

Ephesians

Lesson Five

The Exalted Christ – The Glorious Church

1:15-23

Introduction:

1. This epistle began with praise to God for the many blessings He made available through the wisdom of His plan of redemption.
2. Paul continued by enumerating the blessings that are found in Christ, including the assurance of salvation by the revelation of His will.
3. Now, Paul begins to focus on the goal of God's great plan of the ages – the exaltation of Jesus as the head of the church.

1:15-16 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers

- A. This letter was written about 5 years after Paul left the city of Ephesus.
- B. Thus, Paul had heard of their faith in the time that he had been away from them.
 1. Note that their faith was something that could be seen and discussed.
 2. Paul heard about the actions that expressed their faith.
 3. The same is true of their love for the saints – it was love expressed in deeds and actions (cf. Phm. 1:5-6; Gal. 5:6; 1 Thes. 1:3).
 4. Has anyone heard of our faith and love?
- C. Upon learning of their continual faithfulness, Paul gave thanks for the Ephesians by mentioning them in his prayers.
 1. We should be thankful for faithful brethren.
 2. We should pray for the faithful – both individuals and congregations.

1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him

- A. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was that God would grant them wisdom by revealing the knowledge of His Word.
 1. Paul's desire was for them to have the spirit of wisdom and revelation.
 - a. This refers to miraculous gifts or abilities (cf. 1 Cor. 12:8).
 - b. God was still in the process of revealing His will by means of inspired men.
 - c. Thus, for them to have knowledge, it had to be revealed by miracle.
 2. The knowledge of Him is an understanding of God.
 3. In the context, it refers to knowing God's character as the Designer and Provider of His plan of redemption.
 4. Thus, they would understand the mystery and have knowledge of Truth.
- B. God is the Father of glory.
 1. This means that glory belongs to Him, characterizes Him, and flows from Him.
 2. The glory of His preeminence was manifested in Jesus – by His resurrection, ascension and reign over His kingdom (cf. vs. 19-23).

1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened

- A. Definition of terms:
 - 1. "Eyes" – can refer to the eye or can mean vision or "the faculty of knowing"
 - 2. "Understanding" – means "deep thought" or way of thinking; heart, mind
 - 3. "Enlightened" – to shine or brighten, to light up; to cause to become clear; thus, to inform, instruct, or teach
 - 4. ASV – "*Having the eyes of your heart enlightened*" (ESV)
 - 5. LITV – "*The eyes of your mind having been enlightened*"
- B. Many seek enlightenment in the ideas, philosophies and religions of the world.
- C. However, true enlightenment can come only from God.
- D. The Holy Spirit revealed the Truth of God's Word which brought light to men's hearts of darkness (cf. 5:8; Psalm 119:18, 104; Matt. 13:15; Luke 24:45; Acts 16:13-14; 26:18; 2 Cor. 4:4-6; Heb. 10:32).

That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints

- A. When one's heart is enlightened by the truth of the Gospel, certain things can be known.
- B. God's calling is the call to a new life of salvation as a Christian.
 - 1. Called to a new standard of living (4:1)
 - 2. Called to sanctification (Rom. 1:6-7)
 - 3. Called according to God's purpose (Rom. 8:28-30)
 - 4. Called to fellowship (1 Cor. 1:9)
 - 5. Called into grace (Gal. 1:6)
 - 6. Called unto liberty (Gal. 5:13)
 - 7. Called to Heaven (Phil. 3:14)
 - 8. Called to peace in one body (Col. 3:15)
 - 9. Called to the kingdom and glory (1 Thes. 2:12)
 - 10. Called to holiness (1 Thes. 4:7)
 - 11. Called by the Gospel (2 Thes. 2:13-14)
 - 12. Called to eternal life (1 Tim 6:12)
 - 13. Called into light (1 Pet. 2:9)
 - 14. Called to glory and virtue (1 Pet. 3:9; 2 Pet. 1:3)
 - 15. Called the children of God (1 John 3:1)
- C. Those who understand this calling live with hope (2:12; 4:4)!
- D. The saints' inheritance is one of abundant glory in Heaven.
 - 1. 1:7 – The riches of His grace
 - 2. 1:18 – The riches of His glory (cf. 3:16; Col. 1:27)
 - 3. 3:8 – The unsearchable riches of Christ

1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power

- A. The power of God is exceedingly great – *demonstrated by Jesus' resurrection and ascension*.
- B. Yet, that great power is directed toward the believers – in resurrecting us from sin now and from death in the future.

