

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE, THE CHURCH

By Tony Melton

Did you know that the establishment of the church of Christ was in the mind of God before He created the earth? In other words, the church was not an “overnight” decision, but it was a sacred institution carefully planned by God before he created the human race. Before time began, God chose to make known His divine wisdom (the gospel) to all men and all celestial beings through the church of Christ. The apostle Paul said that before God created the earth, it was His plan to make known His wisdom “*by the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms*” (Ephesians 3:8-11).

The apostle Peter said that the prophets of the Old Testament and the angels of heaven wanted to understand this wisdom of God (1 Peter 1:10-12). God revealed this magnificent wisdom by the church.

The Scriptures teach that it was the eternal purpose of God to create the church. Paul said, “*Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love*” (Ephesians 1:4). God determined before He created the earth to have a holy class of people--those “in Christ” or in His body which is his church (Colossians 1:18). He did not pick out certain individuals to be saved, but rather a certain group who would live holy and blameless in His sight.

God also determined before time began to send Jesus to purchase the church with his blood. Peter says, “*Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*” (1 Peter 1:18-20). Now since Jesus was foreordained to shed His blood before the earth was created, and since the church was purchased with Christ's blood (Acts 20:28), we can rest assured that the church was in the eternal plan of God.

What is our conclusion? The church of Jesus Christ was not an “after thought” of God. It was in God's eternal plan to make the gospel known by way of the church. The church was purchased by the blood of Christ; therefore, if you are not a member of the church, you have not been cleansed by Christ's blood. If you have not been cleansed by Christ's blood, then you are in a lost condition.