

THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD (Ephesians 3:10-11)

I. The church has always been in the mind of God.

- A. As you read through the first three chapters of Ephesians, you quickly realize that God had the church in mind before the beginning of time.
 - 1. Paul starts out by showing us all the things that are ours in Christ.
 - 2. He then lets us know that Jesus died in order to be the head of His body, the church (1:22-23).
 - 3. Paul then tells us that we are saved by grace and faith and brought together in body (which is the church).
 - 4. This body contains both Jew and Gentile and all are given access to God by the death of Jesus.
 - 5. We are now members of the household of God (which is the church - 1 Timothy 3:15).
- B. Paul then tells us that we can have the same knowledge that he has and that we can understand the mystery of God.
- C. Paul reveals that mystery in 3:6.
 - 1. Notice Galatians 3:14.
 - 2. Also notice Galatians 3:28-29.
- D. This mystery has been hidden in, or by, God (1 Peter 1:10-12).
- E. Paul sums all of this up by telling us that this has been God's eternal purpose.
- F. So, from this we see that God always had the church in mind.
- G. Everything that God did in regards to man's redemption led to the building of the church by His only begotten Son.

II. Was the church an afterthought?

- A. It does not take very long, when watching most religious channels, to see that the false doctrine of premillennialism is still a prevailing doctrine among those in denominationalism.
- B. This doctrine basically teaches that God did not foresee the obstinance of the Jews concerning Jesus as the Messiah.
- C. Then, upon realizing that they were not ready for the Messiah at that time, God set up the church and orchestrated the death of Jesus as an emergency back-up plan.
- D. As you can see, this is one of the most ridiculous religious ideas that has ever been put forth.
 - 1. We have already proven from the book of Ephesians that the church was in the mind of God from the beginning of time.
 - 2. God has predestinated a group of people to be saved and that group is made up of those who are a part of the one body (Ephesians 4:4).
- E. Not only that, but this theory discounts the death of Jesus.
 - 1. This idea flies in the face of all the prophecies of the death of Jesus.
 - 2. Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, and other like passages, might as well be

ripped out of the Bible.

- F. Surely one can plainly see that this false doctrine clearly contradicts numerous passages.
- G. What about 1 Peter 1:19-20 and Revelation 13:8 which tell us that Jesus was slain before the foundation of the world?
- H. Some have called this doctrine harmless, but any doctrine that contradicts scripture can never be taken lightly because it will damn our souls to hell if we follow it.

III. A closing thought about Ephesians 3:10.

- A. Many have thought this passage tells the church that it ought to be teaching the wisdom of God to the world.
- B. Many passages clearly teach that we need to be preaching the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 5:8 - they filled the city with the doctrine of Jesus; Acts 8:4; Acts 13:1-4; Philippians 4:14-16 - this congregation supported Paul in his preaching).
- C. However, this verse tells us that the Lord intends for the world to see His manifold wisdom when the world sees His church.
- D. The word "known" means "to gain a knowledge of."
 - 1. In other words, those who see the church gain the knowledge of God's wisdom.
 - 2. The church is on display before all, both heavenly and earthly beings, to show God's wisdom at its finest.
- E. That ought to cause us to stop and think for a moment, and maybe sober some of us.
 - 1. When we have the name "church of Christ" on the sign outside, we are saying that we are displaying the wisdom of God for all to see.
 - 2. When people go away from here, how much wisdom do they think God has?
- F. We are a reflection of the wisdom of God; we need to make sure that we are acting like it.