

The Economy of God to Produce the Church as the Body of Christ in Ephesians

by Ed Marks

A Definition of God's Economy

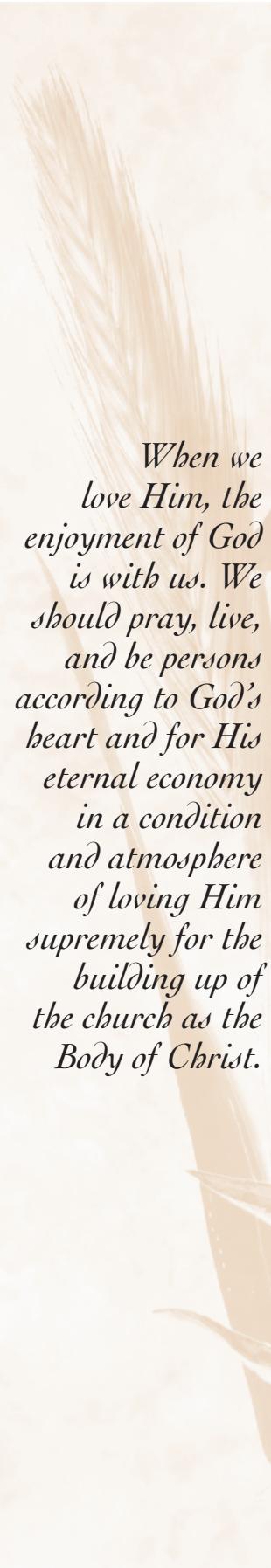
The burden in this article is to present a panoramic view of the economy of God in the book of Ephesians. May God the Father grant us a spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we may see the intrinsic revelation and significance of this wonderful Epistle from the vista of God's economy (1:17).

The Greek word for *economy* is *oikonomia*. This Greek word is composed of two words—*oikos* meaning “house” or “household” and *nomos* meaning “law” or “administration.” Thus, we may say that God’s economy is His household administration. In 1 Timothy 1:3 and 4 Paul tells Timothy to charge certain ones not to teach anything that is different from God’s economy. This indicates that the teaching of God’s economy is the teaching of the apostles (Acts 2:42; Titus 1:9) as the unique teaching in the New Testament.

God’s economy is spoken of in two significant verses in Ephesians. In Ephesians 3:9 Paul declares that a major part of his divine commission was 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.” God’s economy is His eternal plan to dispense Himself into His chosen, predestinated, and redeemed people as their life, their life supply, and their everything for their enjoyment in order to produce, constitute, and build up the organic Body of Christ. In Ephesians 3:2 Paul speaks of “the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you.” The Greek word for *stewardship* here is also *oikonomia*, or *economy*. When this word refers to God’s household administration as His eternal plan, it is His economy; when God’s economy is entrusted to us so that we may cooperate with Him to carry it out, it becomes our stewardship. As believers in Christ, we, like Paul, have been entrusted with a stewardship of the grace of God.

Grace is God in Christ as the Spirit for our enjoyment. Our Triune God is “the God of all grace” (1 Pet. 5:10), “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” is the Lord as life to us for our enjoyment (2 Cor. 13:14), and “the Spirit of grace” brings us into the enjoyment of the Triune God (Heb. 10:29) so that we may dispense Him as grace into others. In his apostleship Paul functioned as a good steward of “the varied grace of God” (1 Pet. 4:10). “Stewards” in Greek are *oikonomos*; they are the Lord’s household administrators who habitually experience Christ as grace and dispense Him as grace into the members of God’s household. This is why Paul says that the grace of God was given “to me for you.” *To me* indicates that we need to experience Christ as grace day by day, receiving Him as “grace upon grace” (John 1:16) through “the word of His grace” (Acts 20:32) so that He reigns within our being as grace (Rom. 5:21). *For you* indicates that we need to dispense the Christ whom we have experienced as grace into others by speaking words that “give grace” to them for their building up (Eph. 4:29).

God’s household, or house, is the church as the house of the living God (2:19; 1 Tim.



When we love Him, the enjoyment of God is with us. We should pray, live, and be persons according to God's heart and for His eternal economy in a condition and atmosphere of loving Him supremely for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ.

3:15-16). The Lord Jesus told us that in order to be ready and prepared for His coming, each believer needs to be a “faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time.” He continued by saying, “Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing” (Matt. 24:45-46). These verses refer to God’s people as His “household” and to the believers who, as faithful and prudent slaves, function to “give them food.” These two verses reveal God’s economy in a practical way, showing that it is His household administration to dispense Himself as spiritual food to all the members of the church as His household through those members who habitually function as His faithful and prudent slaves.

Ephesians Revealing Our Position—in Christ and in the Heavenlies

Paul wrote Ephesians from the position of the heavenlies. Ephesians 2:6 says that God “raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” No matter how we feel, we need to stand with the fact that our position is in the heavenlies; regardless of our feeling, we must exercise our spirit of faith (2 Cor. 4:13) to believe God’s word. Ephesians 1:3 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.” Right now we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. We are not only in the heavenlies; we are also in Christ. We are organically united to Him, joined to Him, identified with Him, and one with Him as members of His Body. Paul mentions the words *in Christ* or *in Him* at least twenty times in Ephesians (1:1, 3-4, 9-10, 12-13, 20; 2:6-7, 10, 13, 15; 3:6, 11-12, 21; 4:21, 32). We must believe in and declare the divine fact that we are in the heavenlies and in Christ.

