

# This is a Great Mystery

## A Study of Ephesians

### Week 7 – Ephesians 1:20-23

#### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, you rule all things because all things have been put under your feet. We know this to be true by what we see and believe about the message of the cross. Continue to rule in our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit so that we would be built up as members of your body to the glory of your most holy name. Amen.

#### **From Last Week**

I can't recall anything that I was tasked with researching further; is there anything you wanted to talk about further with:

- Paul's prayer of thanksgiving?
- The difference between spirit/Spirit/wind/breath?
- Paul's mention of the powerful work of the Holy Spirit?
- Other things?

**Verse 20** - ἦν ἐνήργησεν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐγείρας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ καθίσας ἐν δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις

#### **That is what he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right (hand) in the heavenlies...**

1. It's important to remember where we just came from, especially since translations will handle the transition between 19 and 20 a number of different ways. What did God work or exert? His mighty power, which is what the Holy Spirit reveals to us through the eyes of our hearts. Again, God works; the tense used here (called aorist) presents the undeniable fact. No matter what, God works. This is another wrinkle of when we talked about God working back in verse 11.
2. Paul will often have a "Christ hymn" in his letters (Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5). Such a hymn of praise begins here. It serves as a review of what God has done in Christ, which is the essence of a confession of faith. On that note, many of the places where Paul writes these "hymns" are the bases for the truths we confess in the three ecumenical creeds.
3. ἐγείρας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν – when he raised him from the dead
  - a. Some have made a distinction between where the Bible says that "God raised Jesus from the dead" and where it says that "Jesus rose from the dead." Scripture speaks both ways:
  - b. Jesus was raised
    - i. **John 2:22** – When Jesus was raised from the dead...
    - ii. **Acts 2:32** – This Jesus is the one God has raised up.
    - iii. **Acts 5:30** – The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you arrested and killed...
    - iv. **Acts 10:40** – But God raised him on the third day and caused him to be seen,
    - v. **Romans 10:9** – Certainly, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
    - vi. **Galatians 1:1** – ...through...God the Father, who raised him from the dead...
  - c. Jesus rose
    - i. **Acts 10:41** – ...not by all the people, but by the witnesses God had already chosen—by us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

- ii. **Romans 14:9** – ...he died, rose, and lived, to be Lord of both the dead and the living.
  - iii. **1 Thessalonians 4:14** – Indeed, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again...
  - iv. Consider also **John 10:18** – “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it up again. This is the commission I received from my Father.”
- d. What are the different nuances that are communicated with each option? Think mainly about who is doing the action.
- i. What potential implications (even issues) could that bring up in people’s minds?
- e. Can both be true? If not, why not? If so, why so?
4. What’s the significance of sitting at someone’s right hand?

**Verse 21** - ὑπεράνω πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ κυριότητος καὶ παντὸς ὀνόματος ὀνομαζομένου, οὐ μόνον ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι ·

**...above all rule and authority and power and dominion and [above] every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the coming [age].**

5. What are some rule(r)s, authorities, powers, and dominions that people might think have more power than that of Jesus?
6. What are some rulers, authorities, powers, and dominions that Christians might think have more power than that of Jesus?
- a. For what reasons is it important to make efforts to include ourselves in these kinds of questions?
7. What are the two ages to which Paul is referring?
- a. What truth does that teach about the rule and power of Jesus?

What comments and questions do you have?

**Verses 22-23** - καὶ πάντα ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, <sup>23</sup> ἣτις ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ, τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου.

**And he subjected all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.**

8. ὑπέταξεν – “Of submission involving recognition of an ordered structure.”
  - a. This word can be used, really, in two different ways
    - i. This verse speaks of God causing all things to be submissive to Christ; it’s forced.
    - ii. In Ephesians 5 and elsewhere, the submission is voluntary and done out of sacrificial love.
  - b. Look at **Hebrews 2:6-9** to see why all things have been put under Jesus’ feet.
9. The head/body image will come up again in each chapter of Ephesians, except the closing chapter. It also comes up in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Colossians 1.
  - a. Thinking about the physical head/body relationship, what things does the head do for the body?
    - b. This is thinking ahead a little bit, but what does Jesus, as the head, do for his body, the Church?
      - i. This is especially important to remember in the husband/wife relationship, but also has applications to any ordered structure that has been established by God (church, government, home, etc.).
10. τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου – the fullness of him who fills everything in every way
  - a. I’ll be honest, this phrase makes my head spin a little bit. Here’s why:
    - i. This is a description of Christ’s body, the Church.
    - ii. But how does the Church fill ALL things in EVERY way?
    - iii. You could say that the Church is in heaven (triumphant) and all over the earth (militant) and so it kind of fills all things; but in every way? Not quite.
    - iv. It seems to be a circular type of reasoning (which is allowable when God is the author): The reason the Church is the fullness of Christ in all things and in every way is because Christ fills the Church in all things and in every way.

What comments or questions do you have?

#### SCHEDULE REMINDERS

- No class on 5/30 (both Pastors out of town plus Memorial Day weekend)
- Class on 6/6 (likely with Pastor Plagenz starting chapter 2)
- No class on 6/13 (allowing time for set up at Robinson Park)
- We should be back to a relatively normal class schedule on 6/20

**Closing Prayer** – CW 174 v. 4 (See, The Conqueror Mounts in Triumph)  
**He has raised our human nature On the clouds to God's right hand;  
There we sit in heav'nly places, There with him in glory stand.  
Jesus reigns, adored by angels; Man with God is on the throne.  
By our mighty Lord's ascension We by faith behold our own. Amen.**