

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE GOVERNING VISION OF THE BIBLE—GOD’S ECONOMY

Message One

The Vision of God’s Economy

- I. The governing vision in the Bible is the vision of God’s economy—the vision of the Triune God working Himself into His chosen and redeemed people in order to saturate their entire being with the Divine Trinity for the producing and building up of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 3:9, 16-17; 4:4-6; Rev. 21:2, 9-10:**
 - A. The economy of God is that God in Christ became flesh, passed through human living, died, resurrected, and became the life-giving Spirit to enter into us as life and to dispense Himself into us so that we may be transformed for the producing of the church, which is the Body of Christ, the house of God, the kingdom of God, and the counterpart of Christ, the ultimate consummation and aggregate of which is the New Jerusalem— John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Eph. 1:22-23; Rev. 21:2.
 - B. The entire Bible was written according to the principle of the vision of the Triune God wrought into His redeemed people—Psa. 36:8-9; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 3:16-17; 4:4-6.
- II. If we see the heavenly vision and it is wrought into our being, this vision will have a powerful and lasting effect on us—Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:19:**
 - A. When we see this glorious, heavenly vision, we are revolutionized, our entire being is changed in its concept, attitude, conversation, and thought, and we become thoroughly different; the vision will cause us to be beside ourselves, and our lifestyle will be changed—9:3-9, 11-12, 20, 22; Phil. 3:4-8.
 - B. The heavenly vision captures us, reconstitutes us, governs us, directs us, restricts us, controls us, and preserves us—Prov. 29:18a:
 - C. The heavenly vision causes our life to be full of meaning and purpose, and it motivates us, energizes us, and gives us endurance—2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 12:1-2.
 - D. Under the heavenly vision we are directed toward God’s goal, and our life is controlled according to God’s economy—Phil. 3:3-14; 1 Tim. 1:4.
 - E. The heavenly vision preserves us in the genuine oneness and brings us into one accord—Eph. 1:17-18; 4:3; Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12.
 - F. The heavenly vision directs us toward God’s goal—the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:9-10.
- III. We need to become persons with a vision—Acts 26:19; Gal. 1:15-16:**
 - A. Everyone who serves the Lord must be a person with a vision; the most important matter for one who serves the Lord is that he has a vision and serves Him with a vision—Acts 26:19; 9:3-5, 10, 12, 15-16, 20, 22.
 - B. Not every believer receives a direct vision; Paul received a direct vision, but Timothy received a vision through Paul—Acts 22:14; 2 Tim. 3:14-15.
 - C. We need to be centered on Christ and bear witness of the things in which we have seen Christ—Acts 26:16.
 - D. Like Paul, we should not be disobedient to the heavenly vision—v. 19:
 1. In order to see more vision, we must obey the visions that we have already seen—22:14-15; John 7:17.
 2. We obey the vision by taking Christ as our life, not allowing ourselves to be distracted but maintaining contact with the Lord—Col. 3:4; 1 Thes. 5:17.

Message Two

The Vision of Christ (1)

- I. “Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath, which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ. Let no one defraud you by judging you unworthy of your prize”—Col. 2:16-18a:**
- A. As with a man’s physical body, the body in Colossians 2:17 is the substance, and like the shadow of a man’s body, the rituals in the law are a shadow of Christ, who is the substance and reality of the gospel; Colossians unveils such an allinclusive Christ as the focus of God’s economy—1:17a, 18a; 3:11.
 - B. Daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly Christ is the reality of every positive thing, implying the universal extensiveness of the all-inclusive Christ:
 - 1. Daily Christ is our food and drink for our satisfaction and strengthening— 1 Cor. 10:3-4.
 - 2. Weekly Christ is our Sabbath for our completion and rest in Him—Matt. 11:28-29.
 - 3. Monthly Christ is our new moon as a new beginning with light in darkness— John 1:5; 8:12.
 - 4. Yearly Christ is our feast for our joy and enjoyment—1 Cor. 5:8.
 - C. The extensive Christ, who is full of attractiveness and rich in magnetism, is the essence of the Bible—Luke 24:44; John 5:39-40; Matt. 1:1; cf. Rev. 22:21.
 - D. According to the context, the “prize” in Colossians 2:18 is the enjoyment of Christ as the body of the shadows; to be defrauded of our prize is to be defrauded of the subjective enjoyment of Christ—cf. Gen. 15:1; Phil. 3:8.
- II. Our need is for the subjective Christ to become our enjoyment to complete the divine revelation within us; if we are short in the experience and enjoyment of Christ, we are also short concerning God’s revelation—Col. 1:25-28.**
- A. Whatever we do day by day should remind us of Christ as the reality of that thing; if we follow the practice of taking Christ as the reality of all the material things in our daily life, our daily walk will be revolutionized and transformed, and we will be full of Christ—2 Cor. 4:16; Phil. 1:19-21a.
 - B. We need to enjoy Christ day by day as the reality of all our necessities:
 - 1. Christ is our breath—John 20:22.
 - 2. Christ is our drink—4:10, 14; 7:37-39a.
 - 3. Christ is our food—6:35, 57.
 - 4. Christ is our light—1:4; 8:12.
 - 5. Christ is our clothing—Gal. 3:27.
 - 6. Christ is our dwelling place—John 15:5, 7a; Psa. 90:1; 91:1.

