

# To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

## Ephesians 1:15–20

**Ephesians 1:15** *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,*

As with all the other churches that the apostle applauded,<sup>1</sup> faith in the Son of God, and love towards those born of God, were the two greatest evidences of the Ephesians' religious piety. To genuinely believe in Jesus Christ, will result in being given the Spirit of God, from which the divine fruits of *faith* and *love*, become manifest in the life. Where true faith is, love will follow; where love is, genuine faith in the Son of God has preceded it. Where also God's Spirit truly abides, Its fruit will manifest Itself in those who possess It. Counterfeits—though they may copy religious verbiage, and possess some knowledge of Scripture—cannot truly mimic the fruits of the Spirit,<sup>2</sup> *faith* and *love*, which themselves are divine evidences of having become a child of God.

Jesus said, *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them* (Matt. 7:20). If this truth is applicable at the last day, when all will be judged, it surely should be applied to our present day, when spiritual discernment is needed most, in determining who is truly the Lord's, and who is not.<sup>3</sup>

**Ephesians 1:16** *Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*

It is common for those in the faith, to give thanks and offer prayers for others who are also sincere believers in Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> Being thankful in Christian ministry,<sup>5</sup> is as essential as being faithful. Just as faith and love were evidences of the Ephesians' religious piety, so was Paul's thankfulness and prayer for them, evidences of his own. Ministers also, even if no one else is thankful for true saints' lives, will be. The apostle's prayers for the Ephesians,

1 Col. 1:4 *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, I Thess. 1:3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;*

II Thess. 1:3 *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;*

2 Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,<sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

3 Matt. 7:21–23 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.<sup>22</sup> Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?<sup>23</sup> And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

4 Rom. 1:8–9 *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.<sup>9</sup> For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;*

I Cor. 1:4 *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; Phil. 1:3–4 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,<sup>4</sup> Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,*

Col. 1:3 *We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 5 Eph. 5:20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; I Thess. 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

Col. 3:15 *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

Ps. 107:1 *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

I Thess. 5:16–18 *Rejoice evermore.<sup>17</sup> Pray without ceasing.<sup>18</sup> In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

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reveals that if even absent from the saints, still, spiritual labor in the form of prayer, can be exerted towards them. To pray for someone reveals both a belief in God, that He answers prayers, and a selflessness not to be too overly consumed with our own life. True Christians are, for the most part, rare,<sup>6</sup> and this is why the apostle needed little motivation to lift up to God prayers and thanks for the saints at Ephesus. They were precious in the Lord's sight, and the apostle knew it. Similar with Israel, those chosen by God to share in divine inheritance are cherished in His sight.<sup>7</sup>

***Ephesians 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:***

Paul, after speaking of offering prayers for the Ephesians, now reveals the contents of his prayers. The first thing that the apostle beseeches the *God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory* for, is that the believers at Ephesus may be given *the spirit of wisdom and revelation*. Though the Ephesians had already been baptized by the Son of God with the Spirit, evidenced by bearing Its divine fruits, still they lacked much that was necessary to truly come to know God. This knowledge, a true and deep knowledge of God, can only come through being given spiritual *wisdom and revelation*. Because God is Spirit, (-John 4:24)<sup>8</sup> then only His Holy Spirit can truly make Himself known. Hence, just

as Moses could not see the Lord's glory, without having it to be revealed unto him, so cannot Christians truly come to know the Lord, and His purpose for their lives, apart from spiritual wisdom and revelation being imparted to them.

The two qualities connected to the Holy Spirit that the apostle prays may be imparted to the Ephesians, are *the spirit of wisdom and revelation*. The Greek word for *wisdom* is #4678 *sophia*. Strong's defines the word "wisdom, insight, skill (human or divine), intelligence." HELPS Word-studies defines the word "*wisdom* (properly, 'clarity')." The Greek word for *revelation* is #602 *apokalupsis* (appo-kah-loop-sees). Strong's defines it as "an uncovering." HELPS Word-studies defines the word as, "uncovering (unveiling)," stating also that "*apokálypsis* (appo-kah-loop-sees) ('revelation, unveiling') is principally used of the *revelation* of Jesus Christ (the Word), especially a *particular* (spiritual) *manifestation* of Christ (His will) previously unknown to the extent (because 'veiled, covered')." What we learn from the definitions of these words is that the apostle prayed that God would reveal to the Ephesians, those spiritual truths concerning Jesus Christ, that previously were covered, but now able to be revealed, giving clarity to God's purposes in His Son. The heart of man is by nature dark, sealed, and alienated from spiritual truths and realities. It cannot truly see God, though it is aware of God's existence throughout creation, and His