Ephesians Revealing Our Condition—in Love

Furthermore, Ephesians uses the phrase *in love* six times (1:4; 3:17; 4:2, 15-16; 5:2). Our position is “in the heavenlies” and “in Christ,” and our condition is “in love.” Nothing but love can keep us in a proper relationship with the Lord. The last verse of Ephesians says, “Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility” (6:24). To love Him in incorruptibility is to love Him in the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). This is to love Him in all the incorruptible things revealed in Ephesians. These things include the church as the Body of Christ, the new man, Christ making His home in our hearts, the church being the household of God, the dwelling place of God, the bride of Christ, the whole armor of God, the fullness of God, grace and reality, and love and light. We need to love Him in all the incorruptible items of the new creation revealed in Ephesians. When we love Him in this way, the enjoyment of God is with us. We should pray, live, and be persons according to God’s heart and for His eternal economy in a condition and atmosphere of loving Him supremely for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ.

Ephesians Giving an All-encompassing View of the Economy of God and Showing How We May Be Persons Living in Its Reality

Three major points in Ephesians give an all-encompassing view of the economy of God along with how we may become persons who live in the reality of His economy to produce the Body of Christ. It is important to note that all three of these great matters are in each of the six chapters of Ephesians.

- (1) Each chapter of Ephesians reveals the mingled spirit (our human spirit regenerated and indwelt by the compound, all-inclusive, consummated Spirit).
- (2) Each chapter of Ephesians is composed of the divine economy, the dispensing of the Triune God into the members of the Body of Christ.
- (3) Each chapter of Ephesians unveils the mystery of the church as the Body of Christ, as the organism of the Triune God, from a particular point of view.

Each Chapter of Ephesians Revealing the Mingled Spirit

Each chapter of Ephesians reveals the mingled spirit—our human spirit regenerated and indwelt by the compound, all-inclusive, consummated Spirit (Phil. 1:19; cf. Exo. 30:22-25); the divine Spirit dwells in our human spirit, and these two spirits are mingled together as one spirit (Rom. 8:16; 2 Cor. 3:17; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17). When we turn to our spirit and exercise our spirit (1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 1:6-7), we touch the Body, because the Body is in our spirit. We cannot know the Body, be in the Body, and be for the Body practically if we do not exercise our spirit. Living in the spirit is the secret to the Christian life and the church life (Rom. 8:4). We must live in our spirit to know God's economy and to participate in His divine dispensing.

Ephesians 1:17

Ephesians 1:17 reveals that we must pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation to see the mystery of God's economy, which is to dispense Christ as the mystery of God into God's chosen people in order to make them the reality of the Body of Christ as the mystery of Christ (v. 18; 3:9; 5:32; 6:19; Col. 2:2). In the divine and mystical realm, seeing equals entering; what we see is what we enter into. In John 3:3 the Lord said to Nicodemus, "Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Then in verse 5 He said, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This indicates that our seeing is our entering. Our seeing with a spirit of wisdom and revelation is crucial if we want to enter into the mystery of God's economy—Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ.

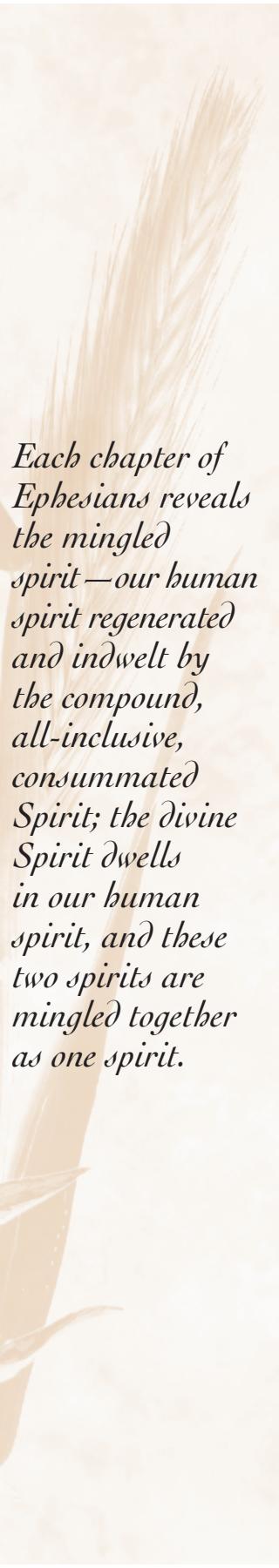
Ephesians 2:22

Ephesians 2:22 says, "You also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit." This verse may be understood in two ways. The first is that the dwelling place of God is our spirit, meaning that our spirit is the "address" of the Triune God, the place where He lives. The second is that God's dwelling place, His temple, which is the church as the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21), is in our spirit, implying that the Body exists divinely and mystically in our spirit. We cannot touch and realize the Body life unless we exercise our spirit and live in our spirit. Because our spirit is the dwelling place of God, we can simply pray throughout the day, "Lord, keep me in my spirit." We need to be those who remain in our spirit all day long by calling on the name of the Lord (Gen. 4:26; Acts 2:21; 9:14, 21; 22:16; Rom. 10:12-13; 1 Cor. 1:2; Psa. 116:4, 13, 17), enjoying the Lord in our spirit as the present grace (2 Tim. 4:22).

