

*A general and panoramic view of  
Paul's epistle to the Ephesians:*

# **THE PRIMACY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IN WORLD HISTORY**

**Considering also its broad implications  
and personal applications; dismantling  
Dispensational views of world  
history and the Church**

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*Comments extracted from an expounding  
of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians*

**H**istory is best appreciated rid of all its bias, partialities and slanted perspectives. This is particularly true when we see the course of time from the vantage of eternity's stance. History is made aslant and askew when man writes it from his personal experiences, feelings and knowledge. It is the want of objectivity and impartiality that makes history so distorted and so messy. Every man's outlook of history is fraught with deficiency and prejudice and therefore subject to scepticism.

This is why the writer of this exquisite epistle drafts this wonderful ode of God's salvation graciously afforded to the sons and daughters of men through the grace of His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, from the standpoint of eternity. The Gospel and its effects upon mankind is best appreciated when we behold it from eternity's perspective. Hence Ephesians chapter one graphically projects the Church of Christ, conceived in the womb of God's secret will in the eternity past, established in the span of time here on earth below and glorified in the eternity to come in heaven above. What a spectacular and breathtaking panorama it is! *"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King"* (Psalm 48:1,2).

From heaven's viewpoint, the ecclesiastical aspect is the focus of world history. What happens

to the Church is God's central and essential plan for the tenure of time. Secular historians are unable and unwilling to admit this because of the blindness of their own depravity. The essential testimony of Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians is that the Church of Christ has the preeminent and prominent place in history from God's context.

The script for providence was written even before the foundation of this present world was established. History is the retrospection of the working out of the immutable and wise counsel of God's eternal and secret will in the realm of time. And in His appointed time, in the fullness of time, God will culminate and conclude the counsel of His eternal will. But be sure the omniscient and omnipotent God has a holy purpose in the realization and unravelling of His providence. The scheme of the divine plan is focused particularly on and for the Church, which is the fruit of God's redemptive work. It is God's design to magnify the Church of Christ in both the economy of time and the eternity to come.

God is extolled and exalted more for His work of redemption than for His work of creation. The glory of redemption is far more resplendent and transcendent than the glory of creation. The works of creation will be dissolved ultimately but the fruits of redemption will endure forever. The Church is very precious to Christ and to God the Father and it will last for ever, "*throughout all ages, world without end*" (*Ephesians 3:21b*).

The history of the world is only a backdrop for the history of the Church. The entrance of the Gentiles into the Church, which coincided with the first advent of Christ, marked a special landmark in the life and existence of the Church. Like the first advent of Christ, the ingress of the Gentiles into the Church was a mystery fully unfolded simultaneously with Christ's incarnation, sufferings and glorification. The conscription of Simon the Cyrene to carry the cross on behalf of our Lord (it is evident that he and his family inherited covenantal blessings (*Acts 13:1*)) and the confession of the centurion that Christ Jesus "was the Son of God", being compelled by his observation of the events that transpired at Calvary, were two conspicuous examples of this fact. And thereafter God enlightened and endued His ministers through His Spirit to preach it (that is the coming in of the Gentiles into the Commonwealth of Israel) to others. Foremost among those who were called and enabled for the proclamation of this mystery (*Ephesians 3:3,4,9*) was Paul, hence known as the apostle to the Gentiles. He was especially ordained and anointed to bring the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles (*Ephesians 3:1-9*).

The Jews, who were nigh, and the Gentiles, who were afar off, are now both afforded access through Christ Jesus to the household of God as an holy temple in the Lord, a habitation of God, the body of Christ, "*the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*" (*Ephesians 1:23b*). It is this event — even the

admission of the Gentiles into the Commonwealth of Israel as fellow citizens — that inaugurates a special fellowship in the Church (the fellowship of the mystery) (*Ephesians 3:9*), which in itself magnifies the manifold wisdom of God. There is nothing that so glorifies God before principalities and powers in heavenly places than when a motley group of men from sundry nations, divers tribes and kindreds congregate together in all simplicity here on earth below in Christ Jesus' name. "*Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined*" (*Psalms 50:2*).

Consider therefore, firstly, the travesty of this doctrine when men distinguish their churches along nationalistic and ethnic alignments. Secondly, how absurd it is for Dispensationalists to view the New Testament Church as a separate entity from theocratic Israel as it existed in the Old Testament era. Dispensationalists are diametrically at odds against this strand of the Christian faith as emphasized so lucidly and elegantly in *Ephesians*.

Wherefore then it is a great vocation to be called to be partakers of the spiritual blessings of the Church through Christ Jesus. What a privilege it is to be an integral part of this special entity of God's eternal will and history, even the Church, created by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. "*Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God*" (*Psalms 87:3*). We are to ensure that we have "*heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus*" (*Ephesians 4:21*) and that we have "*put on the new man, which*

*after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24).*

If so, we are therefore obliged and enabled to fulfill our mutual responsibilities, discharge our bounden duties and uphold the law of Christ mutually one toward another in the Church. Every true disciple of *“the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6b)* must affirm with the Psalmist concerning the Church: *“all my springs are in thee” (Psalm 87:7b)*. We are not to despise our specific roles and places in the visible Church, the Church militant. But we are to remain humble, thankful and contented in our God-given niches. *“I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness” (Psalm 84:10b)*. We are to be convinced of our place in the Church, knowing that it is the Lord Himself Who designates the offices and delegates their commensurate unction through the Holy Spirit to those whom He has appointed. Our gracious God has done this for the edification and perfection of the Church, which is the apple of God’s eyes in all of history! ❧

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