

**Text: Eph 1.20-23**

We are in the second long sentence of Eph 1, Paul's prayer for the Ephesians.

To recap the petition, vv. 15-19, the logic of chapter 1 goes this way:

- God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit give the believer every spiritual blessing (3-14)
- Paul prays that believers will come to know God intimately (17)
  - To better know the hope provided by God's call to salvation (18)
  - To better anticipate the future inheritance for all the saints (18)
  - To better experience the present power of God now (19)

The rest of the prayer expands on the power of God at work for believers in the present age. This is "Part 2" of the prayer, vv. 20-23.

**Proposition: God's power is active in our world today for the benefit of all believers.**

Paul specifically describes three ways God manifests (manifested) his power of the benefit of believers.

**I. God exalted Christ (20-21)**

A. Paul wants you to know the power of God (17, 19)

1. The "surpassing greatness of his power" is the object of our comprehension (19a)
2. This great power is "in accordance with the working of the strength of his might" (19b)

B. This mighty working is what he worked in exalting Christ (20)

1. When He raised him from the dead
2. When He seated him at his right hand

When God worked this work, how did it benefit the saints? **salvation**

Where is Christ located after these works are done? **heavenlies**

C. This mighty working set him above "all rule and authority ..." etc. (21)

What does the list of authorities mean? Do they represent good or evil? **probably evil angelic authorities (see Ep 6.11-12)**

Compare 6.11-12

Ep 6.11-12 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

Does the list indicate a hierarchy? **possibly, but not absolutely, compare other lists**

What is "every name that is named?" **catch-all for every other authority**

What is the scope of Christ's authority over these things listed? **forever**

## II. God subjected all things to Christ (22a)

A. Subjection implies conquest (dominion)

B. Under his feet implies total domination

What position does this give Christ in relation to creation? **total supremacy**

When is this position in effect? **immediately, yet not fully realized now**

## III. God gave Christ as head of the church (22b-23)

A. God gave Christ to the church (22b)

B. The church is His body (23a)

C. The church "the fulness of him who fills all in all" (23b)

What does "as head over all things" mean in v. 22? **the office Christ holds, in which office he is given to the church**

The words of v. 23 are difficult to understand. How does the church as His body benefit from the power of God "filling all in all"? **in the metaphor of a body, the properties of the head flow to all the parts; if Christ is filled with all fulness, as he leads his body, all his fulness flows to all the members**

“In other words, God’s fullness which is filling Christ is filling the church.”<sup>1</sup>

### Conclusion:

The answer to Paul’s prayer is found in Christians who pursue closeness to Christ and by that “hungering and thirsting after righteousness” are filled with the power of God in their lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 299.