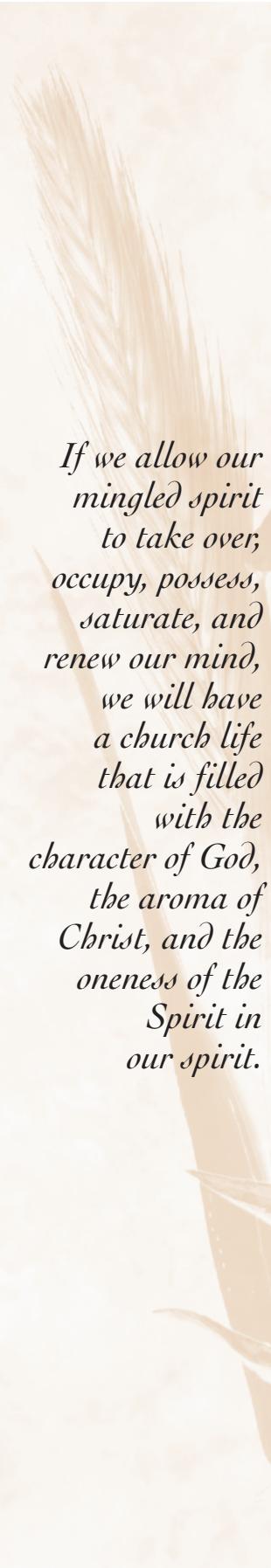
Ephesians 3:5, 16

Ephesians 3:5, which says that the mystery "has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit," shows that the mingled spirit is the means by which Christ and the church are revealed to the apostles and prophets. We cannot see the vision of Christ and the church without exercising our mingled spirit. We must be those who use, pay attention to, care for, and exercise our mingled spirit, especially to know the Body of Christ.

Ephesians 3:16 and 1 Peter 3:4 reveal that our spirit is our inner man, our new person, our new spirit, our new man (Ezek. 36:26). We need to pray to be strengthened with the fourfold power of Christ—His resurrecting power, ascending power, subjecting power, and heading-up power—into the inner man for the reality of the Body life, which is the inner experience of the indwelling Christ as life for God's glory in the church (Eph. 1:19-23; 3:16-21). Our outer man is decaying, being consumed, and wasting away, but our inner man is being renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16). We have an inner man, a new person, a new spirit, so that we can contact and worship God (John 4:24). A wonderful way to build up the church is to daily pray Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:16-21. The church life is absolutely something in the inner man as our new person. There is a new person within each of us. All these new persons added together equal the church. The church is the



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If we allow our mingled spirit to take over, occupy, possess, saturate, and renew our mind, we will have a church life that is filled with the character of God, the aroma of Christ, and the oneness of the Spirit in our spirit.

summation, the sum total, of all these new persons. The church life is in our spirit; the reality of the Body of Christ is the totality of all our spirits. By our regeneration we are born of God in our spirit (John 1:13; 3:6), and our God is now “the Father of spirits” (Heb. 12:9; cf. Num. 16:22; 27:16). All that the unsearchably rich God is to us is in our spirit (Rom. 1:9; 2:29). Romans 8:16 says that “the Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.” This verse uses the words *our spirit* (singular), not *our spirits* (plural). The Spirit witnesses with our collective spirit, not with our individual spirits. The totality of “my spirit” (1:9) and “your spirit” (Gal. 6:18) is “our spirit.” “Our spirit” includes Martin Luther’s spirit, John Wesley’s spirit, John Nelson Darby’s spirit, your spirit, and my spirit. Thus, to be in our spirit is to be in the reality of the universal Body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:23

Ephesians 4:23, which charges the believers to be “renewed in the spirit of your mind,” reveals that we must allow the renewing Spirit mingled with our regenerated spirit to become the spirit of our mind so that we can be renewed to become as new as the New Jerusalem for the reality of the Body of Christ as the new man (v. 24; Titus 3:5; 2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 2:15; Col. 3:10-11). We need to allow our mingled spirit to subdue, take over, occupy, possess, and saturate our mind so that our mingled spirit becomes the spirit of our mind. If we allow our mingled spirit to take over, occupy, possess, saturate, and renew our mind, we will have a church life that is filled with the character of God, the aroma of Christ, and the oneness of the Spirit in our spirit. To be renewed in the spirit of our mind is to eliminate all natural concepts concerning the things of human life and be made new again by the teaching and enlightening of the Holy Spirit. To do this we need, by the Lord’s mercy, to exercise our spirit to pray and to read the Word every day. We should not take our daily reading of the Word for granted. Every day we should read the Bible and read the proper New Testament ministry that opens up the Bible.

In human history there was a long period of time called the Dark Ages. During that time the Bible was “locked up” and was accessible only to certain ones within the sphere of Roman Catholicism who were knowledgeable in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. In other words, the Bible was not accessible to the common man during the Dark Ages. A believer in Christ can testify that if he does not read the Bible for even one day, that day will be a dark day. This is because the word of God is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psa. 119:105; 2 Pet. 1:19). Therefore, we need to open our Bible and read it every day with the exercise of our spirit in a spirit and atmosphere of prayer; this is so that we can be renewed in the spirit of our mind. In John 8:31 the Lord said, “If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples.” If we are to be His true disciples, we need to exercise our spirit to abide in His word. Verse 32 goes on to say, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” The only way that we can enjoy the Son as the liberating truth is by abiding in His word; then the renewing Spirit will have the way to spread into, occupy, possess, take over, and saturate our mind.

