

## GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE CONCERNING THE CHURCH IN EPHESIANS

(Scripture quotations are from the *Recovery Version of the Bible*.)

Scripture Reading: Eph. 3:9-11; 1:4-11; 3:19; Col. 2:9; Eph. 1:19; Col. 1:29; 1 Cor. 1:24

### **Ephesians 3:9-11**

**9** And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things, **10** In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church, **11** According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

### **Ephesians 1:7-11**

**7** In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace, **8** Which He caused to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence, **9** Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself, **10** Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him; **11** In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

### **I. The Economy of the Mystery Hidden in God**

- A. *Economy* and *mystery* are two great words in the Bible
- B. Economy is from the Greek word *oikonomia* derived from two words "house" and "law" in Greek.
- C. The word economy means "an arrangement, an administration, a dispensation, a stewardship."
- D. It means that God made an arrangement and an administration to do something, which is to dispense Himself into man.
- E. Throughout the ages this mystery concerning His economy was known only by God Himself; it was something hidden in God as a mystery.
- F. In His wisdom and prudence He has made this hidden mystery known to us through His revelation in Christ, that is, through Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.

### **II. The Eternal Purpose (Plan) Which God Purposed in Christ Made Known Through the Church**

- A. For *purpose* we may use the word *plan* also. The eternal plan, or eternal purpose, is a great matter.
- B. The church is the central matter in God's economy.
- C. God has an economy, and in this economy God's divine "business" is the church.
- D. Because the church is the central item in God's economy, it was planned by God.

- E. That is why Ephesians 3:11 speaks of the eternal purpose which God made. God purposed and planned to have the church.
- F. The church is something eternal because it is something of the eternal plan of God. *Eternal* is a matter not only of time but also of nature. *Eternal* means unlimited in time, but it also refers to the uncreated nature.
- G. Only God is uncreated, so only God is eternal. If the church were not mingled with God, the church could not be eternal.

### **STUDY QUESTIONS**

1. What is the meaning of the word “economy” in the New Testament?
2. What happened that opened the mystery of His will to you and I, His believers?
3. How does it affect you as a believer in Christ to know that we were predestinated to be His inheritance according to His eternal purpose?
4. How does it affect you to realize that God has a good pleasure in His heart in which you and I as His believers are directly involved?