

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2018**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CENTRAL VISION**

Message Eleven

Knowing the Church as the Mystery of Christ

Scripture Reading: Col. 2:2; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; 3:4-5, 9-11; 5:32

I. The church is a hidden mystery in God's eternal economy—Eph. 3:9-11:

- A. God's eternal economy is related to God's will, God's good pleasure, and God's purpose—Rev. 4:11; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11:
 - 1. God's will is God's wish; God's will is what He wants to do; God has made known the mystery of His will to us through His revelation in Christ, that is, through Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension—v. 9; 3:9.
 - 2. God's good pleasure—the desire of His heart—is of His will and is embodied in His will, so His will comes first—1:5.
 - 3. The determined will of God became God's purpose, His intent set beforehand—v. 9; 3:11.
- B. The eternal economy of God is God's eternal purpose, God's determined intent; with a definite and strong determination, God intends to have the church—1:9; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9.
- C. God made His eternal economy in Christ—Eph. 3:11:
 - 1. The Christ revealed in the New Testament is the embodiment of the Triune God and all the processes through which He has passed—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Heb. 1:3.
 - 2. Christ is the element, sphere, means, goal, and aim of God's eternal economy—Eph. 1:3-6.
 - 3. Christ is the center of God's eternal economy, and all the contents of the economy of God are simply Christ—Col. 2:9.
 - 4. Christ is the element and sphere in which, with which, and through which God carries out His economy to have the church, the Body of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23.

II. According to Ephesians 3:4, the church has a particular title—the *mystery of Christ*:

- A. In God's economy, as revealed in the New Testament, there are mainly two mysteries:
 - 1. The first mystery, revealed in the book of Colossians, is Christ as the mystery of God—God embodied, God defined, God explained, God expressed, and God made visible—2:2.
 - 2. The second mystery, revealed in the book of Ephesians, especially in chapter 3, is the church as the mystery of Christ—v. 4:
 - a. Although Christ is mysterious, the church is the manifestation of Christ—1:22-23.
 - b. The church, as the Body of Christ, is the expression of Christ—4:15-16.

- c. When we see the church, we see Christ; when we come into the church, we come into Christ; when we contact the church, we contact Christ.
 - B. The church is a corporate unit produced out of Christ, who is the mystery of God—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4; 5:30-32:
 - 1. The all-inclusive Christ is the mystery of the mysterious God, and such a Christ as the mystery of God produces a unit, which is the church.
 - 2. Mystery produces mystery; Christ, who is the mystery of God, brings forth the church, which is the mystery of Christ.
- III. The mystery of Christ has been revealed to the apostles and prophets in their spirit by revelation—3:5:**
 - A. The mingled spirit is the means by which the New Testament revelation concerning Christ and the church is unveiled to the apostles and prophets.
 - B. When our spirit is mingled with the divine Spirit, our spirit becomes the organ in which the mystery of Christ is revealed—1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 1:17; 3:5.
- IV. Through the church as the mystery of Christ, God's multifarious wisdom will be made known to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies—v. 10:**
 - A. God desires to demonstrate to the powers of Satan how wise He is; therefore, through the church God makes His wisdom known not mainly to human beings but to those rebellious angels who are the followers of God's enemy.
 - B. The church through which God's wisdom is so marvelously displayed is God's masterpiece—2:10:
 - 1. In the eyes of God the most wonderful thing in the universe is the church, for through the church God's multifarious wisdom is made known to Satan and his angels.
 - 2. The day is coming when, through the church, Satan and his angels will be put to shame; they will realize that everything they have done has given God the opportunity to manifest His wisdom—3:9-11.
- V. The great mystery—Christ and the church—is the meaning of the universe—Rev. 4:11; Eph. 5:32:**
 - A. Christ and the church are the meaning of the universe and of human life.
 - B. God's intention in His creation of all things, including man, was that man would be mingled with God to produce the church—Zech. 12:1; Eph. 3:9.
- VI. The desire of God's heart is to have the mystery of Christ—the Body of Christ—as the increase and expression of Christ—1:5, 9, 11, 22-23:**
 - A. The Body life is the ultimate satisfaction of our spiritual experience—5:30:
 - 1. Unless we reach this ultimate point, we cannot be fully satisfied.
 - 2. We will be fully satisfied only when we realize that we are part of the mystery of Christ and live as members of the Body of Christ—Rom. 12:4-5.
 - B. In order to know the Christian life, we must know the mystery of Christ—Col. 1:27; Phil. 1:19-21a.
 - C. The mystery of Christ should be our daily life; without this mystery, our life would be merely the life of a human being, not the life of a Christian—Eph. 3:4; 1 Tim. 3:15-16.