Ephesians 5:18

Ephesians 5:18 reveals that we must be “filled in spirit” with the pneumatic Christ as the beautifying, bride-preparing Spirit mingled with our spirit; this is so that we can be prepared to be Christ’s glorious church, His beautiful bride and the house of God’s beauty, for God’s radiant expression (vv. 26-27; Isa. 60:7, 19; 62:3; Gen. 1:26). We need to ask the Lord continually to fill us with the Spirit in our spirit. When we are filled in spirit, we are filled with the beautifying, bride-preparing Spirit mingled with our spirit. This filling prepares us to be Christ’s glorious bride. In Isaiah 60:7 God said, “I will beautify the house of My beauty.” Verse 19 says that our God is our beauty and by being filled with Him as the Spirit, we are becoming His crown of beauty for His expression (62:3). By being filled in spirit, we are fulfilling God’s eternal purpose, that for which He created man in His image, that is, for His glory, His corporate expression (Gen. 1:26). As those who have been created, formed, and made by God for His glory (Isa. 43:7), we are His vessels of mercy prepared unto glory by being daily filled with Him as the God of glory (Rom.

9:21, 23; Acts 7:2). We desire to be continually filled in spirit with Him as the Father of glory (Eph. 1:17), the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8), and the Spirit of glory (1 Pet. 4:14) for His radiant expression. We give thanks to our unsearchably rich Triune God of glory for predestinating us unto His glory (1 Cor. 2:7), calling us into His glory (1 Pet. 5:10), transforming us from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18), and leading us into His glory (Heb. 2:10). Our expectation and living hope are to continually be filled in our regenerated spirit with Him as the unsearchably rich Christ (Eph. 3:8) unto all the fullness of God (v. 19), the overflow of God, to become His glorious bride, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9-11).

Ephesians 6:18

Ephesians 6:18 reveals that we must pray “at every time in spirit” in order to experience the slaying word of the Spirit mingled with our spirit. In this way everything of God’s adversary can be killed within us, enabling us to rule in the divine life of the Spirit over Satan, sin, and death for God’s dominion. Verses 17 and 18 of Ephesians 6 say, “Receive... the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit.” We need to receive the word of God by means of all prayer, praying at every time in spirit, so that the word of God would become a sword to us. This sword is for slaying the enemy as God’s adversary within us. God’s word slays all the elements of Satan, sin, and death within our fallen being so that we can represent God with His dominion by reigning in life by the Spirit in our spirit (Rom. 5:17). God’s eternal purpose can be seen in the creation of man in Genesis 1:26; man was created with the image of God to express Him and with the dominion of God to represent Him. In Ephesians 5 we can see God’s expression through the church as the glorious bride of Christ, and in chapter 6 we can see God’s dominion exercised over Satan, sin, and death through the church as the corporate warrior of God.

Each Chapter of Ephesians Revealing the Dispensing of the Triune God for the Fulfillment of His Economy

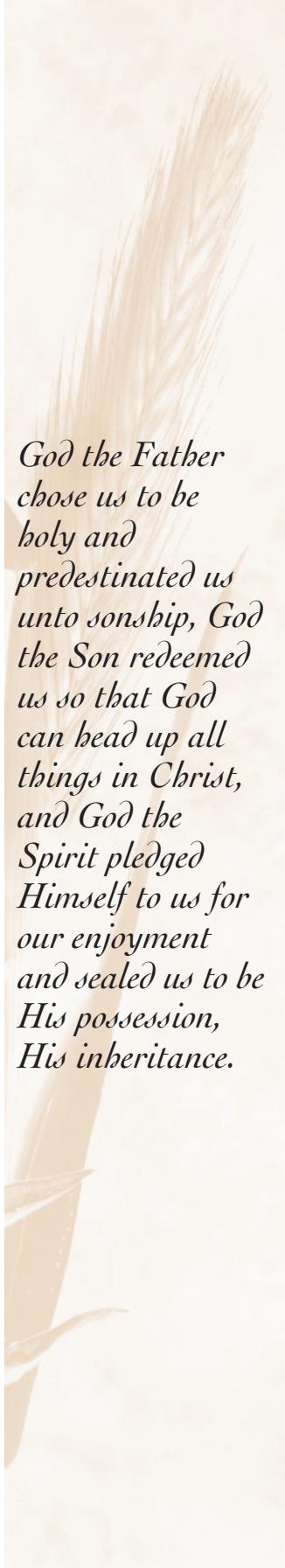
Each chapter of Ephesians, concerning the producing, existing, growing, building up, and fighting of the church as the Body of Christ, is composed of the divine economy, the dispensing of the Triune God into the members of the Body of Christ.

Ephesians 1:3-14

Ephesians 1 unveils that God the Father chose and predestinated us to be the members of the Body of Christ in eternity (vv. 3-6), that God the Son redeemed us (vv. 7-12), and that God the Spirit, as a pledge, sealed us (vv. 13-14), thus imparting Himself into His believers for the formation of the church, which is the Body of Christ, the fullness of the One who fills all in all (vv. 18-23). The Father chose us to be holy and predestinated us unto sonship before the foundation of the world (v. 4). Then God the Son redeemed us not only to accomplish His judicial redemption but also to head up all things in Christ (v. 10). Because of the rebellion of Satan and the fall of man, everything in this universe is upside-down, but when God the Son redeemed us, He began to head us up. Everything in our being, in our daily life, and eventually, in the entire universe will be turned right-side up through the heading up of all things in Christ. According to Ephesians 1, God the Father chose us to be holy and predestinated us unto sonship, God the Son redeemed us so that God can head up all things in Christ, and God the Spirit pledged Himself to us for our enjoyment and sealed us to be His possession, His inheritance. Now He is continually imparting Himself into His believers for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ, the fullness of the One who fills all in all (vv. 22-23).