<sup>6</sup> Luke 13:23–24 *Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, <sup>24</sup>Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Matt. 7:13–14 *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: <sup>14</sup>Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

Matt. 7:21–23 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. <sup>22</sup>Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? <sup>23</sup>And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

7 I Pet. 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;*

Isa. 43:4 *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.*

8 John 4:24 *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

eternal power and Godhead.<sup>9</sup> But though creation reveals God's eternal power and Godhead, it cannot reveal the true essence of God, nor His divine plan for man. For this, spiritual wisdom and revelation are needed, which only the Lord Himself can provide. These truths must be imparted spiritually, simply because through natural perception, an invisible God,<sup>10</sup> cannot be accurately perceived, nor His person truly known. There are many things that those who lack the Spirit cannot perceive. They cannot perceive the resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup> They cannot perceive, the powers of the Spirit, and/or its manifestations.<sup>12</sup> They cannot grasp the great courage and boldness, that the Spirit imparts to those purposed to speak for Jesus Christ, even if uneducated and untrained in public discourse.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately the natural man, when governed by the natural mind, will not accept spiritual things, because to him they are deemed as foolishness. (I Cor. 2:14) *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The reason that the *natural man*, who has no connection to the Spirit of God, deems spiritual truths as foolishness, is because what is seen by spiritual men, he lacks the ability to see, or perceive, much less rejoice in. Since they have not the Spirit of God, which alone can reveal God, those of the flesh are blind, obtuse, and completely removed from the higher, holy and heavenly realm of the Spirit.

(*Benson Commentary*, I Cor. 2:14) No man, as naturally born into the world, and not supernaturally born again of the Spirit, *can see the kingdom of God*, or receive, in faith and love, the spiritual mysteries of redemption by the cross of Christ. To all unregenerate men, these things will, in one way or other, appear *foolishness*, uninteresting, unnecessary, inconsistent, absurd: and doubtless proud reasoners have scoffed at them, more than ever mere sensualists did. No ingenuity, address, or reasoning of the preacher can prevent this effect: no application of a man's own mind, except in humble dependence on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, can enable him to perceive the real nature and glory of them. (END QUOTE)

For any to be taught of God, and brought into the heavenly mysteries and truths of the spiritual world, then they must be given the Spirit of God. It is through the possession of the Spirit, that the things of God are made known. (I Cor. 2:11) *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, I Cor. 2:11) *things of God knoweth no man*—rather, “none knoweth,” not angel or man. This proves the impossibility of any knowing the things of God, save by the Spirit of God (who alone knows them, since even in the case of man, so infinitely inferior in mind to God, none of his fellow men, but his own spirit alone knows the things hidden within him). (END QUOTE)

<sup>9</sup> Rom. 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

<sup>10</sup> Col. 1:15 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

*I Tim. 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

*Heb. 11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him [God] who is invisible.*

<sup>11</sup> Acts 17:32 *And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.*

<sup>12</sup> Acts 2:11–13 *Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*

<sup>13</sup> *And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

<sup>13</sup> Acts 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*

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It should be the great purpose of the Christian's life, to more intimately come to know their Savior.<sup>14</sup> They are commanded to do so,<sup>15</sup> and those truly led by Christ's Spirit will with great effort make this their primary aim in life.<sup>16</sup> Once given the Spirit of God, the quest to come to know the Lord, can begin. Israel's great sin, and that which led to her destruction, was that she lacked spiritual knowledge, and the primary reason for this was because she first rejected a knowledge of God.<sup>17</sup> What was true of Israel, is still true today, that those who are destroyed through a *lack of knowledge*, are the very same who stubbornly reject being taught anything by the Lord.<sup>18</sup> It is also only when men truly repent and return to the Lord,<sup>19</sup> that they can actually come to know Him. (Hos. 6:3) *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.*

(Pulpit Commentary, Hos. 6:3) *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. ...* Aben Ezra understands the exhortation of intellectual knowledge: "To know Jehovah is the secret of all wisdom, and for this alone

was man created. But he cannot know God till he has learnt many doctrines of wisdom, which are, as it were, a ladder in order to mount up to this highest step of knowledge."

