



The Grand Theater in Ephesus
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A Prayer for Wisdom and Revelation

Ephesians 1:15-23

A Prayer for Wisdom and Revelation

Introduction

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Four important topics in this letter:

1. What we need to know about Christ – our Savior and Redeemer.
2. What we need to know about our salvation – how we are made right with God, the forgiveness of our sins, etc.
3. What we need to know about spiritual warfare – an important topic in a city most famous for occult practices.
4. What we need to know about the Church – this new society that God is building in the midst of the world.

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A continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next ...

*– C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963),
in Mere Christianity*

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The Apostles themselves ... the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth “thrown in:” aim at earth and you will get neither.

*– C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963),
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- When we begin the Christian life, our spiritual eyes are opened to new realities.
- Still, we cannot grasp everything at one time.
- The truths we are only now beginning to see are simply too immense to take in all at once.

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- Last week we learned how God has given us “every spiritual blessing in Christ.”
- How long do you think it will take us to fully grasp that?
- Perhaps all eternity?
- Paul prays for a more complete understanding even now.

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- In the first part of the chapter Paul praises God for having blessed us.
- In this part he prays that we will be able to comprehend the full extent of that blessing.

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- Last week's passage was one long sentence in Paul's original Greek – and this week's passage is similar.
- It is one long sentence in the original.
- The ESV does a pretty good job of imitating that.

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a

- **1:15** For this reason Because of everything he wrote about before this.
- That is, the amazing abundant spiritual blessings that are now ours in Christ.

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a

- 1:15 because I have heard of your faith ... and your love
- Here is a goal for us as a church – that we be known for both our faith and our love.

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a

- **1:16** This verse gives us a glimpse into Paul's prayer life.
- Choose someone to give thanks for every day this week.

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a

- **1:17** revelation = *apokalypsis*, like the Apocalypse, another title for the book of **Revelation**.
- Paul is referring to a supernatural revealing of God.
- This wisdom and this revelation come from the Holy Spirit and result in a deeper knowledge of God.

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a

- **1:17** We can easily make the mistake of believing that faith is incompatible with knowledge, reason or understanding.
- This simply is not true.
- The two are never contrasted in Scripture in that way, as if we had to choose one or the other.

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a

- **1:17** Faith goes beyond reason, but is supported by it.
- Understanding is like a stairway by which faith climbs higher.
- Our knowledge and understanding of God can feed our faith and cause it to grow.

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a

- Peter closes his second letter like this.
- **2 Peter 3:18** (ESV)

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a

- **1:18** Perhaps if we understood that heavenly hope better, it would motivate us here on earth.
- We might say Paul believes that it is only by being more heavenly minded that we can be more earthly good.

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a



1:18 *When we were saved, we were brought from the darkness of ignorance into God's wonderful light. But that does not mean that we see all things clearly as soon as we are saved. We still need more enlightenment and a greater understanding of our wonderful God and of how he wants us to live.*

*– Idicheria Ninan, Principal of
IPC Theological Seminary, Kottayam, India*

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a

- **1:18** Paul gets to the *earthly good* part in later chapters.
- He is laying a theological foundation upon which he will later tell us more about how to live in the here and now.

Open the Eyes of Our Hearts 1:15-19a

- **1:19a** The power of God working toward us is so great it cannot be measured.
- He is now going to talk about that more.