Ephesians 2:18

Ephesians 2 shows that in the Divine Trinity all the believers, both Jews and Gentiles, have access unto God the Father, through God the Son, in God the Spirit (v. 18). This indicates that the three of the Divine Trinity coexist and coinhere simultaneously, even



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*The building up
of the church
is by Christ's
making His
home in our
heart, making
our heart,
our intrinsic
constitution,
His home.
This is
the ultimate
experience of
our participation
in God in His
Divine Trinity.*

after His passing through all the processes of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. The Son as the Accomplisher is the means, the Spirit as the Executor is the application, and the Father as the Originator is the source of our enjoyment. We do not want to lose our enjoyment of the Triune God. If we realize that we have lost our enjoyment, we can pray, "Lord, restore to me the gladness and the joy of Your salvation" (Psa. 51:12; John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; 1 John 1:4; 2 Cor. 1:24).

Ephesians 3:14-19

Ephesians 3 conveys the apostle's prayer that God the Father would grant us, the believers, to be strengthened through God the Spirit into our inner man, that Christ, God the Son, may make His home in our hearts, that is, occupy our entire inner being, so that we may be filled unto all the fullness of God (vv. 14-19), the climax of our experience of and participation in God in His Divine Trinity. Based on chapter 3, we may liken the Triune God to a "machine" for the purpose of dispensing Himself into His chosen and redeemed people. In order for this machine to work, there is the need of "operators," and we are the operators. We can operate this wonderful machine through our prayer. We need to pray that God the Father would strengthen us through God the Spirit into the inner man (our spirit); this is so that Christ the Son would make His home in our heart for the building of Himself into our being for the mutual abode of God and man (John 14:23; 15:4-5). By God's building Himself into our heart, we become His habitation, and He becomes our habitation; He is built into us as His home, and we are built into Him as our home, our dwelling place. The building up of the church is by Christ's making His home in our heart, making our heart, our intrinsic constitution, His home. This is the ultimate experience of our participation in God in His Divine Trinity.

Ephesians 4:4-6

Ephesians 4 portrays how the processed God as the Spirit, the Lord, and the Father is mingled with the Body of Christ (vv. 4-6) so that all the members may experience the Divine Trinity. These verses actually unveil a universal "four-in-one" entity—one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, and one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all. The Spirit is mentioned first among the three of the Divine Trinity because the Spirit is the essence, the life, and the life supply of the Body. There is one Body constituted with one Spirit as the essence of the Body, one Lord as the element of the Body, and one God and Father as the source and Originator of the Body.

Ephesians 4:4 is a verse for our experience in the Body of Christ. It speaks of "one Body and one Spirit." When we are about to do anything out of our desire to serve the Lord, we need to ask ourselves two questions. The first question is, "Is this the Spirit?" If the answer is yes, then we need to ask the second question: "Is this for the Body?" If we can say, "Yes, this is the Spirit, and this is for the Body," we can proceed to follow the Lord according to His leading for the building up of His Body. Then all that we do will be with the one Lord as the element and the one Father, who is over us, through us, and in us.

Ephesians 5:19-20

Ephesians 5 exhorts the believers to praise the Lord, God the Son, with the songs of God the Spirit and to give thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, to God the Father (vv. 19-20). This is to praise and thank the God who has passed through incarnation, human living, death, and resurrection in His Divine Trinity to become our enjoyment of Him as the Triune God. We praise the Lord, God the Son, with spiritual songs. These songs are of God the Spirit for us to give thanks to God the Father. As we sing spiritual songs and psalms with our heart to the Lord, we are "giving thanks at all times for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father" (v. 20). This ushers us into the full enjoyment of the Triune God so that we may experience His divine dispensing for His divine economy.

Ephesians 6:10-20

Ephesians 6 instructs us to fight the spiritual warfare by being empowered in the Lord, God the Son, putting on the whole armor of God the Father, and wielding the sword of God the Spirit, which is our experience and enjoyment of the Triune God even in spiritual warfare (vv. 10-20). It is necessary that we realize that the whole armor of God is for the entire Body. In this way we take our standing in the Body to fight the battle in the Body. We must always remember that spiritual warfare is a matter of the Body and is for the building up of the Body. This is the dispensing of the Divine Trinity for the divine economy in each chapter of Ephesians.

Each Chapter of Ephesians Unveiling the Mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ

Each chapter of Ephesians unveils the mystery of the Body of Christ as the organism of the Triune God from a particular point of view. The Body of Christ as the organism of the Triune God is the top revelation of the whole Bible. Therefore, we need to go through Ephesians chapter by chapter to see the Body of Christ as the organism of the Triune God.