- C. One whose heart has been enlightened by the Gospel will understand the immense and immeasurable greatness of God's power.
- D. This can be known because the Christian is aware of the demonstration of God's power – "that working of the strength of His might" (ASV), "the working of the power of His might" (LITV).

1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places

- A. That power was manifested in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.
 - 1. Imagine the power to resurrect one from the dead.
 - 2. Imagine the power to cause one to ascend to Heaven.
 - 3. Imagine the power to crown one as King of kings and Lord of lords.
 - 4. Now, understand that that same power has been and will be directed toward the Christian!
- B. It was that same power – expressed in the Gospel – that forgave the Ephesians of their sins, raised them from spiritual death and set them in heavenly places in the church.
- C. One who obeys the Gospel and walks in the light can be sure of salvation!

1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come

- A. In His resurrection and ascension, Jesus was placed above all others (save for God Himself).
 - 1. Principality – *refers to the hierarchy of angelic beings*
 - 2. Power – *refers to earthly leaders (kings, potentates, etc.)*
 - 3. Might – *refers to inherent strength, not manifested power*
 - 4. Dominion – *refers to lordship; manifested power*
 - 5. Every name – *refers to any rank or dignity*
 - a. "Let any name be uttered, whatever it is, Christ is above it; is more exalted than that which the name so uttered affirms" (Meyer).
 - b. The "position of Christ [is] above every dignity revered, real ...or imaginary... in the present or future state" (Foy E. Wallace, Jr.).
- B. The emphasis is on the exaltation of Jesus.
- C. The reminder is of the power of God directed toward believers.

1:22-23 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all

- A. Thus, by exalting Jesus, God put all things under His feet (cf. Psalm 8:6; 1 Cor. 15:25-27; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 2:5-9, 14-15).
- B. In exalting Jesus, God appointed Him as Head over all things to the church.
 - 1. Luke 22:29 – The kingdom was appointed to Jesus.
 - 2. Hebrews 1:2 – Jesus was appointed heir of all things.
 - 3. This was not merely a gift, but an appointment.
- C. This appointment as Head occurred at the ascension and crowning of Jesus.
 - 1. Daniel 7:13-14; Psalm 24:7-10
 - 2. There was no kingdom before the ascension; for, there was no King.
 - 3. There was no church before Pentecost; for, there was no Head.
- D. In the church, Jesus has all authority and power.

1. Thus, the church must be submissive in every way to the will of Christ.
2. All must be done by His authority (Col. 3:16-17).
 - a. Plan of salvation
 - b. Worship
 - c. Work
 - d. Doctrine
- E. In relation to Christ as the Head, the church is the body (cf. 4:4; 5:23; Col. 1:18).
 1. Thus, there is union and unity between the Lord and the church.
 2. You can't have one without the other!
 3. The body must be guided by the Head in all things – energy, strength, life, authority, direction, emotions, feelings, will, action, etc.
 4. Furthermore, to have more than one head (authority) in religion is sinful and chaotic.
 5. To claim that there are a plurality of bodies is illogical and wrong.
- F. The church is the fullness of Christ.
 1. Christ is the fullness of God (cf. Col. 1:19; 2:9).
 2. In Christ, the Christian is filled with the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19).
 3. Yet, Christ is filled with the church – it is everything to Him.
 4. Therefore, nothing that is in Christ is outside of the church.
 5. *{If you are a Christian, you are important to the Lord!}*
- G. As the church is the fullness of Christ, so He fills all in all.
 1. He “fills all the members with all the things belonging to that relationship.”
 2. This included miraculous gifts in the early church (cf. 4:10, 15).
 3. It emphasized the importance of true fellowship in the church in contrast to the pagan practices in Ephesus.
 4. It reminds us that all spiritual blessings are in Christ; thus, in the church.
- H. This unity of fellowship in the church will be the focus of Paul's discussion.