

# MAKING KNOWN THE MULTIFARIOUS WISDOM OF GOD TO THE RULERS AND THE AUTHORITIES IN THE HEAVENLIES THROUGH THE CHURCH AS THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE TRIUNE GOD

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The New Testament reveals that there is a twofold testimony of the Triune God and His eternal purpose in the economy of God's full salvation—one that is made known to the people of the earth and one that is made known to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies. In both instances this testimony is made known through the church, but more intrinsically, it is a testimony of the church itself as the enlargement of the Triune God. In John 17, before His impending crucifixion, the Lord prayed concerning the first testimony by asking the Father of glory to glorify those whom the Father had given Him so that the world, by seeing the oneness of the church, would believe that He had been sent by the Father to make the oneness of the Triune God available to all those who believe. Such a testimony unveils the goal of God's eternal purpose to the people of the earth.

In Ephesians 3 Paul speaks concerning the second testimony by declaring that God's glorification through the church, the selected ones given to the Son by the Father, makes the multifarious wisdom of God known to the evil and dark principalities and powers in the air. Such a testimony heralds the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose to the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.

The fulfillment of the eternal purpose of the Triune God, beginning with the Father's selection and predestination in eternity past (1:3-6), advancing with the Son's accomplishment of redemption (vv. 7-12), and culminating with the Spirit's sealing and pledging (vv. 13-14), is the central focus of the operations of the Triune God in Ephesians. These operations are heavenly in nature, and Paul presents them from a heavenly perspective, that is, from the high and uplifted eternal intention that resides in God's heart.

Nothing is higher than the good pleasure of God's will, and the good pleasure of God in Ephesians is not, as many think, just the accomplishment of redemption but, rather, the producing of the church as a testimony of the multifarious wisdom of God (3:9-10), especially to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies, who now are actively seeking to frustrate God's will. Redemption is a vital component related to the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose in Ephesians, but it is presented primarily as a necessary means to reach God's intended goal. The fulfillment of God's eternal purpose ultimately will produce the church as a testimony of an eternally enlarged Triune God.<sup>1</sup>

The church as the enlargement of the Triune God is described in various aspects in Ephesians. In its organic identification with the life of the Triune God, the church is the Body (1:22-23). In its shared personhood and image with the Son, the church is the one new man (2:15; 4:13, 24; cf. Col. 3:10-11). In its familial relationship with the