Ephesians 1:3-23

Ephesians 1 reveals that the Body of Christ is the issue of the dispensing of the processed Trinity and the transmitting of the transcending Christ (vv. 3-23). The Father's dispensing in His choosing and predestinating issues in many sons as His house in sanctification (vv. 3-6). He chose us to be holy and predestinated us unto sonship. Our being chosen to be holy indicates that we have His holy and divine nature and are partakers of His holiness (2 Pet. 1:4; Heb. 12:10). Being predestinated unto sonship indicates that we have His divine life to be the sons of God. Revelation 22:14 says, "Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city." We have washed our robes in the blood of the Lamb; therefore, we have the right to eat of the tree of life and to participate in God's divinity. We do not participate in His incommunicable Godhead but in His communicable divinity. For us to participate in God's divinity is for us to partake of His divinity for our enjoyment. The fact that He chose us to be holy indicates that we can participate in His divine and holy nature. The fact that He predestinated us unto sonship indicates that we can participate in His divine eternal life.

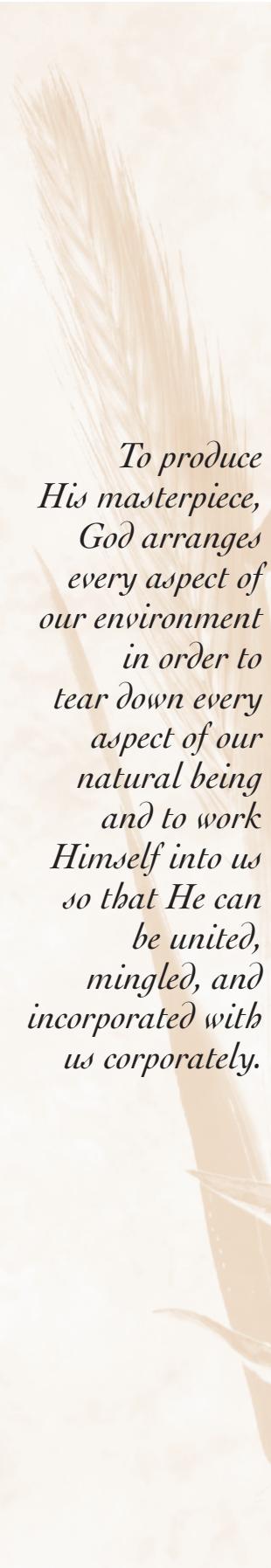
The Son's dispensing in His redeeming and saving issues in the believers as God's inheritance in His transformation (Eph. 1:7-12). The Son's dispensing enables us to participate in His divine element. With the Father, we have the divine nature and the divine life; through the Son, we have the divine element. The Spirit's dispensing in His sealing and pledging issues in God becoming the believers' inheritance unto their perfection (vv. 13-14). The Spirit's dispensing in His sealing and pledging indicates the dispensing of the divine essence. We therefore can participate in the divine nature, in the divine life, in the divine element, and in the divine essence. Thus, we are made divine. We are the divine sons of God, and we have the right to participate in God's divinity.

When a piece of paper is stamped with a seal, the essence of the ink permeates the paper, and the image of the seal is put onto the paper. If a book is stamped with the owner's name, this indicates that the book belongs to its owner. When God seals us, He seals us with His essence, mingling Himself with us. When He seals us, He is also putting His image on us for us to express Him. The more He seals us, the more image and essence of the Triune God we possess. Furthermore, when He seals us, He possesses us and claims more and more ownership of our being. It is an experiential fact that we can remain and be kept in oneness with one another by remaining and keeping ourselves in the fine dispensing of the sealing Spirit.

The transcending Christ's transmitting of the Divine Trinity issues in the church, His Body, as His expression unto the believers' consummation (vv. 19-23). Christ rose from the dead, He ascended to the right hand of God, all things were subjected under His feet, and



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*To produce
His masterpiece,
God arranges
every aspect of
our environment
in order to
tear down every
aspect of our
natural being
and to work
Himself into us
so that He can
be united,
mingled, and
incorporated with
us corporately.*

God gave Him to be Head over all things “to the church” (v. 22). The word *to* indicates that Christ in His resurrecting power, ascending power, subjecting power, and heading-up power is being transmitted into the church. If we unreservedly and unconditionally open our entire being to the Lord in prayer, we will enjoy the divine and heavenly transmission of the heavenly Christ with His fourfold power into our being. When we put these points from Ephesians 1 together, we can see that we possess the divine nature, the divine life, the divine element, the divine essence, and the divine power so that we can participate in the Triune God for the producing and building up of the church as the Body of Christ.

Ephesians 2:10, 14-16

Ephesians 2 reveals that the Body of Christ is the masterpiece of the Triune God as the one new man (vv. 10, 15-16). Although we are the masterpiece of the Triune God, we may often feel that we are a “mess-terpiece.” This is because we are under the constructing work of the Triune God, being remodeled and even repaired by Him with His divine life. When a road is being repaired, there is often a sign that says Men at Work. In a certain sense, we can put a sign on ourselves that says God at Work. God is working Himself into us to transform us from all the damage that we incurred as a result of man’s fall; by this God is making us His masterpiece. To produce His masterpiece, God arranges every aspect of our environment in order to tear down every aspect of our natural being and to work Himself into us so that He can be united, mingled, and incorporated with us corporately. In this way we dwell in Him and He dwells in us so that we become His glorious expression in this universe as the Body of Christ to be the one new man and, consummately, the New Jerusalem.

