

# *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.