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Who Are We?

Those On Behalf Of Whom God Works His Mighty Power

EPHESIANS 1:19B-23

Introduction

1. Since we first opened Paul's letter to the Christians in the city of Ephesus, we have been asking ourselves the question, "Who Are We?"
2. Paul began by telling us that we are those people who God has blessed with every spiritual blessing.
3. All of these blessings are ours because we put Christ on in baptism at some point in the past and because God adopted us into His family.
4. In *verses 3-14* Paul informs the Ephesian Christians and us as well that these blessings include the fact that God . . .
 - a. Chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.
 - b. Predestined to adopt us to Himself, that again, through Jesus Christ.
 - c. Redeemed us through Christ's blood.
 - d. Has forgiven us of our sins (trespasses) according to the riches of His grace.
 - e. Sealed us with the Holy Spirit of promise until the day of our final redemption.
5. Paul then wrote, in *verses 15-19*, of the fact that he was praying for them that God would open the eyes of their hearts so that they will come to know three things:
 - a. The hope of His calling
 - b. The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints
 - c. The surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

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6. Now, as He concludes this section of his letter he states that these last three things "are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He

brought about in Christ” (vv. 19b-20a).

7. Paul’s focus is upon God’s power and how it is at work in our lives.
8. He utilizes four different Greek words for power here in verse 19:
 - a. “The surpassing greatness of His power” (v. 19a) — (*dunamis*) from which we get the word dynamite.
 - b. “the working of the strength of His might” (v. 19b):
 - 1) “working” (*energia*)
 - a) Energy
 - b) Used in the N.T. only of superhuman power
 - 2) “strength” (*kratos*)
 - a) Power that overcomes resistance, as in Christ’s miracles.
 - b) A word used only of God
 - 3) “might” (*ischus*)
 - a) God’s inherent strength
 - b) That which He provides

“... whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies” (1 Peter 4:11).

9. In these next three verses Paul goes on to share with us three ways in which God displayed His power in Christ.

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I. God Displayed His Great Power In Our Lord’s . . .

A. RESURRECTION

“These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead . . .” (Ephesians 1:19b-20a, NASB95).

1. God’s mighty power was “brought about” (“worked,” NKJV, ESV; “exerted,” NIV84; “demonstrated,” HCSB) first in Jesus’ resurrection.

2. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was no simple feat:
 - a. He had been beaten to the point of death.
 - b. He was crucified on a cross.
 - c. He was placed in a tomb with a large stone rolled across the entrance.
3. Only the power of God could raise Him.
3. This was the great truth which the apostles kept proclaiming:

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- a. Peter's preaching to the crowds in Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2:32)

"This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses." (Acts 2:32, NASB95)

- b. Paul told the Christians in Rome that through this power which God utilized to raise Jesus from the dead, He declared Him to be His Son (Romans 1:4).

"who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord," (Romans 1:4, NASB95)

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- c. He also promised the philosophers in Athens that God's resurrection of Christ was evidence that He would one day judge the world (Acts 17:31)

"He [God] has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:31)

4. It is this same power which guarantees our own future resurrection (1 Corinthians 6:14; Philippians 3:21).

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"Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power." (1 Corinthians 6:14, NASB95)

"who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all

things to Himself.” (Philippians 3:21, NASB95)

5. As we have already seen, it is this same power which is available to God’s people today.

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B. EXALTATION

“... and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 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.” (Ephesians 1:20–21, NASB95)

1. Not only did God through His power raise His Son from the dead, He also exalted Him to ‘a position of unparalleled honor and universal authority.’
2. God seated our Lord at His own right hand.
3. This was what David prophesied in Psalm 110:1.

“The Lord says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”” (Psalm 110:1, NASB95)

4. To be at someone’s “right hand” is to be in a position of special honor and privilege.

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5. In the Old Testament the Lord’s right hand is the position of . . .

- a. Favor (Psalm 80:17),

“Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself.” (Psalm 80:17, NASB95)

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- b. Victory (Psalm 20:6)

“Now I know that the **LORD** saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand.” (Psalm 20:6, NASB95)

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- c. Power (Exodus 15:6; Psalm 89:13)

“Your right hand, O Lord, is majestic in power, Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy.” (Exodus 15:6, NASB95)

“You have a strong arm; Your hand is mighty, Your right hand is exalted.” (Psalm 89:13, NASB95)

6. Because Christ is enthroned at the right hand of God, He now possesses the full authority of the Father.
7. His position is superior to every imaginable hostile power.
 - a. He is “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion” (v. 21a) — both human and superhuman.
 - b. Paul told the Christians in Colosse Christ “disarmed” these “rulers and authorities” and “triumphed over them through Him” (Colossians 2:15, NASB95).
 - c. It is because of our Lord’s position over them that we can “stand firm . . . against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12, NASB95).
8. He is “above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come” (v. 21b)

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C. HEADSHIP

“And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,” (Ephesians 1:22, NASB95)

1. Paul quotes from another psalm of David, specifically Psalm 8, where David wrote “You have put all things under his feet” (Psalm 8:6b, NASB95).
2. Christ has not only been given a position of authority, seated at the right hand of the Father; he is now able to exercise that authority in the subjection of everything under his feet.
3. The “all things” which God has put in subjection under our Lord’s feet include

the whole universe, heaven and earth, and especially the spiritual powers.

4. The only one not subject to Christ is the Father (**1 Corinthians 15:27**).

“But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him”” (1 Corinthians 15:27b, NASB95).

5. Though the complete fulfillment of these words will occur only when death is destroyed and God is all in all, our Lord’s present enthronement at God’s right hand assures us that all that is promised will come about without fail.

6. We must not miss the last words of Paul here in verse 22, “And He . . . gave Him as head over all things to the church.”

7. In these words of Paul, we see the demonstration of God’s power in order to grace His church.

8. Christ’s headship over the universe is for the benefit of those who gather around Him in fellowship and worship.

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II. The Significance Of God’s Great Power Working Through His Son

“And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:22–23, NASB95)

A. WE ARE HIS BODY

1. Christ is the head of His church and we are the Body which compliments the head.
2. There is a vital union between ourselves and our Lord.
3. When we think our union in terms of an actual human body, we realize that our bodies are not a bunch of loose parts somehow attached to each other.
4. All of these parts are actually one and function as a whole.
5. There is a vital union between them.
6. As head over His church (body) He directs its movements and growth — He is in total control.

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B. WE ARE THE FULLNESS OF HIM WHO FILLS ALL IN ALL

1. The NIV translates this as “the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.”
2. Not only does Christ rule His church but He fills it in a special way with His Spirit, grace, and gifts.
3. In other words, He gives to us all that we need to follow Him, serve Him, obey Him, etc.

Conclusion

1. God has great power available toward us who believe.
2. It is power which according to Paul is “in accordance with the working of the strength of His might” (1:19).
3. It is the same power which God used to . . .
 - a. Raise His Son from the dead
 - b. Seat Him at His right hand
 - c. Put everything in subjection to Him
4. It is this power which fills His church.
5. One day, our Lord will present us, His church, to His Father in all her glory.
6. Will you be present with Him on that day?
7. You will if you are a part of His body?
8. Will you make the decision to obey the gospel tonight?