

**Outline of  
the Messages for the Full-time Training  
in the Fall Term of 2013**

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**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
THE KERNEL OF THE BIBLE**

Message Fourteen

**God's Economy in Faith  
Issuing In the Church as the Mystery of Godliness—  
the Corporate Manifestation of God in the Flesh**

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 1:4; 3:15-16

- I. God's economy is God's household administration, which is to dispense Himself in Christ into His chosen and redeemed people so that He may have a house to express Himself, which house is the church, the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 1:4; 3:15:**
- A. God's economy, as His household administration, is to produce and constitute a Body for His Son—Eph. 1:22-23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 16; 5:30.
  - B. The central subject of the Bible is the economy of God, and the entire Bible is concerned with the economy of God—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10:
    - 1. The governing and controlling vision in the Bible is the divine economy—Prov. 29:18a.
    - 2. In our reading of the Bible, we need to focus our attention on the divine economy for the divine dispensing—Eph. 3:9.
  - C. Christ is the element, sphere, means, goal, and aim of God's eternal economy; He is everything in God's economy—Matt. 17:5; Luke 24:44.
  - D. God's economy is to dispense Himself into our being that our being may be constituted with His being; this can be accomplished only by God dispensing Himself into us as the divine life—Eph. 3:16-17a; Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11.
  - E. God's economy is God becoming man that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead to produce the organic Body of Christ, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem—v. 3; 1:3-4; 12:4-5; Rev. 21:10.
  - F. God's eternal economy is to make man the same as He is in life and nature but not in the Godhead and to make Himself one with man and man one with Him, thus to be enlarged and expanded in His expression, that all His divine attributes may be expressed in human virtues—John 1:12-14; 2 Pet. 1:4.
  - G. God's economy is initiated and developed in the sphere of faith—1 Tim. 1:4:
    - 1. On the negative side, to exercise faith is to stop our work, our doing; on the positive side, to exercise faith is to trust in the Lord—Heb. 11:6.
    - 2. Faith is a proclamation that we cannot fulfill God's requirements but that God has done everything for us and that we receive all God has planned for us, all God has done for us, and all God has given to us—John 1:16.
    - 3. Faith is a matter of seeing a view of the contents of God's economy—Heb. 12:2:

- a. Because we have seen a revelation regarding the contents of God's economy, we spontaneously believe in what we see—Eph. 3:9.
  - b. The ability within us to believe is a product, a result, of having a proper view of God's economy—Heb. 11:6, 9, 23-26; 12:2.
4. The Christian life is a life of faith, a life of believing; we do not live according to what we see; we live according to what we believe, walking by faith, not by appearance—Gal. 3:2, 14; John 20:25-29; 2 Cor. 5:7.

**II. God's economy in faith issues in the church as the mystery of godliness—the corporate manifestation of God in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:16:**

- A. God's manifestation was first in Christ as an individual expression in the flesh—v. 16; Col. 2:9; John 1:1, 14:
- 1. The New Testament does not say that the Son of God was incarnated; it reveals that God was manifested in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:15-16:
    - a. God was manifested in the flesh not as the Son only but as the entire God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.
    - b. The entire God—and not only God the Son—was incarnated; hence, Christ in His incarnation was the entire God manifested in the flesh—John 1:1, 14; 14:10-11.
  - 2. The Word, who is God, became flesh; the God, who the Word is, is not a partial God but the entire God—God the Son, God the Father, and God the Spirit—1:1, 14.
  - 3. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; *all the fullness of the Godhead* refers to the entire Godhead, to the fullness of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—Col. 2:9.
- B. First Timothy 3:15-16 indicates that not only Christ Himself as the Head is the manifestation of God in the flesh but also that the church as the Body of Christ and the house of God is the manifestation of God in the flesh—the mystery of godliness:
- 1. *Godliness* in verse 16 refers not only to piety but also to the living of God in the church, that is, God as life lived out in the church to be expressed.
  - 2. The church life is the expression of God; therefore, the mystery of godliness is the living of a proper church—1 Cor. 1:2-9; 14:24-25.
  - 3. God is manifested in the church—the house of God and the Body of Christ—as the enlarged, corporate expression in the flesh—Eph. 2:19; 1:22-23:
    - a. The manifestation of God in the flesh that began with Christ continues with the church, which is the increase, enlargement, and multiplication of the manifestation of God in the flesh—John 14:9; 1 Tim. 3:15-16.
    - b. This is Christ lived out of the church as the manifestation of God—God manifested in the flesh in a wider way according to the New Testament principle of incarnation—1 Cor. 7:40; Gal. 2:20.
  - 4. The great mystery of godliness is that God has become man so that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead to produce a corporate God-man for the manifestation of God in the flesh—Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; Eph. 4:24.

## **Faith—the Unique Way for God to Carry Out His Economy with Man**

### **I. In the New Testament, *faith* bears two denotations—objective and subjective:**

- A. In the objective denotation, *faith* refers to the entire revelation of the New Testament concerning the person of Christ and His redemptive work—Acts 6:7; 14:22; Rom. 16:26; 1 Cor. 16:13; 1 Tim. 1:19b; Jude 3, 20.
- B. In the subjective denotation, *faith* refers to the act of believing—Luke 18:8; Mark 11:22.

### **II. Faith is the unique way for God to carry out His New Testament economy with man—Heb. 11:6:**

- A. The economy of God is a matter in faith, that is, in the sphere and element of the faith, in God and through Christ—1 Tim. 1:4.
- B. Faith is the unique requirement for people to contact God in His New Testament economy—v. 4; Heb. 11:1, 6.
- C. God's New Testament economy, which is to dispense Himself into His chosen people, is not in the natural realm nor in the work of the law but in the spiritual sphere of the new creation through regeneration by faith in Christ—Gal. 6:14-15; 3:23-26:
  - 1. By faith we are born of God to be His sons, partaking of His life and nature to express Him—v. 26; John 1:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:4.
  - 2. By faith in Christ we are put into Christ to become the members of His Body, sharing all that He is for His expression—John 3:15; Rom. 12:4-5.

### **III. Faith is the principle by which God deals with His people in the New Testament—Gal. 3:22-24:**

- A. This faith characterizes the believers in Christ and distinguishes them from the keepers of law; this is the main emphasis of the book of Galatians.
- B. The law of the Old Testament stresses letters and ordinances, whereas the faith of the New Testament emphasizes Spirit and life.
- C. Faith is the way for God's people to apprehend, comprehend, grasp, enjoy, and participate in all that God is to His people through His having been processed—vv. 2, 5, 14.

### **IV. The faith in Christ by which the believers are justified is related to their appreciation of the person of the Son of God as the most precious One—Heb. 12:2:**

- A. The experiential definition of faith is that faith is the preciousness of Jesus infused into us.
- B. Genuine faith is Christ Himself infused into us to become our ability to believe in Him; after the Lord Jesus has been infused into us, He spontaneously becomes our faith.

### **V. The faith of the Son of God refers to the faith of Jesus Christ in us (Gal. 2:16), which becomes the faith by which we believe in Him—3:22; Rom. 3:22, 26:**

- A. As we behold the Lord, hear Him, and treasure Him, He causes faith to be generated in us, enabling us to believe in Him—Matt. 17:5; Heb. 12:2.
- B. Christ becomes the faith in us by which we believe in Him; this faith is the faith in Him, and it is also the faith that belongs to Him—Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16.
- C. When we believe in Christ, we enter into Him; we believe ourselves into Christ and thereby become one spirit with Him—John 3:15; 1 Cor. 6:17.