

GOD'S MAGNIFICENT IDEA

Part IV

Ephesians 1:1-4

Introduction: While news magazines and pundits outside of the church postulate of the decline and eventual demise of the Christian church, the evangelical wing of the church is flourishing. God's church is built and predicated on the fundamental fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. He is the rock, the very under-pinning, the cornerstone of the church. The most exhilarating thing that I know is that we who are born again are intrinsically His children, and as such, we constitute the body of Christ on earth. The real universal church is not built upon someone's private interpretation or revelation. The church is exponentially and wholly God's idea, and He has endowed us an unambiguous pattern or blueprint of it in His Word. This unmitigated truth cannot be compromised if we are to experience the blessing of God. Cain tried to offer his own ideas about worship, and as a result, he was banned from the presence of God. *Genesis 4:1-8*. Nadab and Abihu tried to offer strange fire at the altar of incense, and it was utterly rejected. They found out that God is explicit about His pattern. *Leviticus 10*. Uzziah thought he could approach God his own way, and he died a leper as a result. *2nd Chronicles 26:16-20*. We must remain faithful to God's Word.

I. God's magnificent idea!

A. Jesus Christ Himself is the builder of God's magnificent idea.

1. We should note that when Jesus spoke to the disciples, He indicated to them He was going to be the builder of the church. *Matthew 16:18*. He did not give the blueprint to man and say, "Do the best you can with it." There was too much at stake for God to trust the whole project to the hands of men. However, we are privileged that the Master Builder Himself has invited us to be co-laborers together with Him. *Ephesians 2:19-22, 2:10*.
2. Jesus Christ is the owner of the church. *Acts 20:28*. He designed it, built it, and purchased it with His own blood. The Lord never relinquished His claim to His church; in fact, He calls it by His name. *Romans 16:16*. In *1st Corinthians 1:1-2*, He calls it "the church of God." Men have been entrusted with the administration of the affairs of the church, but it doesn't belong to them. *1st Corinthians 4:1*. Man will be held accountable for what he does with that trust.
3. Jesus commissioned the church. In *Matthew 16*, Jesus gives to the church, represented by the twelve, the power to bind and loose. The authority was confirmed to them in *Matthew 18:18*. This authority was foundational to the commission He gave to the church upon His departure. *Matthew 28:19-20; John 20:21; Acts 1:8*. The church is commissioned by God because it is the instrument of God on earth to fulfill the mission of God. The church is a divine institution because it has a divine origin, a divine existence, and a divine function.
4. The church is an organism because it has structure and life, while an organization has structure but no life. The church's vibrant life is inherent in Him. In order to become a part of the New Testament church, you must be born into it. Each member of the body of Christ is filled with the life of Christ, and together we make up the habitation of God. *1st Corinthians 3:16-17*.
5. The church is holy unto the Lord. Nowhere in the New Testament do we read of a defeated, failing, battered bride. *Ephesians 5:23, 26, 27, 32*. Our God, who has called us out of the world and into His family, has also energized us and empowered us to carry on His work. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are available to aid us in fighting the good fight of faith. The unctuousness we have received is from God, and we are ordained by Him to win. Sometimes the fight is brutal, but God is faithful to bring us through victoriously. *1st Corinthians 10:13*.

Conclusion: There is a powerful war that is raging between the forces of God and the forces of evil. A line has been drawn in the sand – those who stand for righteousness and those who accept the position of evil because they are desensitized by it. *Ephesians 5:14* warns us to awaken from our spiritual sleep. There is a choice for us to make. *Deuteronomy 30:19-20*.