

The Economy of God – Chapter 1 Excerpts

THE ECONOMY OF THE TRIUNE GOD

My burden in all the messages I am giving here is to share with you something of God's economy. Let us read 1 Timothy chapter 1, verses 3 through 7: "That you might charge certain ones not to teach different things nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith. But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of unfeigned faith; from which things some, having misaimed, have turned aside to vain talking, desiring to be teachers of the law."

These verses contain two very important expressions as indicated in Greek, the original language of the New Testament: *God's economy* and *misaimed*. The apostle Paul was chosen by God to bear the responsibility for God's economy, and he trained his spiritual son Timothy in this economy. It is quite interesting to note that Paul's Epistles to Timothy were written at a time when many Christians had drifted from the original pathway. They had missed the central mark of God's economy and were paying attention to something else.

THE DISTRACTIONS FROM GOD'S ECONOMY

According to history two prevailing elements distracted the early Christians from the right track: Judaism and Gnosticism. Both the Judaizers with their religious doctrines and forms and the Gnostics with their philosophies deterred the Christians from following the Lord in the pathway of God's economy.

Today, even though there are no Judaizers or Gnostics to disturb us, there is still much to distract us. For nearly twenty centuries the subtle one has never ceased using the seemingly good things to divert believers from following the Lord in the right track. If we spend time with the Lord, we will realize that the enemy is persistent in utilizing even the good things of Christianity to distract the Lord's children from the mark of God's economy. While I was traveling through many districts in this country during the last few years, I realized that many religious matters and even scriptural things have been used by the subtle enemy to influence seeking Christians to depart from the pathway of God's economy.

THE DEFINITION OF GOD'S ECONOMY

What is God's economy? The Scriptures, composed of sixty-six books, contain many different teachings, but if we would make a thorough and careful study of the Scriptures with spiritual insight, we would realize that God's economy is simply His plan to dispense Himself into humanity. God's economy is God's dispensation, which means nothing else than God dispensing Himself into the human race. It is regrettable that the term *dispensation* has been misused by Christianity. Its definition is nearly the same as the Greek word *economy*. It means the administrative arrangement, the governmental management, or the dispensing, distributing stewardship of God's plan. In this divine dispensation God, who is almighty and all-inclusive, intends to dispense nothing other than Himself to us. This needs to be repeated many times in order to impress us deeply.

God is exceedingly rich. He is like a successful businessman who has an enormous amount of capital. God has a business in this universe, and His vast wealth is His capital. We do not realize how many billions, countless billions, He has. All of this capital is simply Himself, and with it He intends to "manufacture" Himself in mass production. God Himself is the Businessman, the capital, and the product. His intention is to dispense Himself to many people in mass production and free of charge. Therefore, God requires such a divine arrangement, a divine management, a divine dispensation, a divine economy, in order to bring Himself into humanity.

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Let us be more specific. Now that we know that God's purpose is to dispense Himself, we must discover what God is in order to know what He is dispensing. In other words, what is the substance of God? When a businessman plans to manufacture a product, he must first of all be clear about the substance, or its basic constituent. God's substance is Spirit (John 4:24). The very essence of the almighty, all-inclusive, universal God is simply Spirit. God is the Manufacturer, and He intends to reproduce Himself as the product; therefore, whatever He reproduces must be Spirit, the very substance of Himself.

THE STEPS OF GOD'S ECONOMY

We have seen God's purpose and what is dispensed by God; now we must realize how God is dispensed through His economy. In other words, Spirit is what God dispenses into man, but now we need to see the means by which He does this. It is by the Trinity. The Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—is the very economy of the Godhead. Christianity during the past centuries has had many teachings about the Trinity, but the Trinity can never be adequately understood unless it is related to the divine economy. Why are all three persons of the Godhead required for the development of His economy? We know that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not three different Gods but one God, who is expressed in three persons. Yet what is the purpose of there being three persons of the Godhead? Why are there God the Father, God the Son, and also God the Holy Spirit? It is because only through the Trinity can the essential means be provided whereby His Spirit is dispensed into us.

Second Corinthians 13:14 shows the steps of God's economy by the Trinity. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Here we have the grace of the Son, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. What are these? Are these three different Gods? Are love, grace, and fellowship three different items? No. Love, grace, and fellowship are one element in three stages: love is the source, grace is the expression of love, and fellowship is the transmission of this love in grace. Likewise, God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are one God expressed in three persons: God is the source, Christ is the expression of God, and the Holy Spirit is the transmission bringing God in Christ into man. Thus, the three persons of the Trinity become the three successive steps in the process of God's economy. Without these three steps, God's essence could never be dispensed into man. The economy of God is developed from the Father, in the Son, and through the Spirit.