

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

"Demonstrations of God's Power" (1)

Ephesians 1:20-21

Introduction

1. Paul's prayer for the Ephesian believers has three basic goals. They include an understanding of a) the hope of His calling, b) the glory of His inheritance, and c) the greatness of His power (vv. 18b-19a).
2. In connection with God's power, Paul explained how God demonstrated that power. Apparently Paul felt that his inability to describe the power must give way to his desire to demonstrate it in the person of Christ.
3. There are four pivotal expressions in this demonstration (vv. 20-23): a. God raised Christ (resurrection), b. God set Christ (exaltation), c. God subjected all to Christ (session), d. God gave Christ (relation).

1. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST v. 20.

That these items are demonstrations of God's power is evident. Grammatically the phrase "which he wrought..." is connected to the word for energizing power (v. 18). The supreme example is "in Christ," a phrase meaning Christ was the supreme object. Moreover, the perfect tense for "wrought" makes an abiding, continuing matter. It stands done. Now the first demonstration which stands done is His resurrection. Two items are noted:

a. The resurrection is history

This is clearly stated by the aorist tense of the verb "raised." Being a participle, it is dependent on "wrought." The combination speaks forcefully of a finished work.

b. The resurrection is victory

Christ's resurrection was an "out" resurrection. The preposition "from" really means "out." Christ was raised out of the dead ones. This is the same sort of resurrection in which believers will be a part (Phil. 3:11). He is the firstfruits of them that slept (1 Cor. 15:20).

Note: The resurrection was vigorously and joyously proclaimed by the apostles. It served 1) to authenticate our Lord's ministry; 2) to seal His redemptive work; 3) to attest the Father's acceptance of His sacrifice; 4) to mark the beginning of His glorification (Rom. 1:4; 4:25; Phil. 2:5-11).

2. THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST vv. 20, 21.

a. Its act

The verb "set" is a causative participle and grammatically associated with the verb "raised" in subordination to the finite verb "wrought." It, therefore, tells how God's power was wrought in the Person of Christ. Being aorist, the fact is an historical act of God, the Father to the Son. The seating is done and actual.

b. Its location

The "right hand" is a figurative expression for the place of supreme privilege and authority (cf. Heb. 1:3; Phil. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:22). This is really an honor due to God alone (John 5:23). The possessive pronoun "His" makes the place more dignified and royal. Being in "the heavenly places" notes the non-earthiness of His abode (cf. 1:3; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12).

c. Its position

The adverbial preposition "far above" illustrates the primacy of Christ over all angelic and human creation. It seems obvious that the emanation theory which was adopted by the gnostics (today such groups as the Jehovah Witnesses) is in view by Paul here. Christ is God and must not be relegated to a created position (cf. Col. 1:16). There are levels mentioned here.

- 1) Principalities. This speaks of those beings who govern.
- 2) Powers. This denotes those beings who exercise authority.
- 3) Might. This marks those beings who have special powers.
- 4) Dominion. This connotes those beings who exercise lordship.
- 5) Every name. This summarizes every other creature who may have some title, such as, prince potentate, or whatever.

The obvious intent of the above list is that whatever kinds of rulership there may be or name they bear - all must submit to His supremacy (Phil. 2:9).

Conclusion Christ's resurrection and exaltation stand as patent illustrations of the power of God toward us who believe. Oh, may this cause us to respond in gratefulness to live unto Him with joy. Amen.