On the cross Christ created the one new man in Himself by abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, which are all the forms or ways of living and worship that divide mankind (vv. 14-15). When the Lord died on the cross, He was doing His greatest work, for His death was a new-man-creating death. In His death in the flesh on the cross, He abolished the law of the commandments in ordinances and created in His resurrection the one new man; in His resurrection the new man was brought into being. Christ’s dying and resurrecting are inseparably one; therefore, at the darkest time in His death, He was doing His greatest work by creating the one new man.

We thank the Lord that all the commandments in ordinances were crucified on the cross. It is very notable that Hudson Taylor, a great missionary to China, dropped his Western way of dress and took the Chinese way of dress in order to gain the Chinese people. He took the apostle Paul’s way of becoming all things to all men that he “might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22). He denied his Western culture with its way of living and became Chinese to the Chinese so that he could gain the Chinese. He did that because he was absolute for Christ and the gospel. Our many forms and ways of living and worship can divide us from others, so all of them need to remain on the cross as we abound in the work of the Lord for the sake of Christ and the gospel.

The worldly people regard cultural differences as a source of prestige, but in the church, the Body of Christ as the one new man, we have lost this prestige; now our only prestige is Christ and the genuine oneness (Eph. 4:3-4). *Prestige* refers to the level of respect with which others regard us. In the Body of Christ as the one new man, we have lost all our natural prestige. Our only prestige now is the presence of Christ and the keeping of the oneness of the Spirit. In order to live in the reality of the one new man, we should be “diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace” (v. 3).

We need to realize that in the one new man there is only one person—the all-inclusive Christ. This one new man has one mouth to speak the same thing in one accord (Col. 1:18; 3:10-11; Eph. 2:15; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10). We cannot have different teachings other than the unique teaching of God’s economy (1 Tim. 1:3-4), because the Body of Christ as the one new man has only one mouth, which speaks the same thing—the economy of the Triune God. Romans 15:6 says that “with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” First Corinthians 1:10 charges us to be “attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.”

Ephesians 3:2, 7-9, 14-19

Ephesians 3 reveals that the Body of Christ is the fullness of the Triune God by our being supplied with the riches of Christ and by Christ's making His home in our hearts (vv. 8, 14-19). God has an economy to distribute the unsearchable riches of Christ into our being so that we become His fullness, His expression (vv. 2, 7-9, 19). Christ distributes His riches into our being, and then we become the expression of these riches. The expression of these riches is the fullness of Christ (1:23) and of God (3:19) for His expression.

We need to pray daily to be strengthened into our inner man so that the Triune God may carry out His unique work to build Himself in Christ into our hearts and thus become our intrinsic constitution for the mutual abode of God and man (vv. 16-17; John 14:23). This is the Triune God's unique work. Whenever we pray this prayer, we are praying for Him to accomplish His unique work.

Ephesians 4:4-6, 11-16

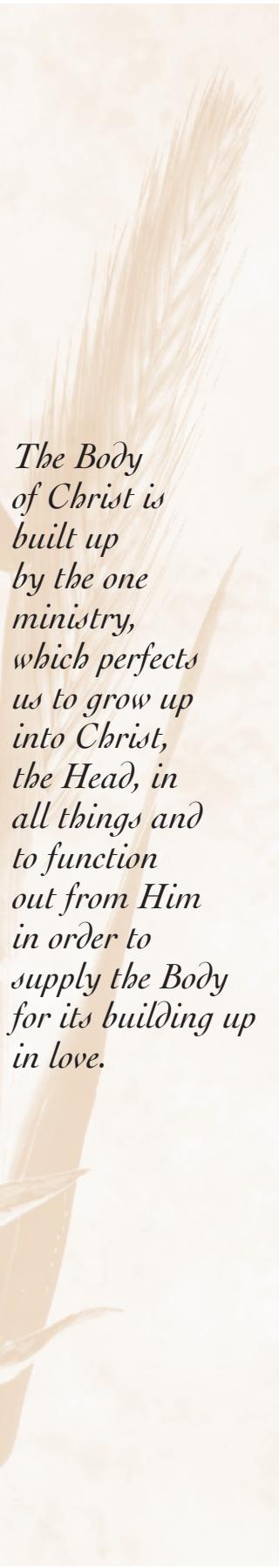
Ephesians 4 reveals that the church as the Body of Christ is the mingling of the processed Triune God with the regenerated believers and that this one Body is built up by the one ministry. The one Spirit, one Lord, and one God and Father are mingled together with the believers into one entity to be the organic Body of Christ (vv. 4-6). The Body of Christ is built up by the one ministry, which perfects us to grow up into Christ, the Head, in all things and to function out from Him in order to supply the Body for its building up in love (vv. 11-16). It is a great blessing to be under the unique New Testament ministry (2 Cor. 4:1). Under this ministry we are being perfected to grow up into Christ and to function as a channel of supply out from Him for the Body's building up.

Ephesians 5:2, 8-9, 18, 25-27

Ephesians 5 reveals that the church as the Body of Christ is composed of the children of light to be the bride of Christ for the satisfaction of Christ. We were once not only dark but also darkness itself because we were at that time only one with Satan; now we are not only children of light but also light itself because we are one with God in the Lord (v. 8; Matt. 5:14). Furthermore, the church is signified by a golden lampstand. This lampstand signifies the Triune God: its golden element and substance signify God the Father in His divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), its form and image signify Christ as the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15), and its appearance and expression with its seven lamps signify the sevenfold intensified Spirit for the shining forth of the Triune God (Rev. 4:5). Thus, in this sense, we may say that the church is the reproduction of the Triune God.

