

The Church: God's Plan

by Wayne Goff

“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church” — Ephesians 5:32.

God planned the church (“the called out”) before time began. Jesus died for it, built it and purchased it with His own blood, Acts 20:28. “... *the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*” Not one drop of blood was used to purchase anything else! But Jesus died to “*seek and save the lost*” (Lk. 19:10). So His blood went to purchase and redeem lost souls. But once those lost souls are redeemed, Jesus added them to His church. There is not one saved soul outside of the church of Christ!

God the Father made Jesus to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, Ephesians 1:22. But this occurred after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Matthew 28:18-20. In his death, burial and resurrection, Jesus conquered Satan, sin, and death, Hebrews 2:14-15. So He arose victorious, and reigns today as Head of the church, far above all principalities, might, dominion and every name that is named (Eph. 1:20-21; Phil. 2:9-10). All those who have been saved by Him, and are subject to Him, are a part of the blood-bought institution — the church.

You see, “*the church*” (Acts 2:47) is not a building, nor a humanly devised organization. “*The church*” is composed of saved people. These people have been *separated* from the world by having their sins forgiven. These people have been *called out* of a world of sin, and *into a holy relationship* in the Lord. “*Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty’*” (2 Cor. 6:17-18). God calls us to be holy “*because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’*” (1 Peter 1:16). “*Holy*” means “set apart, morally clean.”

Having been added by the Lord to His church, we are to be His holy bride. The apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 5 that the husband-wife relationship is **equivalent** to the relationship of Jesus and His bride, the church! What is true of the closeness, nearness and dearness of husband and wife is even more true of Christ and His saved ones.

What has Christ (the Husband) done for His bride (the church)?

- Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her on the cross (Eph. 5:25).
- Christ sanctified and cleansed her with the washing of water by the word (Eph. 5:26).
- Christ presented His bride to Himself a glorious church without moral spot or blemish (Eph. 5:27).
- Christ loves the church, and nourishes and cherishes it because we are members of His body, of His flesh and bones (Eph. 5:29-30).
- Christ is the Head of the church and the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23).

In spite of these obvious facts, some desire to minimize the church and make it non-essential to one's salvation. But again the church **is** the saved. It is not *something different* than the souls saved by the blood of Christ!

So what is this great mystery? Paul said in Ephesians 3:8-11 — “*To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is **the fellowship of the mystery**, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now **the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church** to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, **according to the eternal purpose** which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” The great mystery is the *previously unknown* scheme of redemption devised by God before time began to bring together all men and women who desire to be saved into the one body, the church. It is only a “mystery” because it was not revealed until now in the last dispensation of time.

Dear reader, are you a member of the body of Christ? If so, then you are part of the saved, the church of Christ.

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