



# Ephesians

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**...which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, Ephesians 1:20**

These words now explain “what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power” of the previous verse. The “which” of this verse refers especially to “the working” of the previous. This is marvelously described by Albert Barnes –

“The ‘power’ which was then exerted was as great as that of creation. It was imparting life to a cold and "mangled" frame. It was to open again the arteries and veins, and teach the heart to beat and the lungs to heave. It was to diffuse vital warmth through the rigid muscles, and to communicate to the body the active functions of life. It is impossible to conceive of a more direct exertion of ‘power’ than in raising up the dead; and there is no more striking illustration of the nature of conversion than in such a resurrection.”

In the resurrection, God’s mighty power was on display in such a marvelous way that it becomes the believer’s very point of hope. We can understand creation because we can see it, we can analyze it, and we can contemplate it. In so doing, we understand the marvelous majesty of the Creator. We can consider how immense His power must be by that which He has created. The same is true with the resurrection of Christ for the believer.

In the resurrection, we can understand the power of God in a new way. Nothing, not even death, could hold back God's power in the reanimation of the body of Christ. As this is so, then if we are in Christ, we can then be assured of this in us as well. We can trust that the power of God which worked in Christ will also work in like manner in us.

In this Epistle, Paul highlights this marvelous moment, but then he goes beyond it. God raised Christ from the dead, but He also "seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*." This is a confirmation of Jesus' own words in Matthew 28 –

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Matthew 28:18

Christ, at the right hand of God, is in the position of power and authority. It means that in Him is all of the power of creation and resurrection. The greatest powers ever contemplated are endowed in Him. Because of this, we have the absolute assurance that we too will be resurrected, just as He was. It is a guarantee that cannot fail. For now, we are to look to Christ with eyes of faith and to behold the majesty of God, who stepped out of the eternal realm, in order to restore us once again to intimate fellowship. This He did through Jesus Christ, and this He continues to do now through Him. All things are being brought to their fulfillment through Christ, who even now sits on heaven's throne.

Life application: Are you sure that there is ground beneath your feet? You should be as sure in your faith that Christ has all things under control as you are of the fact that the ground is really there. Don't doubt, but look to Christ who has gone before us into the heavenly places.

**...far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.** Ephesians 1:21

While reading this verse in order to analyze it, I raised my arms in victory. "YES!" Who cannot get excited at such marvelous words!

In this verse, Paul completes the very long and continuous thought that he began in verse 3. To keep it in context, the previous verse is cited with it here –

"...which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, <sup>21</sup> far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come."

God worked the exceeding greatness of His power toward us in Christ. When His earthly mission was complete, he seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places “far above all principality and power and might and dominion.” The words which are translated as “principality and power” give the idea of government and the authority committed to that government. Christ’s position is above all such things. As there are both earthly and heavenly hierarchies, it signifies that He is the ultimate authority on earth and in heaven; He is God.

The words “might and dominion” further describe the first two words. This “might and dominion” is “the actual force and the moral force of dignity or lordship in which it is clothed” (Charles Ellicott). All governments, and all of the power associated with them, are far below the authority and power of Christ. Their ability to rule, and the scope of their rule, is finite. In contrast to this are Christ’s might and dominion, both of which are infinite. Paul refers to this same idea several times in his epistles. Two examples are found in Philippians 2:9 and in Colossians 2:10.

Paul’s next words further show Christ’s supremacy. He says that Christ’s authority is over “every name that is named.” A name signifies a position, title, area of authority, and so on. If the name is given to something by another, it then implies authority over that thing. For example, Adam was given the right to name the animals. Thus, he was set as the authority over them. In the naming of his wife, Eve, he was demonstrating authority over her.

In Exodus 3:14, the Lord proclaimed His name, I AM THAT I AM. He is the self-existent One. Nobody can claim authority over Him because He is before all things, and His name signifies His eternal nature and His infinite Being. Christ follows in the same way, proceeding from the Godhead. He has a name, but it is above all others. This is confirmed by the words of Revelation 19 –

“His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.” Revelation 19:12

No authority can be claimed over Christ because His unknown name identifies His infinite Being and His eternal nature. Where all others are named in a knowable way, Christ is named in an unknowable way. Only as He reveals Himself, slowly and eternally in the stream of time, can we comprehend His true Being. Thus He is above “every name that is named.” And this is true “not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” Christ is the eternal Logos, the Word of God.

