

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints,16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

This power was manifested in three ways:

First, God's power was manifested in the resurrection of Jesus (vv. 19b-20a)

Paul does not mean by those words that the soul of the Lord Jesus survived, nor does he mean that his memory lives on, nor that his teaching lives on through his people. He does not mean that his influences and ideas still have living power. Jesus Christ is not alive in the sense that men may have a 'religious encounter' with him, as some say. The raising of Christ means none of those things. There is no doubt that all the above are true, but those attitudes are not what the New Testament means when it talks of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Savior. Paul is speaking in the most literal terms of a phenomenal occurrence - a physical event. He is not speaking of the soul of Christ. He is not speaking of Jesus' ideals, or the religious potential of his influence. He is speaking of the dead body of Christ, and he is saying that something happened to that body which means that it was reanimated; it came to life again, and it still exists; it functions.

We have to lift this whole concept of resurrection out of the realm of doctrine and theology. We must place it firmly where it belongs - in the world of physical reality and history, because you go to the New Testament and ask the women and men who encountered the risen Christ on the first day of the week, "What did you see?" They will say that they saw a body. They witnessed Jesus of Nazareth in a certain physical

form. It was a visible and tangible form. This body had hands and feet; it had eyes and ears; it was able to speak; it breathed on them in an expulsion of breath; it was able to think with its brain; it was capable of locomotion, killing fish, making a fire and cooking a meal. It was a body which ate and drank. As the Lord himself said, he had flesh and bones. It was a body which still bore the wounds of the cross. Thomas was invited by his Savior to see the marks of the nails, and to put his hand into the appalling wound in his side. If we go on to John's vision in the book of Revelation we are presented with the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and it is a Lamb as if it had been slain.

Note again in v. 19b the piling up of terms. This power that is designed for believers is the self-same power by which God raised Jesus from the dead. Again, it wasn't just God's "might" (ischus = ability, latent strength), but the "strength" (kratos = power in action) of his might. In addition, it is in accordance with the "working" (energeia = the efficiency of the power) of the "strength of God's might!" And all this . . . for believers!

Some have questioned why Paul doesn't mention the death of Jesus. There seem to be at least two reasons. First, the resurrection and exaltation are more suitable expressions of divine power than the cross, the latter typically portrayed in the NT as an expression of weakness ("For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God [2 Cor. 13:4].") Second, it is usually in relation to the love of God that Paul mentions the cross.

Second, God's power was manifested in the exaltation of Jesus (vv. 20b-23)

Paul alludes here to Psalms 110:1 and 8:6 (for the exaltation and ascension of Jesus, see Acts 2:33-35; 5:31; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pt. 3:22; Rev.. 3:21). The exaltation of Jesus is expressed in his supremacy in three respects:

1) Jesus was exalted above all power and authority vv. 20b-21

To be seated at someone's "right hand" was to be afforded the highest of honor, privilege, and authority. In the OT, God's 'right hand symbolized many things: victory (Ps. 20:6; 44:3; Isa. 41:10), the position of favor (1 Kings 2:19; Ps. 80:18; Jer.

22:24), and power (Exod. 15:6; Ps. 89:13; Isa. 48:13). O'Brien reminds us that 'although Ephesians will later assert that God has seated believers with Christ in the heavenly realms (2:6), significantly there is no mention of their being placed at "his right hand." "Christ's exalted status cannot be shared (141)."

The four words in v. 21a translated "rule," "authority," "power," and "dominion" are among six typical Pauline terms for demonic spirits found in Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:10,15; Rom. 8:38. Does this imply there are six classes or categories of angelic (demonic) beings?

1) principalities/rulers (arche) - a ruler must have someone or something over which to exercise dominion (Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:10; Rom. 8:38).

2) authorities (exousia) - again, authority, by definition, demands a subordinate (Eph. 1:21; 3:10; Col. 1:16).

3) powers (dunamis) - Eph. 1:21; Rom. 8:38. In Mark 9:29 Jesus refers to a type of demon that "cannot come out but by prayer and fasting." The point seems to be that some demons are stronger and more powerful than others. Hence, there is implied a hierarchy or differentiation based on spiritual strength.

4) dominions (kuriotetos) - again, "lordship" or "dominion" over what, whom, and where (Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16)?

5) thrones (thronoi) - used of angels only in Col. 1:16.

6) world rulers (kosmokratoras) - used only in Eph. 6:12.

If all angels and demons are of the same type or rank or carry the same authority, why are they described by such a variety of terms? It would also seem that with difference in rank comes difference in power, task, etc.

These four words are not intended to be exhaustive, hence the phrase 'every name that is named encompasses all other intelligent beings, whether good or evil, human or angelic.

The reference to the 'heavenlies "heavenly places" (v. 20b) indicates that for Paul

"Christ had not simply disappeared nor had he evaporated into a universal spirit, but he had departed to a new sphere, that of heaven, which would be appropriate to his transformed body's mode of existence (Lincoln, 62)."

