

# Spirit of Wisdom & Revelation

*Ephesians 1:15-23*

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## Praying for..

***Ephesians 1:15–16*** ...Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly,

The letter was probably a general circular (like an email) rather than just to the Ephesians, but here we get a bit of personalised sentiment. The passionate zeal of the Ephesian Christians in their faith and love of others has reached Paul, this causes him to respond to them in the only way that he can by 'praying continually' for them.

Paul is 'thankful' and persistent - two great strategies for prayer. Prayer was something that Paul seemed to understand as essential to the unfolding of the Mystery of the gospel. Prayer and proclamation was in balance, there is something about prayer that 'unleashes the power of God in fresh, new ways'<sup>1</sup>. James 4:2 says we don't get because we don't ask, prayer seems to fuel the release of the power of God, worship and prayer are essential to the release of the spiritual - its how it works! When we pray we are accessing and releasing something of the heavenly realms.

## .. a Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation

***Ephesians 1:17*** ...asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.

Paul wanted something very specific for the Ephesian believers. He prays to the 'Father of Jesus with the spirit of' ... a great descriptor of the trinity in action! The 'spirit of wisdom and revelation (insight)' is referring the human spirit energised by the Holy Spirit that enable us to pray with wisdom (clarity of thought) and revelation (clarity of understanding). Remember the context of the letter is to encourage the believers to gain a deeper understanding and experience of spiritual blessing stored up in the bank of heaven, if we want to grasp spiritual things we need to discern things spiritually (Jn 16:14, 1 cor 2:9-16). Is 11:2 gives us a description of the spirit as having 7 dimensions, two of them are the characteristics of wisdom and revelation.

Wisdom gives insight into the reality of heavenly things, revelation is the unveiling of something that was a mystery. Paul didn't just want the churches to operate on the earth level, he wanted them to operate apostolically, as sent ones of heaven, like Jesus, like the Spirit, operating with divine power! But the focus of our revelation is getting to know HIM, the more we understand the person of God, the nature of God, the more we understand about the things of the Spiritual realm.

'A spirit of wisdom and revelation can be imparted only through him who is the personal spirit of wisdom and revelation... only as God reveals by his spirit can his people understand by that same spirit'<sup>2</sup>... personal knowledge of Him through a personal experience of Him.

# Opened Eyes

**Ephesians 1:18** ...I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.

The greek says “eyes of your understanding” or could even be translated “imagination”. Our eyes need to be opened! The NLT says 'hearts flooded with light' and MESS 'eyes focussed clear'. To possess the spiritual blessings of the heavenly regions we need to get our spiritual periscope up and see what is around us.

In 2 Cor 4:6 the light creating God is said to have shone into his people's hearts so as to give the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. It is the heart that needs to be changed 'the heart is the core of life, and the fountain of our thoughts<sup>3</sup>, “the heart” in Scripture includes the mind, as well as our attitudes and desires.

The context is about the realm of blessing that is before us, and Paul puts refers to 3 things that are the consequence of the wisdom revelation opening our eyes..

1. Confident hope
2. The glorious inheritance of the saints
3. The power of God made at the disposal of the saints.
4. The mystery of the church

## **1. Confident Hope**

Biblical hope is the absolute certainty of a believers victory in God, not a wishing for something to happen (Rom. 8:23-24; Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:5; 1 Thess 1:3; 1 Peter 3:15). Here Paul says that the result of the revelation, wisdom and understanding is the certainty that God has called his people, that we are given that name of the people of God, that we have a destiny. All the earlier verses about destiny come flooding back into this verse, we are a people with an incredible hope for the future, based on God's love and mercy for us.

Fundamental to a believer is the certainty of their God hope, we get rooted into God when we have a hope that is not a logical or emotional response to God, rather it is a deep supernatural confidence. It is a gut deep knowledge that God is for them and with them and will never let us go!

'The Christian who does not know his high calling (Phil. 3:14), holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9), and heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1) will never be able to walk worthy of that calling (Eph. 4:1)<sup>4</sup>... get a grip on the nature of your calling and you will walk in the calling!

Some uses of hope to Paul<sup>5</sup>

1. The Second Coming, Gal. 5:5; Eph. 1:18; 4:4; Titus 2:13; I Pet. 1:13
2. Trust in the gospel, Col. 1:23
3. Ultimate salvation, Col. 1:5; I Thess. 4:13; 5:8
4. The glory of God, Rom. 5:2; II Cor. 3:12; Col. 1:27
5. Assurance of salvation, I Thess. 5:8
6. Eternal life, Titus 1:2; 3:7
7. Redemption of all creation, Rom. 8:20
8. Faith, Rom. 8:23–25
9. Title for God, Rom. 15:13
10. Paul's desire for believers, II Cor. 1:7

## **2. Inheritance of Saints**

The people of God are the inheritance of God. The people of God are the very 'riches' of 'his glorious inheritance', you are the treasure. The MESS says *'grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers, oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—endless energy, boundless strength!'*

The life that we are supposed to live out is full of a treasure, the radiant expression of God. This is the sixth time Paul talks about riches (1:7, 18; 2:4, 7; 3:8, 16), there is nothing in God that we need to lack, we not only have a rich inheritance in Christ but we are a rich inheritance to Christ! Perhaps we emphasise what we get from Jesus but seldom emphasise what we mean to Jesus?

