

"God Be With You"

by Wayne Goff

"God be with you till we meet again; by His counsels guide, uphold you, With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again."

Most of us recognize the words to the popular dismissal hymn, "God Be With You." The song was penned by Jeremiah E. Rankin in 1880. The music was written by William G. Tomer in 1881 after Mr. Rankin sent him the lyrics.

If you are like me, you would think that the song was inspired by some sad loss in life, or because of family moving on, or some similar circumstance. Instead, the hymn was deliberately composed on the basis of the etymology of "good-bye," which is the shortened form of "God be with you." Mr. Rankin did not want us to lose sight of the meaning of the word "good-bye."

All too soon you and I will be gone from the face of God's earth. It is fitting always to express our love for one another with the words "God be with you till we meet again." We are indebted to the hymn writer for this popular song, but we are eternally indebted to God for uniting all of God's children together in one body by the cross, Eph. 2:14.

Jesus announced while He was here upon the earth, *"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd"* (Jn. 10:16). He specifically had reference to the Gentiles which were *"afar off"* and not part of the *"household of God"* at the time. Indeed, since Peter entered the house of Cornelius (Acts 10), both Jews and Gentiles have been reconciled to God by the cross (Gal. 3:26-29).

"And not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad" (Jn. 11:52).

Now we are a body of God's people, a *"family of God"* (Eph. 3:15). This family meets in *"the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Tim. 3:15). We have one Leader, our Savior Jesus Christ, and Elder Brother (Heb. 2:17). All of us are brethren! Paul referred to us as *"holy brethren"* (1 Thess. 5:27).

Whenever I talk with my family, I try to remember to say "I love you" because we never know if this will be the last time we have to speak with them! Likewise, we should always say to one another, "God be with you till we meet again" because the next time we might meet is in heaven.

Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary for ***all of mankind*** (1 Jn. 2:2). Those of humble, sincere hearts have responded to the gospel message, obeyed unto their salvation, and have been added by the Lord to ***His church, His family, His people***. Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called, Eph. 4:1. Love your brethren here upon the earth as you *profess* to love God in heaven (1 Jn. 2:9-11). God be with you till we meet again.

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