All true knowledge of God, begins first with faith in God's Son. It is He, Who has revealed God to man, and only through Him, that the mysteries of God can be known.<sup>20</sup> To begin to know Christ, is to begin to know the Father, and to begin to know the Father, can only come through first, faith in His Son. It is in Him that the Lord has made Himself known,<sup>21</sup> and only through His Spirit, that any true knowledge of God, can be gained. For this reason the apostle prayed that *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory*, would impart to the Ephesians that necessary *spiritual wisdom and revelation*, directly related to the Son of God. It is important also to understand that there is emphasis placed on not merely the *God of our Lord Jesus Christ* but also *the Father of glory*. What this reveals is, that He, Whom the apostle desired the Ephesians to be given spiritual wisdom and revelation from, was the *Father of glory*. It was He, Who had glorified Jesus Christ,<sup>22</sup> and He, Who has called those

14 Phil. 3:10 *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*

15 II Pet. 3:18 *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

16 Phil. 3:10 *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*

17 Hos. 4:6-9 *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. <sup>7</sup>As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame. <sup>8</sup>They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. <sup>9</sup>And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.*

18 Hos. 4:6b ... *because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee...*

19 Hos. 6:1 *Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.*

20 John 8:19 *Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.*

21 Matt. 11:27 *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

Col. 1:15 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

John 17:25-26 *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. <sup>26</sup>And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

22 Acts 3:13 *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.*

who believe upon His Son to eternal glory. Important also to note is the fact, that all divine and heavenly glory, originates in the Father of glory. (John 17:5) *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, John 17:5) *with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*—when “in the beginning the Word was with God” (Joh 1:1), “the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father” (Joh 1:18). With this pre-existent glory, which He veiled on earth, He asks to be reinvested, the design of the veiling being accomplished—not, however, simply as before, but now in our nature. (END QUOTE)

The *Father of glory* has direct relationship with Christ's title, the *Lord of glory*,<sup>23</sup> which defines Jesus after His resurrection, ascension, and glorification. He, Whom the apostle prayed would enlighten the Ephesians, was the *Father of glory* Who had first glorified His Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup> There will also come a preordained future time, when Jesus comes in the glory of the Father,<sup>25</sup> when also God and His heavenly glory will be made to be fully known upon the earth.

***Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,***

(Benson Commentary, Eph. 1:18) Observe, reader, it is by the eyes of the understanding alone that we discern the things of God; and in order hereto these eyes must first be opened, and then enlightened, by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, spoken of in the former verse. (END QUOTE)

Without a man being spiritually enlightened, he is little more than a beast. All his thoughts of God are wrong; all presumptions of the spiritual realm, remain in error. A spiritually unenlightened man, is by all divine measures, a completely blind man.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 1:18) The views which people entertain of themselves and of God are narrow and wrong. The understanding is enfeebled and perverted by the practice of sin. It is limited in its operations by the necessity of the case, and by the impossibility of fully comprehending the great truths which pertain to the divine administration. One of the first effects of true religion is on the understanding. It enlarges its views of truth; gives it more exalted conceptions of God; corrects its errors; raises it up toward the great Fountain of love. And nowhere is the effect of the true religion more apparent than in shedding light on the intellect of the world, and restoring the weak and perverted mind to a just view of the proportion of things, and to the true knowledge of God. (END QUOTE)

There are three things listed in Paul's prayer for the Ephesians which he im-

23 Jas. 2:1 *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. I Cor. 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

24 Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Eph. 1:20–23 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.*<sup>21</sup> *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.*<sup>22</sup> *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*<sup>23</sup> *Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

John 5:27 *And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

John 17:2 *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Col. 2:9 *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

25 Matt. 16:27 *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

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plored the Lord to reveal to them. They are as follows:

1. *The hope of His calling*
2. *The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*
3. *The exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe*

The knowledge that Paul prayed would be imparted to the Ephesians, has specific relationship to God, since it is *his calling*, *his inheritance*, and *his power* which believers are the most ignorant of. Generally speaking, all false religion is interested in man: what man's power is, and how man may use, albeit misuse, the Lord's power to gain what man wants. This is not true of genuine Christianity. Its focus is upon the Lord and His purposes for the saved, not their purposes for themselves.

