

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2014**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE HEART OF THE BIBLE—
GALATIANS, EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS, AND COLOSSIANS**

Message Sixteen

Colossians

(4)

The Mystery of God's Economy

Scripture Reading: Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3; Eph. 1:9; 3:3-5, 9; 5:32

I. The basic revelation in the Bible is the unveiling, the bringing to light, of God's mystery; for this reason the Bible speaks of the revelation of the mystery—Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:3-5.

II. There are five great mysteries in the Bible:

- A. The mystery of the universe is God, who is the meaning and purpose of the universe—Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; Eph. 3:9.
- B. The mystery of man is also God—Gen. 1:26; Zech. 12:1; 1 Cor. 2:11.
- C. The mystery of God is Christ—Col. 2:2.
- D. The mystery of Christ is the church—Eph. 3:4; Col. 4:3.
- E. The mystery of the church is the organism of Christ, the Body of Christ as the enlargement of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4, 16; 5:30, 32.

III. In Colossians and Ephesians *mystery* is a crucial word—Col. 1:26-27; 2:2; Eph. 3:3-5, 9; 5:32:

- A. In eternity God planned a will, but it was hidden in Him; hence, it was a mystery—the mystery of His will—1:9.
- B. God's hidden purpose is the mystery, and the unveiling of this mystery in the mingled spirit is the revelation of the mystery—3:3, 5.
- C. God's mystery is His hidden purpose, and with this mystery there is an economy—the economy of the mystery—v. 9.
- D. Christ is a mystery, and the church, as the Body of Christ to express Him, is the mystery of Christ—v. 4; Col. 4:3.
- E. Christ and the church as one spirit are the great mystery—1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 5:32.

IV. The all-inclusive Christ, who indwells us, is the mystery of God's economy—Col. 1:26-27:

- A. God's New Testament economy is like a great wheel, having Christ as its every part—He is the hub (the center), the spokes (the support), and the rim (the circumference) of the divine economy—Ezek. 1:15; Col. 1:17b, 18b:

1. God's intention in His economy is to work Christ into His chosen people so that Christ may be all and in all—3:10-11; Gal. 1:16a; 2:20; 4:19.
 2. Christ is the mystery, the secret, the crucial focus, of the divine economy; this means that the secret of the dispensing of the Triune God into God's chosen people is Christ Himself—Col. 1:25-28, 17b, 18b; 2:9.
- B. The mystery hidden from the ages and from the generations has been made manifest to the saints; this mystery is the all-inclusive Christ as the indwelling hope of glory—1:26-27:
1. The hope of our calling is the hope of glory, which is the transfiguration of our body and the manifestation of the sons of God—Eph. 1:18b; 4:4b; Rom. 8:19, 23-25, 30; Phil. 3:21.
 2. The Christ who dwells within us is the mystery full of glory, with countless riches; we are being strengthened into our inner man according to the riches of God's glory, which are being wrought into us—Eph. 3:8, 14-17a.
 3. Christ as the mystery of God's economy is indwelling us as the hope of glory unto the full expression of God—2 Cor. 3:18; Rev. 21:10-11.

V. The great mystery is Christ and the church—Eph. 5:32:

- A. The mystery of God is Christ, the Head—1:22; Col. 1:18:
 1. As the mystery of God, Christ is the history of God; the whole "story" of God is in Christ and is Christ—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 5:5.
 2. As the mystery of God, Christ is the definition, explanation, and expression of God—the Word of God—John 1:1; Rev. 19:13; Col. 2:2-3.
- B. The mystery of Christ is the church, the Body of Christ—Eph. 3:3-5:
 1. Christ, the embodiment of God, is the expression of God, and the church, as the Body of Christ, is the expression of Christ—1:22-23.
 2. In God's economy mystery produces mystery: Christ, the mystery of God, brings forth the church, the mystery of Christ—Col. 2:2; 4:3.
 3. As the hidden mystery in God's eternal purpose, the church is a mystery within a mystery, for the church is the third stage of one mystery—Eph. 3:4, 9, 11:
 - a. The first stage is God as the mystery of the universe, the second stage is Christ as the mystery of God, and the third stage is the church as the mystery of Christ—John 1:18; Col. 2:2; 4:3.
 - b. The church is the mystery of Christ, who is the mystery of God, who Himself is the mystery of the universe—Eph. 3:4, 9; Col. 2:2.
 4. Related to the mystery of Christ, the church, there is the economy of the mystery; God's economy is His plan and arrangement to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity into His chosen people in order to produce the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem for the eternal corporate expression of the Triune God; this is the greatest mystery in the universe; nothing is greater or more important than this—v. 9; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; Rev. 21:2, 10-11.