

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Read Eph. 5:25-27

Beloved of the Lord:

This Scripture reveals a three-fold love of Christ for his Church. Though the apostle writes of Christian marriage, he reveals the special love of Christ for his bride, the Church - see Eph. 5:32. He calls it a mystery, never before known - Eph. 3:9-11. The mystery is not Christ, nor the church, but "CHRIST AND THE CHURCH."

1. **WHAT IS THE CHURCH?** - The word is used today to describe a religious building, or of a special religious group or sect; but Scripture declares it to be composed of ALL believers in this dispensation who have Christ, born again, from Pentecost to the Rapture when the Lord comes for His Saints - Acts 2:47 - 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and John 14:3. Saints of other dispensations will have their special place of perfect blessedness, but the Church will be His Bride - Rev. 19:7, 21:9.
2. **CHRIST'S ETERNAL LOVE**
 - A. **The first proof of His love** - "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it" - v 25. when did His love begin? In eternity past, a mystery" which from the beginning hath been hid in God" - Prepared in eternal ages past - Eph. 3:9-11. Positively unknown in the O.T. - for since the death of Christ it is composed of believing Jews and Gentiles - Read Eph. 2:13-22. The Church is - (1) a special object of His love, a special affection of His heart and (2) the special object of His work of redemption he gave HIMSELF for it. True, He died for all, but here is not alone what He did, and what He suffered, but He gave HIMSELF in absolute self-renunciation for His Bride!
 - B. **The second proof of His love** - "That he might sanctify and cleanse it" - His present work of intercession (Heb 7:25), His High Priesthood, Advocacy - Heb 4:14-16 - IJohn 2:1,2. A two fold work - "Sanctify" and "Cleanse": When born of God, set apart positionally and in practical experience sanctified by the Spirit and the Word. He "cleanses" us when we sin - 1John 1:9. Read John 17:17-19. His love in caring for His Church continues in Heaven, a present ministry that never fails. His prayer of John 17 for us, proves His unfailing love. The Father will not deny it!
 - C. **The final proof of His love** - "That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church" - etc. v27. That presentation is recorded in Rev. 19:6-9, following the Judgement Seat of Christ, when His Bride will be arrayed in perfect completeness. The love of Christ will have its perfect result, the church, His Bride, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." The Church will be then perfectly fitted to be sharing His exaltation, His affections and His joys through all eternal ages - Eph. 3:21.

What a relief and comfort to know we can turn our eyes away from all the present confusion and discord prevailing now on the earth in the testimony of the professing Church and look forward to the eternal consummation of the Church, the final fruit of His love for His blood bought Bride.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