When the prophet Isaiah saw Christ's glory in the temple he said, "I saw the Lord high and lifted up." There was such a gulf between the prophet and this Lord. He was far above Isaiah; there was such discontinuity between them. There was no way that Isaiah could get from where he was to get where the Lord was. How powerful Jesus Christ is. Power adequate to create the universe in its vastness. Power adequate to sustain the universe. Power, above all, adequate to destroy the whole universe. He could pull the structures of the cosmos apart atom by atom. How little of that power it would take to destroy me! There is no way that you or I can afford, in the name of some kind of Christianity, to outgrow that sense of the grandeur of Jehovah Jesus, in the name of a user-friendly Christianity, a touchy-feely Jesus is my sugar daddy theology kind of Christianity, a Christianity that is anxious not to make bold proclamation of the truth of the Gospel but rather reject, an evangelistically motivated Christianity, a concern-for-the-lost Christianity which is to deny Christ His glory, for we are to preach the Glory of the Cross to the nations and to do any less is to discard or minimize that sense of the glory of Jehovah Jesus. He is the Power. Fearing him is the beginning of wisdom. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God for wrath or even for discipline for the church. Jesus is unlike any other power. He is far above every other power and we are to be conscious of that in its awesomeness.

## 2) Jesus was given dominion over all power and authority v. 22a

Not only has he been exalted over all, but all have been placed in subjection to him. This is a present reality and not merely a future hope. See Ps. 8:7; 1 Cor. 15:27; Heb. 2:8. "The brow once crowned with thorns now wears the diadem of universal sovereignty; and that hand, once nailed to the cross, now holds in it the sceptre of unlimited dominion. He who lay in the tomb has ascended the throne of (an) unbounded empire (Eadie, 104)."

And consider the idea of under His feet, the picture of Christ's feet in Scripture.

There is that scene in the upper room in the last chapter of Luke where we are told that Jesus showed the disciples his feet (Lk. 24:40). Then they were broken and wounded by the crucifixion, but now they too are transfigured and glorified. What is this metaphor saying to us? The powers of the whole universe are not simply inferior to Christ they are subject to him. They're under his feet. The powers of hell are under his feet. God's great prophecy about Christ which he made to the serpent in the garden of Eden has been fulfilled, "He will crush your head." You see the Lord Christ stamping on the head of the serpent.

The material universe is under his feet. Christ governs every planet, its composition, its properties and all its movements. Christ determines the qualities of every crystal and every chromosome. It is the Lord Christ who has given to all of these their own distinctive qualities. He has imposed upon them his own particular laws. They must submit to his own principles.

When you study physics or chemistry or mathematics you are only seeing what Jesus Christ has done. School textbook writers, most of them in spite of themselves, are only describing the way God has ordained that things should be. The last and foundational thing in the universe is not mathematics. It is not natural law or human rationality. It is the will of Jehovah Jesus. He is in control and everything else is under his feet. He has given to every particle of matter the properties that he decides. He causes them to behave in the way he has decided. The thinking of Jesus Christ is the last and basic and foundational reality in the whole material universe. Everything else is responding to him

The living world of biology and zoology is under his feet. We are surrounded by vegetable life, and insect life, the fishes of the sea, the birds of the air and the animals. Who is in control? Who has given them being? Where does the initiation come from? It all comes from the Lord Christ, his will and rationality. It comes from his eternal divine mind. This Lord is the one who said, "Let there be . . ." and it was. None of it came from some spontaneous generation. It did not simply evolve out of inert matter in

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Salvation is under his feet. When a person puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ isn't that because God the Son had received him from God the Father before the foundation of the world? Isn't it because that person was on Jesus' heart and mind as he hung and died redeeming him on the cross? Isn't it because he sent forth the Holy Spirit at the time of our regeneration to convict and give spiritual life? Isn't our trust something that Jesus Christ has foreordained? "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." And when the heart is opened is it not the Lord Christ who opens the heart? When our hearts are broken in contrition and repentance for sin, is it not again because the Lord has given repentance? "God has granted even unto the Gentiles repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). The Lord Christ convinced them of their sin. When the church grows and many are converted - in revival times every day - is it not that "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47)?

### 3) Jesus was made head over all things to the Church vv. 22b-23

Here Paul declares that Jesus in his exaltation over the universe is God the Father's gift to the church! Thus not only is the greatness of God's power "toward us who believe" (v. 19) but so too is Christ's cosmic dominion. Question: How is Christ's supremacy over the cosmos for our benefit?

Most often in Paul the Greek word ekklesia, translated "church," refers to actual

concrete gatherings of Christians in a local setting (see 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1,4; 2:14; Gal. 1:2; Rom. 16:5; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2). But on occasion, especially in Ephesians, it appears to refer to an entity that is much broader than any one local congregation. Such texts as Gal. 1:13; 1 Cor. 10:32; 12:28; 15:9; Phil. 3:6; Col. 1:18,24; and especially Eph. 3:10,21; 5:23,24,25,27,29,32, as well as here in 1:22, seem to have in view the universal Church, the "body of all believers." Not everyone accepts this view. O'Brien, for example, believes it better to understand the term "metaphorically of a heavenly gathering around Christ in which believers already participate (cf. Heb. 12:22-24). . . . Local gatherings, whether in a congregation or a house-church, are earthly manifestations of that heavenly gathering around the risen Christ (cf. Heb. 10:25) (146-47)."