'Because of the "glorious grace" (v. 6) of "the glorious Father" (v. 17), He will receive "His glorious inheritance" (v. 18)'<sup>6</sup>

## **3. Power of God**

***Ephesians 1:19-21***...*I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.*

The other thing that we are supposed to get some wisdom revelation and enlightenment is the power of God made available to us. Charismatics have a good grasp on power, 'dynamis' because of the emphasis we place on the power of God in our lives. However, we have a powerhouse of God at work. This power is 'immeasurable' without limit given to those of us that are believers. The 'working of his mighty power' is the energising dynamo of God at work in us. The power of God is part of the heavenly storehouse of riches, it is the blessing of God to us.

Paul goes on to explain that it is the same power that was at work when Jesus was resurrected from the dead. The same source, the same energy, he describes the process of what happened to Jesus. He was raised from the dead and on his arrival into heaven he entered the throne room, and was seated on the power seat of honour next to the Father himself. The maddening crowd of demonic hosts, the powers, the evil realm are all far away, this is the safe place of the absolute rule of God... now that's power!

**Spiritual powers** are at work today, and will often manifest themselves in physical powers. There are false teachers and powers at work in society all the time. In this eye opening chapter where we see with spiritual sense, it is right that we take a heaven downward look at the powers that are at work currently on earth, we will get a better look at this from Eph 6 when we are given the tools to fight them!

**Two Ages.** There is a tension in scripture between what is fulfilled now and what is still to come. A NT paradigm is that the kingdom has come, is coming and will come, the 'age to come' refers to a coming rule of God when the last vestiges of the demonic powers are dealt with. This is of course part of the confident hope that that the believer has, hoping for full expression of the kingdom.

#### **4. The mystery of the Church**

*Ephesians 1:22-23...God has put all things under the authority of Christ (feet) and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.*

These verses are of staggering significance to the nature of the church. If we really grasp the depth of spiritual significance here then we would think radically differently about what church is and how it functions. There is an organic unity between Jesus and the church, a fully integrated unit.

#### **Feet over all things**

Jesus is described a bit like a conquering hero, 'all things', that is all created order, is given to Jesus to rule over, his 'feet' stand on top in triumph! Lets never loose sight of the heavenly reality that Jesus stands on top of all things, he has won the victory, whatever battles we face we can know with certainty that the battle is won!

#### **Head over all things**

The brains of the operation is the head. From the head we get our instructions, our identity, our life! The Hebrew idea of head was source, life flowing from the head to the rest of the body. The ascended Jesus is given headship over all things, for the 'benefit of the church'. With Jesus as the head of the church on earth, we should get the benefit and blessing of this rule.

#### **Body fills all things**

Then the church is described as the body of Jesus. This body is filled with Jesus, it is made 'full and complete' by Jesus. We are encouraged in Scripture to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to be immersed and saturated with the fullness of God. Like empty flesh being filled with blood to bring it to life so the body of the church is filled with the Spirit, Jesus, to bring it to life.

But what is the purpose of the filling of the body, to 'fill all things everywhere with himself', that is us friends. We are supposed to permeate every facet of 'all things' to bring Jesus. Jesus is not some weird disembodied head/foot combination, no He has a body, it is called us! When we see Jesus at the right hand of the Father (Rev 3:21) we can see ourselves the church standing there as well. 'For the Head and body are not severed by anything intervening, else the body would cease to be the body, and the Head cease to be the Head<sup>7</sup>. So when scripture is talking about the filling of all things with Christ, he is talking about the glorious church taking rule, getting stuck in at all levels of society, filling the entirety of living with the glory of Jesus.

It is why the secular lobby are so violently opposed to Christianity in public life, they are carrying a spiritual agenda to stop the permeation of the church (Jesus) into all areas of life. If the church is marginalised as a leisure pursuit then we are contained. The reason the secular lobby is growing is because the church is beginning to show some muscle, it should because we are the muscles of Jesus!

## **Notes**

1 Utley, R. J. (1997). Vol. Volume 8: Paul Bound, the Gospel Unbound: Letters from Prison (Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon, then later, Philippians). Study Guide Commentary Series. Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.

2 Bruce, F.F. (1984). Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians (New International Commentary on the New Testament). William B Eerdmans

3 Quoting Harless. Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

4 Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

5 Utley, R. J. (1997).

6 Utley, R. J. (1997).

7 Quoting Pearson from Chrysostom. Jamieson (1997)