The Old Testament depicts the lampstand as a living, golden almond tree, blossoming with resurrection life as the shining light, which is the fruit of the light for the full expression of the Triune God (Exo. 25:31-34; Num. 17:8; Rev. 1:11-12; Eph. 5:9; Gal. 5:22). The light that shines out from the lampstand is also the Triune God. "The fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22 is "the fruit of the light" in Ephesians 5:9, which "consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth." "Goodness denotes God the Father, for the only one who is good is God (Matt. 19:17). Righteousness denotes God the Son, for Christ came to accomplish God's purpose according to God's righteous procedure (Rom. 5:17-18, 21). Truth denotes God the Spirit, for He is the Spirit of reality (John 14:17)" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, Eph. 5:9, note 1). Therefore, the Triune God, who is the reality of the lampstand, and the church, as the reproduction of the Triune God, shine forth the Triune God as the light of the lampstand.

As children of light, walking in love and light, we will be prepared to be Christ's glorious bride by the life-giving Spirit's sanctifying us, cleansing us by the washing of the water in the word (Eph. 5:2, 8, 18, 26-27). Ephesians 5:25 through 27 unveils God's eternal purpose. Verse 25 says, "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her." This refers to Christ as our Redeemer in the past. Verse 26 says, "That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word." This refers to Christ as the life-giving



*The Body
of Christ is
built up
by the one
ministry,
which perfects
us to grow up
into Christ,
the Head, in
all things and
to function
out from Him
in order to
supply the Body
for its building up
in love.*

The economy of God ultimately consummates in the New Jerusalem as the ultimate union, mingling, and incorporation of the Triune God with the regenerated, transformed, and glorified tripartite man so that His glory in humanity can eternally shine forth.

Spirit in the present. Then verse 27 says, “That He might present the church to Himself glorious.” This refers to Christ as the Bridegroom in the future. The words *gave Himself up for her* in verse 25 indicate judicial redemption; *the washing of the water in the word* in verse 26 indicates organic salvation (being saved in Christ’s life in Romans 5:10); and the words *present the church to Himself glorious* in Ephesians 5:27 indicate a bridal presentation. Through judicial redemption and organic salvation Christ achieves His bridal presentation. Ephesians 5:25-27 covers the entire span of Christ’s work to carry out God’s New Testament economy through judicial redemption, organic salvation, and bridal presentation.

Ephesians 6:10-20

Ephesians 6 reveals that the Body of Christ is the corporate warrior of the Triune God for the defeating of God’s enemy. Spiritual warfare is not an individual matter but a matter of the Body; the church as the Body is a corporate warrior, and only the corporate warrior can wear the whole armor of God (vv. 10-20; cf. Matt. 16:18). According to the context of Romans 16:20, Satan is crushed under the feet of the saints who are in the Body and for the Body. Prayer is the unique and vital means by which we apply the whole armor of God, making every item of the armor of God available to us (Eph. 6:18).

All spiritual warfare has its source in the conflict between Satan’s will and God’s will; we must have our will subdued and transformed by Christ through sufferings so that it chooses God’s will (Isa. 14:12-14; Matt. 6:10; 26:42; Phil. 2:13). According to Isaiah 14, in his rebellion against God, Lucifer said, “I will,” five times. He said, “I will ascend to heaven;... / I will exalt my throne. / And I will sit upon the mount of assembly / ...I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; / I will make myself like the Most High” (vv. 13-14). His thought was, “I will dethrone God and take His place.” Although Satan as the Daystar (v. 12) said, “I will,” five times, the Lord said, “I will,” only once in Matthew 16:18: “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” This one “I will” negates and defeats the five satanic “I wills.” The Lord’s word in Matthew 16:18—“I will build My church”—is the greatest prophecy in the Bible, and this is what He is doing in this age.

Song of Songs speaks typologically concerning Christ’s loving seeker’s will by referring to her neck. Song of Songs 4:4 says, “Your neck is like the tower of David, / Built for an armory: / A thousand bucklers hang on it, / All the shields of the mighty men.” This indicates that our neck, our will, should be rich in the defending power of Christ in resurrection. Verse 4 of chapter 7 says, “Your neck is like a tower of ivory.” Ivory signifies resurrection. This means that our will should be subdued and transformed by Christ through suffering so that it submits to the headship of Christ to choose God’s will and to be rich in the defending power of Christ in resurrection.

In order to see the economy of God in Ephesians, we need to put these three major points together—our mingled spirit, the dispensing of the Triune God for the fulfillment of His economy, and the church as the organic Body of Christ. All three of these items are seen in each chapter of Ephesians. Together they show that the economy of God (His household administration according to His heart’s desire) revealed in Ephesians is accomplished by the exercise of our mingled spirit for the dispensing of the Triune God into us unto the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ (1 Tim. 1:3-6; Eph. 1:5; 3:8-10; 1:10; 3:2; cf. 1 Tim. 3:9; Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4; 5:32). This ultimately consummates in the New Jerusalem as the ultimate union, mingling, and incorporation of the Triune God with the regenerated, transformed, and glorified tripartite man (Rev. 21:2, 9-11) so that His glory in humanity can eternally shine forth in splendor radiantly. **AFC**

Work Cited

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