Observe Paul's use of the word 'head (kephale) in this passage to indicate the authority of Jesus over the entire cosmos, including the church. The "head is the ruling, guiding, and sustaining power over its body." This will become important later in Eph. 5 and Paul's discussion of the relation between husband and wife.

Whereas it is clear that "fullness" (4x in Ephesians 1:10,23; 3:19; 4:13; 2x in Colossians 1:19; 2:9; 6x elsewhere Rom. 11:12,25; 13:10; 15:29; 1 Cor. 10:26; Gal. 4:4) further defines "body" (see esp. Eph. 3:19), which is the church, the meaning is ambiguous. The term "fullness" probably refers to the glorious revelation of God's presence and power. Or, as Snodgrass says, fullness "refers to God's making his presence and power felt (80)." The church now embodies, expresses, and mediates that glorious presence to the world. Having said that, there still remain several possible translations:

\* The church is that which fills up or completes Christ, he himself being the one who fills all things. The first half of this rendering is theologically inconsistent with what Paul says elsewhere of Jesus.

\* The church is that which fills up or completes Christ, he himself being the one who is filled by all things. Both halves of this rendering are heretical!

\* The church is the fullness of Christ, i.e., the church is filled by him - he himself being the one who is filled by all things. But Christ is already the fullness of God (Col. 1:19; 2:9) and it would be improper to speak of him as dependent on all things; indeed, he himself is head over all things!

The church is the fullness of Christ, i.e., the church is filled by him (his fullness having been imparted to it), he himself being the one who fills all things. This last option is the most likely one. Be it noted, also, that only the church, not the cosmos, is said to be Christ's body. Although Christ rules over the cosmos, he sustains a relationship of loving and leading intimacy only with his church, filling it with his Spirit, grace, and gifts.

Consider how this mighty sovereign Christ invites us to himself. This is the language he uses, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly of heart and ye shall find rest to your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). How sweetly he speaks to sinners, and how tenderly he deals with them when they come to him: "He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (Isa. 40:11). This is the good shepherd who is seated at the right hand of God. What promises of protection and patience are made about him: "A bruised reed he will not break and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out" (Matt. 12:20). He tells his disciples to forgive one another seventy times seven. How much more will he keep on forgiving and forgiving us?

All his mighty power is for the church, to add to its number all who shall believe and then to keep them from falling. There is this great theme in the letter to the Hebrews that speaks of our compassionate Saviour: "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebs. 4:15&16). Jesus Christ is not far away. The king of the universe can



understand us because he was once tried and tested as we are. He is able to sympathise with our weaknesses. He not only feels for us but he feels with us. There can be empathy between ourselves and one so remote and elevated and magnificent - beyond all that we can conceive. He has taken our nature. This mighty King once came into all the weakness and vulnerability of manhood in a groaning creation in our low condition. He has known the pain of loneliness, and fear, and human sorrow and bereavement. He has known the spiritual pain of being forsaken by God. He remembers that we are dust because he has been dust. He has walked through the valley of the shadow. He has been in temptation, and sorrow, and anguish, and pain. He has been in spiritual darkness and situations where he needed God's special help if he was going to be able to cope. He remembers all of that. In fact all that was necessary in order for him to become head over all things for us the people of God. So he sees us in our struggles, and physical and emotional pain, our dereliction and loneliness. This great Sovereign's heart beats for us and with us in sympathy. He prays for us there. "Father I know exactly what that man is going through. I know what it's like to be so helpless and hurting, baffled and weak. Help him Father!" That is what our Savior does with his power, he prays for us without ceasing for a moment.

As for the idea that Christ 'fills all in all, i.e., fills all things in all respects, O'Brien explains:

"Christ is the one who completely fills everything, that is, the whole of creation, the earthly and the heavenly, comprising all of humanity as well as the entire angelic realm, especially the rebellious powers. The nature of this filling is not to be explained in a physical or spatial sense: Christ pervades all things with his sovereign rule, directing all things to their appointed end (cf. Heb. 1:3), and this entails his functioning as the powerful ruler over against the principalities (1:21) and giving grace and strength to his people, the church (4:13,15-16) (151)."

Paul is not praying for an academic knowledge of theology about God, although that is necessary in the process of knowing God. Rather, he is praying for a personal,

Ephesians:1:15-23pt2 New Covenant Baptist Fellowship Pastor Joseph Krygier 4/25/2010 10  
experiential knowledge of God Himself through Jesus Christ, who is the only way to  
know the Father (John 14:6, 9).

Are you growing to know God personally through Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit reveals Him to you through His Word? Is spending time with God in His Word a priority to you? Knowing God is your supreme need, as Dr. Lloyd-Jones asserted. The quest of your life should be to know Him more and more. With Paul, you should be able to say (Phil. 3:8), "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ."