

Message Five

**God's Eternal Purpose,
His Eternal Economy**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 3:3-5, 8-11; 1 Cor. 1:30

I. God's eternal purpose is His eternal economy, His administrative plan, to distribute Himself into His chosen people to make them the same as He is in life and nature but not in the Godhead for His enlarged and expanded expression—Eph. 3:2, 8-11:

- A. The forty-two chapters of the book of Job leave us with a twofold question concerning the purpose of God in creating man and the purpose of God in dealing with His chosen people—1:1; 10:13; 13:3-4:
 - 1. The great answer to this great question is the eternal economy of God, which is God's eternal intention with His heart's desire to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity as the Father in the Son by the Spirit into His chosen people to be their life and nature that they may become the same as He is for His fullness, His expression—Eph. 3:9; Gen. 1:26; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19.
 - 2. God's purpose in dealing with His lovers, even in the way of loss, is that they may gain Him to the fullest extent, that He might be expressed through them for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose in His creation of man—Rom. 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 4:16; cf. Jer. 48:11.
- B. God's intention in His creation of all things, including man, was that man would be mingled with God to produce the church as the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem for His glorious expression—Zech. 12:1; Rev. 4:11; 19:7; 21:2:
 - 1. The church as the mystery of Christ was hidden in God, who created all things, throughout the ages—Eph. 3:4, 9; Col. 2:2; 1:27; 1 Tim. 3:16.
 - 2. The church, something particular hidden in God as a mystery, which was not made known to men in other generations, has been revealed to the apostles and prophets in their spirit by revelation in the New Testament age—Eph. 3:3-5; 1:17.

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II. By the dispensing of Christ, as wisdom to us from God, into our entire tripartite being, we become constituted with Him to be the church as the wise exhibition of all that Christ is—1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Eph. 3:10:

- A. Christ became wisdom to us from God as three vital things in our salvation:
 - 1. Christ is our righteousness (for our past), by which we have been justified by God, that we might be reborn in our spirit to receive the divine life—Rom. 5:18; 8:10.
 - 2. Christ is our sanctification (for our present), by which we are being sanctified in our soul, that is, transformed in our mind, emotion, and will, with His divine life—6:19, 22; 8:6.
 - 3. Christ is our redemption (for our future), that is, the redemption of our body, by which we will be transfigured in our body with His divine life to have His glorious likeness—v. 23; Phil. 3:21.
 - 4. It is of God that we participate in such a complete and perfect salvation, which makes our entire being—spirit, soul, and body—organically one with Christ and makes Christ everything to us—1 John 3:2.
- B. When God's chosen people partake of and enjoy the unsearchable riches of Christ, they are constituted with those riches to be the church, through which God's multifarious wisdom is made known to the angelic rulers and authorities in the heavenlies—Eph. 3:8, 10.
- C. God's eternal purpose, the purpose of eternity, according to the desire of His heart, is to have the church to be the organic Body of Christ for the manifestation of His multifarious wisdom—1:9-11, 22-23; 3:9-11.

III. The church as the Body of Christ is the center of God's eternal purpose, His eternal economy; the

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church is the goal of God and the target of the enemy—vv. 4, 9-11; Matt. 16:18:

- A. The Body is the intrinsic significance of the church—Eph. 1:22-23:
 - 1. The Body of Christ is the organic essence of the church, just as apples are the organic essence of an apple tree as the frame.
 - 2. The Body of Christ is the divine constitution of the Triune God with the believers in Christ—4:4-6.
- B. The church as the Body of Christ is the unique means used by God to fulfill His purpose and settle all His problems—cf. Gen. 1:26:
 - 1. The church in the economy of God is for the expression, the glory, of God the Father in the divine sonship with the Father's life and nature—Eph. 1:4-5; John 17:22-24:
 - a. The Father imparts His holy nature into us to make us as holy as He is to be the holy city—2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Heb. 2:10-11; Rev. 21:2.
 - b. The Father imparts His divine life into us to make us His sons, having Christ as our life, that we may grow in this life unto the maturity of life to be the city of life—Eph. 4:15-16; Heb. 6:1; Rev. 22:1-2.
 - 2. The church in the economy of God is God's greatest boast in making known to the angelic rulers and authorities His multifarious wisdom for the shame and defeat of His enemy to bring in His kingdom—Eph. 3:10; Rom. 16:20:
 - a. Only through problems can all the aspects of God's wisdom be manifested—cf. Gen. 1:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:6; Rom. 11:30-36.
 - b. Even our failures, mistakes, defeats, and wrongdoings have given God opportunities to display His wisdom—cf. Psalms 51; John 18:17, 25, 27.
 - 3. The church in the economy of God is for the heading up of all things in Christ through the working of

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Himself into us as life that we may be full of light—Eph. 1:10, 22-23:

- a. When we enjoy Christ as life, the church is built up by this life, and we are under the control of the light of life for our oneness under Christ's headship—4:15; John 8:12; Col. 1:13.
- b. When everything is headed up in Christ, there will be absolute peace and harmony (Isa. 2:4; 11:6; 55:12; Psa. 96:12-13), a full rescue out of the heap of the universal collapse.