This age began at the creation of the universe, which He created. He was before it, and thus He is above it – including all that is in it. In the age to come, He will reveal Himself eternally to His subjects, all named, all fully known, all subjected to Him. We will ponder that Name which is above every name for all eternity, and yet we will never fully know it. There will always be something more of Himself to reveal to His creatures.

Life application: Take time to hail the name of Christ – the eternal Word of God. And don't stop! Eternity itself will be filled with the ceaseless praises of our heavenly Lord.

**And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church,** Ephesians 1:22

The idea of placing all things under the feet goes back to the Old Testament. In the 8<sup>th</sup> psalm we read –

"You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;  
You have put all *things* under his feet." Psalm 8:6

These words from the psalm speak of man, but in the greater sense they speak of Christ who took on the nature of man. Adam (man) fell and lost his right to the world. Christ came to reclaim that. Through His work, He has been granted all power and all authority. In this, the "He" is emphatic. "He (emphatic - meaning God) put all *things* under His (meaning Jesus') feet." The meaning is that all things are in subjection to Him, not because He was simply set over these things, but because God has granted Him these things as a gift. Christ has all authority over all things.

The next words show a surprising concept which should not be missed. God "gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church." All things are "under His feet," and He is "head over all *things* to the church." What this means is that we are, as Paul explains in Romans 8:17, "joint heirs with Christ." The next verse will bear this out, but even without it, if Christ is the head, then the church must be (as verse 23 will show) His body.

Therefore, we see the exceptional magnitude of the inheritance we possess because of Christ. We are subject to Him as our Head, but all things are below us (as we are members of His body). This takes us back to the authority of man at the beginning. God gave us dominion over the animals of the earth. He gave us the right to subdue the earth and to fill it. We were subjected to God, but were granted authority below Him.

The devil gained control over that, and man has been subjected to him. However, Christ regained that control. Now all who are in Him are again a part the original intent for creation. A Man (meaning Christ) is its head, and we are His body. We share in the inheritance of what Christ has obtained. It is truly a marvelous thing which God has done for us in Christ.

Life application: When you see the wicked advancing in the world's system and seemingly getting away with their wickedness, don't let it trouble you. They will have their moment of ease and supposed power, but they will be swept away like the dust beneath your feet. Our inheritance is so far superior to what they think they have, that there is simply no comparison at all.

**...which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.** Ephesians 1:23

The meaning of this verse is one which is highly debated, and the wording is somewhat obscure. It should be taken together with the previous verse for context –

“And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church,<sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

Paul says that it is “the church which is His body.” John Chrysostom says that, “...the complement of the Head is the Body, and the complement of the Body is the Head.” Christ Jesus is fully God and fully Man. In His deity, there is no lack. He is a member of the Godhead and they are in eternal fellowship and harmony with one another. In His humanity, there needs to be something to complement who He is. It would make no sense to come as a human if there were no humans who would be affected by His coming.

But humanity is fallen and needs a Redeemer. In coming as their Redeemer, He would be incomplete without a group of redeemed. He is also the Savior, King, High Priest, etc. A savior without saved would be no savior. A king without a kingdom and subjects is not truly a king. It is the church which fills these roles and which complete who Christ is. This does not mean that He is lacking in anything in His being, but that His roles are complete in those whom He heads.

In order to show that this is the case, and that it is not Christ who is lacking in His being, Paul immediately follows up with the thought that the church is “the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” It is the church which “fills up” or “makes compete” the roles of Christ. His glory and His power are seen in the fact that He is our Head. Without such a body, these would only be known to Himself. But as His body, we are able to

acknowledge them. And yet it is Christ “who fills all in all.” He is transcendent over all things and it is He who does the filling of the church. Charles Ellicott states that “we are infinitely more incomplete without Him than He without us.”

He is the Vine, we are the branches. Together we form a whole, but the branches are dependent on the Vine. He was the crucified One; we were crucified with Him. He is the glorious One; we too now share in His glory. Christ is the Head; we are the body.

Life application: God did not need to create, but He did. He became the Creator when He created. Likewise, Christ did not need to redeem us, but He did. When He redeemed us, He became the Redeemer. In all things, Christ is the preeminent One through the things He has accomplished. Let us never forget that Christ truly is our All in all.