*The hope of his calling.* The hope of God's calling is attached to, that glory which is directly related to, God's call in Jesus Christ. It is through the Son of God, that there is given a heavenly invitation to partake in the glory of God. (I Peter 5:10) *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*<sup>26</sup>

God's call in Jesus Christ, is a call to eternal glory. It is a call which has for its final end, sharing in divine glory. It is a call to glory, as Benson has said, "not merely to behold, but to possess."<sup>27</sup> The invitation by which this call is delivered to man, is in the person of God's Son.<sup>28</sup> The glory spoken of is "that eternal glory whereof believers at the last day shall be made partakers, which is called God's glory, because it is that which he hath promised to them, and will at last put them in possession of: see 1 Peter 5:1 Romans 5:2."<sup>29</sup> It is not simply that those called by God through Jesus Christ will enter heaven, but even more astonishingly, share in the glory of its Creator. Through the Son of God is given an invitation to share in that eternal glory, which all who are merely flesh, and have sinned, have woefully fallen short of.<sup>30</sup> (II Thess. 2:14) *Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* This future glory will be revealed in us, at the last day.<sup>31</sup> Corinthians states that regardless of our present and momentary troubles, the heavenly glory that shall be given to saints, exceeds beyond all measure, any affliction undergone in this life.<sup>32</sup> The sorrow, pain, and anguish of this life, according to Scripture, cannot even remotely compare to the weighty glory awaiting Christ's saints, in the next. The *hope of his calling* is therefore without question, the hope of glory, that the

<sup>26</sup> I Peter 5:1 *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:*

Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

Rom. 5:1-2 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

<sup>27</sup> *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

<sup>28</sup> Benson Commentary, I Pet. 5:10

<sup>29</sup> I Cor. 1:9 *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

<sup>30</sup> I Pet. 5:1 *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:*

Rom. 5:2 *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Matthew Poole's Commentary, I Pet. 5:10

<sup>31</sup> Rom. 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

<sup>32</sup> Rom. 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

<sup>33</sup> II Cor. 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

gospel of Jesus Christ is purposed to reveal to man.

*The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 1:18) Comp. Colossians 1:27, "the riches of the glory of this mystery . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." The inheritance of God is the unity with Christ, in which lies the earnest and hope of glory. (END QUOTE)

Where Israel and their leader, Moses, were given hope of entering Canaan,<sup>33</sup> and possessing its land for an inheritance, Christians, because of having Christ in them, have heaven as their future hope of possession. Just as God provided an inheritance for Israel,<sup>34</sup> upon which they held hope of obtaining, so does God provide a far more exceeding spiritual inheritance, for those chosen in God's Son. It is not enough for the Lord to make a people for Himself, without also providing a habitation for their dwelling. For Israel this habitation was earthly Canaan, for saints, it is God's heavenly Jerusalem,<sup>35</sup> which has for its inhabitants and *innumerable company of angels*, which Deuteronomy refers to as myriad of angels,<sup>36</sup> and to the *general assembly and church of the firstborn*. In this heavenly inheritance, believers may draw near to God as a beloved Father, and not as with Israel, where they needed to stand afar off from

the Lord.<sup>37</sup> In this heavenly inheritance there is also present, *the spirits of just men made perfect*, and *Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*. (Heb. 12:22–24) *But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

(*Benson Commentary*, Heb. 12:23) *To the general assembly*—To the Christian Church, consisting of the whole number of true believers spread over all the world. The word πανηγυρις, here used, properly signifies a stated convention, upon some joyful and festival occasion: particularly it is applied to the concourse at the Olympic games; in which view it presents a very elegant and lively opposition to the case of the Israelites, who were struck with a general terror when they were convened before mount Sinai. *And church of the firstborn*—The whole body of true believers, consisting of converted Jews and Gentiles. The saints are called the *firstborn*, because under the law the firstborn were peculiarly appropriated to God, and heirs of a double honour and inheritance: and the saints are in a special manner devoted to God, are made his children by a gratuitous adoption, and entitled to the heavenly inheritance. Therefore they are said (Revelation 14:4)<sup>38</sup> to be *redeemed from*

