel?
7. Have I wedded the Gospel to my political opinions?

### B. Celebrating our unity in Christ through the Gospel

1. We come to the Table united in Christ by Gospel
2. Our deepest identity is found here - not culture
3. Here we see our common problem - sin
4. Here we see our common salvation - Christ

### Messiah's Mosaic

Galatians 3:26-29  
Revelation 7:9-17  
January 2, 2011  
Communion  
Genesis 12:2-3

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)-- 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:11-13

"Blessed are you, Hashem, King of the Universe, for not having made me a Gentile."

"Blessed are you, Hashem, King of the Universe, for not having made me a slave."

Blessed are you, Hashem, King of the Universe, for not having made me a woman."

Traditional Jewish prayer and blessing (Note that Hashem means 'the Name' and is used to avoid taking God's name in vain.)

Thanks that I was born a human being and not a beast; next a man and not a woman; thirdly, a Greek and not a barbarian." (Greek prayer, attributed to Thales and Plato; quoted in Richard N. Longenecker, *Commentary on Galatians*, 157.)

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.... 3 and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12:2-3

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Revelation 7:9-10

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. Acts 6:1

Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them.

Acts 15:1-2

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. 12 Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

Galatians 2:11-14

Does he talk openly about atonement, redemption, and individual salvation through Christ? (I can definitely answer this in the affirmative, for I have seen him do so on numerous occasions not only on his program but also in the rallies where I have personally participated with him.) Christians concerned about Glenn's faith should judge the tree by its fruits, not its labels. After all, Nancy Pelosi and Bill Clinton openly call themselves Christians, as do Evangelical Christian ministers such as Jim Wallis and Joel Hunter. Although these individuals have the right labels, they have the wrong fruits; yet many Christians have a more visceral reaction to Glenn than to Pelosi, Clinton, or Wallis. This is wrong; it is not Biblical. - see <http://www.ecollege.edu/glenn-beck-by-their-fruits>