Message Three

The Vision of Christ (2)

- I. **“Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath, which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ. Let no one defraud you by judging you unworthy of your prize”—Col. 2:16-18a:**
- II. **The all-inclusive Christ is the reality of all the positive things in the universe— cf. Rom. 1:20; Eph. 3:18; Hymns, #496:**
 - A. Because the universe with the billions of things and persons in it was created for the purpose of describing Christ, He, in revealing Himself to His disciples, could easily find in any environment something or someone to serve as an illustration of Himself—Col. 1:15-17; John 1:51; 10:9-11; 12:24; Matt. 12:41-42.
 - B. The Old Testament uses six major categories of things as types to describe Christ—human beings, animals, plants, minerals, offerings, and foods:
 1. Human beings typify Christ, such as Adam (Rom. 5:14), Mechizedek (Heb. 7:1), Isaac (Matt. 1:1), Jonah (12:41), and Solomon (v. 42).
 2. Animals typify Christ, such as a lamb (John 1:29), a lion, an ox, an eagle (Ezek. 1:10), and a gazelle (S. S. 2:9).
 3. Plants typify Christ (who is the tree of life—Gen. 2:9), such as the vine tree (John 15:1), the apple tree (S. S. 2:3), the fig tree, the pomegranate tree, and the olive tree (Deut. 8:8); the different parts of a tree are also types of Christ, such as the root, the stump, the sprout, the shoot, the branch, and the fruit (Isa. 11:1, 10; 4:2; Luke 1:42; Rev. 5:5).
 4. Minerals typify Christ, such as gold, silver, copper, and iron (Deut. 8:9, 13), and different kinds of stone: the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4), the rock (1 Cor. 10:4), the cornerstone (Matt. 21:42), the topstone (Zech. 4:7), the foundation stone (1 Cor. 3:11), and precious stone (v. 12).
 5. Offerings typify Christ, such as the burnt offering, meal offering, peace offering, sin offering, trespass offering, wave offering, heave offering, and drink offering—Lev. 1—7; Exo. 29:26-28; Num. 28:7-10; cf. John 4:24.
 6. Foods typify Christ, such as bread, wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, milk, and honey—6:35; Deut. 8:8-9; 26:9.
 - C. In the New Testament Christ is the Spirit of reality who makes the untraceable riches of all that He is real to us, guiding us into Himself as the divine reality— John 14:6; 1 John 5:6; John 14:17; 16:13.
 - D. The elements of the reality of all the types are in the Spirit, and the Spirit transfuses and dispenses all these riches into us through the Lord’s words—Phil. 1:19; John 6:63; Col. 3:16; Eph. 6:17-18; Rev. 2:7.

Message Four

The Vision of the Church, the Body of Christ

- I. The very Christ who is the reality of all positive things is the One who is the Head of the Body; thus, to hold the Head is simply to enjoy Christ as the reality of all positive things—Col. 2:19:**
 - A. Since the Christ we enjoy as our everything is the Head of the Body, the more we enjoy Him, the more we become Body-conscious:
 1. This indicates that the enjoyment of Christ is not an individualistic matter but a Body matter—cf. Eph. 3:8; 4:15-16.
 2. The more we enjoy Christ, the more we love the other members of the Body— Col. 1:4, 8.
 - B. Because Christ's headship is in resurrection (v. 18), the enjoyment of Christ spontaneously brings us into resurrection and saves us from our natural being.
 - C. The enjoyment of Christ brings us into the heavenlies in ascension; we can be experientially in the heavens only by enjoying Christ, the Head, as the life-giving Spirit in our spirit—3:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:17; 2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:10, 34.
- II. As we enjoy Christ and hold Him as the Head, we absorb the riches of the extensive, all-inclusive Christ; these riches become in us the increase of God by which the Body grows for its building up—Col. 2:19, 6-7; Eph. 4:16.**
- III. The governing vision in the Bible is the vision of God's economy—the vision of the Triune God working Himself into His chosen and redeemed people in order to saturate their entire being with the Divine Trinity for the producing and building up of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 3:9, 16-17; 4:4-6; Rev. 21:2, 9-10.**