To the Supremacy of Christ 1:19b-23

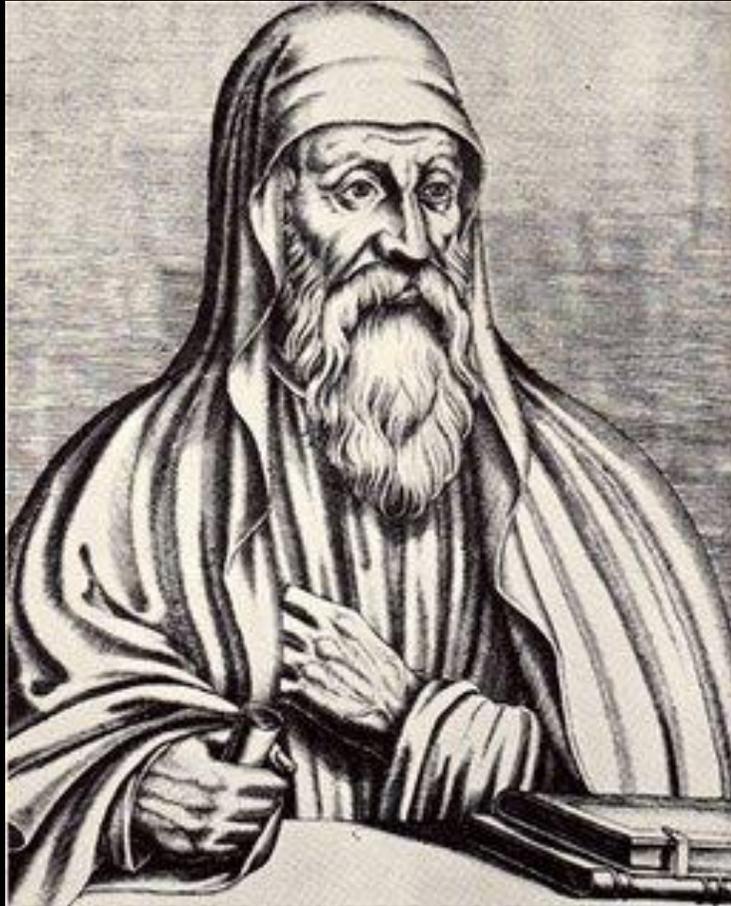
To the Supremacy of Christ 1:19b-23

- 1:19b-20 Power in 1:19a refers to “inherent ability.”
- Might in 1:19b refers to “exerted power.”

To the Supremacy of Christ 1:19b-23

- **1:19b-20** Consider God's ability and what he has actually done in the resurrection and ascension. Of Christ.
- He overcame **evil** and overcame **death**.
- We can do **neither**; he did **both**.

To the Supremacy of Christ 1:19b-23



1:21 Under one Lord there may be many subordinate powers and lordships ... But none of these has an authority equal to the Son's. All authorities must be subject to his authority. All subordinate powers are rightly exercised under that of Christ, since God's power is superior to every other power.

*– Origen of Alexandria (184 – 253 AD),
Early Christian theologian*

To the Supremacy of Christ 1:19b-23

- 1:21 Elsewhere Paul says,
- Philippians 2:8-11 (ESV)

⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

To the Supremacy of Christ 1:19b-23

- **1:22-23** One of Paul's favorite metaphors for the church is the body, of which Christ is the head.
- The head controls the body, and relies on it to express its desires and will.

To the Supremacy of Christ 1:19b-23



1:22-23 The relationship between Christ and the church is as close as that between your body and your head. To belong to Christ is to be incorporated into him. He fills his community as his power, purpose and presence reside in the body, bringing it to completion.

*– Idicheria Ninan, Principal of
IPC Theological Seminary, Kottayam*

To the Supremacy of Christ 1:19b-23

- Without the head, the body cannot function – it simply dies.
- Without the body to express them, no one would ever see or know the thoughts and wishes of the head.

A Prayer for Wisdom and Revelation

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- Paul's prayer is that we would come to more fully understand the blessings God grants us in Christ.
- The way he sees to understanding those blessings is to better know Christ himself.

A Prayer for Wisdom and Revelation

- An infinitely powerful Savior can give us access to infinitely wonderful blessings.
- These blessings are stored away for us in heaven, but that only means they too great for earth to contain.
- It does not mean they are inaccessible.

A Prayer for Wisdom and Revelation

- The spiritual blessings available to us in Christ are precisely what motivate and empower us now.
- May the Lord open our eyes to these new realities.