33 Num. 13:1–2 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.*

34 Num. 34:2 *Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:)*

35 Rev. 21:2 *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

36 Deut. 33:2 *And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.*

37 Exod. 20:18–21 *And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. "And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. "And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.*

38 Rev. 14:4 *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto*

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*among men, the first-fruits to God and the Lamb, being the most excellent of mankind, as the first-fruits were judged to be the best of the harvest. Which are written in heaven—The firstborn of Israel were enrolled by Moses in catalogues kept on earth, but these are registered in heaven as citizens of the New Jerusalem, and entitled to all the privileges and immunities of the church of God, whether militant or triumphant. ... And to the spirits of just, or righteous, men made perfect—Namely, the spirits of the saints in paradise, with whom the saints on earth have communion by faith, hope, and love, and make up one body with them. These are said to be made perfect, because, being justified before God, and fully sanctified in their natures, they are completely holy; and being freed from all the infirmities of the body, are perfected in a much higher sense than any who are still on earth. (END QUOTE)*

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

There is a spiritual power that is directed both towards, and becomes available to, those who believe. It is this power of God manifested towards the Christian, which saves his soul, enlightens his eyes, and makes sight available to the spiritual world invisible to the naked eye. As unlearned as believers are to the great hope of God's calling in Christ, and His inheritance in the saints, so also are they equally as blind to the exceeding greatness of God's power, to usward who believe. If any also remain ignorant to the power of God, then you can be sure that they remain to a large part, ignorant of the Lord Himself. For to truly know the

Lord, a believer must be illuminated and enlightened to God's power, which is exerted towards His people, when they believe. It is only as this heavenly power is perceived and believed in, that a true and proper knowledge of the Lord is attained.

If there is anything that produces doubt in saints more, it is when they do not believe in the *exceeding greatness* of God's power. Doubt in the Lord often has at its core, a lack of faith in the power of the Lord, to hear our prayers, come to our aid, and deliver us from so many internal fears that haunt the saved.<sup>39</sup> It is this divine power of God, that the apostle prayed the Ephesians would be enlightened to. It is the same power which God exerted when He raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and set Him at God's own right hand.

***Ephesians 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,***

The power that the apostle prayed that the Ephesians would be enlightened to, was resurrection power. That power which is able to raise the dead<sup>40</sup> and supersede natural laws. It is this knowledge of God, that the apostle prayed might be made known to the Ephesians. A similar prayer is necessary for us. For though the Lord's people love Him, desire to please Him, and are willing to forsake all to follow Him, still there is great lack, if there remains unbelief in the Lord's divine power. This opens up a very important spiritual truth, which is, if God's people really believed that Jesus Christ is truly in heaven, and that God's power has lifted Him there,

*God and to the Lamb.*

<sup>39</sup> II Cor. 7:5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.

<sup>40</sup> John 5:21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

Rom. 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Rom. 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.



then very little doubt would remain, regarding virtually every human sorrow on this earth. To believe that Jesus now sits in heaven, because God's power has lifted Him there, can do more to comfort the heart, than even a mountain of knowledge, even biblical knowledge. Hence, some of the greatest knowledge of God that a believer can attain, is that knowledge and spiritual illumination, which directly prompts belief in the exceeding greatness of God's power, to usward who believe. And this power was first evidenced to saints, when God raised His Son from the dead, and lifted Him, to now sit at God's right hand, in heaven.

This is that divine power that the apostle prays, that the Lord of glory will reveal to the Ephesians. When done, it would completely change their spiritual lives.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 1:20)* It is impossible to conceive of a more direct exertion of "power" than in raising up the dead; and there is no more striking illustration of the nature of conversion than in such a resurrection.

*And set him at his own right hand*—The idea is, that great power was displayed by this, and that a similar exhibition is made when man is renewed and exalted to the high honor of being made an heir of God. (ENDQUOTE)