

## Ephesians 1:22-23

There really is no discernible distinction in intent between verses 20-21 and our text for today. Our passage continues to impress upon the Ephesians the truth of the power of Christ. As you recall, this prayer is intended to bless the people which means that the exaltation and illumination of Christ (in all of His power and glory) is not a mere theological construct, instead it is a means of peace and joy for all believers. Specifically, we are comforted and emboldened when we are reminded of the majesty of God as revealed in Christ. When we see His might, we have reason for hope and courage in difficult times. Today, I want us to consider three ways that Christ is revealed as powerful in this passage.

### 1. Christ is victorious

- a. There is a well known theological view called “Christus Victor”
  - i. This biblical perspective focuses on the truth that Christ was victorious over the powers of evil that hold men and the creation in bondage, at the crucifixion and resurrection
  - ii. While there have been some theologians who have extended this perspective to the detriment of other, harmonious, biblical truths, the reality remains that Christ was, in fact, victorious!
- b. We derive proof for the Christus Victor perspective from passages like Ephesians 1:22
  - i. The phrase “put in subjection” means to place something, or someone, under another’s authority
  - ii. The phrase “under His feet” speaks of the victory
    1. There is undoubtedly a redemptive connection between this passage and Genesis 3:15 (the protoevangelium)
    2. In Genesis 3, we are told that One is coming who would crush the head of Satan
      - a. How would He do this? In such a manner that His heel (under His foot) would be bruised
      - b. The point is that this act of putting the enemies of God under subjection cost Christ something but, ultimately, this cost was covered and Jesus prevailed
- c. The term “put” is in the past tense
  - i. Paul does not say that God is “putting” (present tense) all things under subjection, instead Paul says that God has already “put” (in the past) all things under subjection
  - ii. This illustrates a very valuable, biblical principle

1. All things are, currently, under subjection AND all things are being organized and conquered in order to reflect this truth
  2. Jesus already rules, but He is not yet fully recognized by the world as ruler
2. Christ is our authority
- a. Now, last week we stated that Christ is in a position of authority so this point is a bit of a retread, but there is more color that is added in verse 22
  - b. This passage tells us that Jesus is “our head”
    - i. The term clearly denotes One who is in control
    - ii. We know this (see Matthew 28:16-20, “all authority has been given to me...”)
  - c. Why would we repeat ourselves? In light of the context!
  - d. Verse 22 reminds us that Christ has already prevailed and yet we know that His Kingdom is still to grow
  - e. How is this going to happen?
    - i. The answer is through the obedience of His body of whom He is the head
    - ii. Stated differently, we are the hands and feet of Christ (the “body”) who are to be working to expand the knowledge of His rule and reign
    - iii. More succinctly, we are the means that God uses to carry out the ramifications of the subjection of all things
  - f. This is a very important reality
    - i. Our job is not to “win” the battle
    - ii. Our job is to tell others that the battle has been won and to hold the line when resistance comes in faith that Christ has already been seated at the right hand of God and that all things are under His right rule
  - g. I worry that some people live as if the battle hasn’t been won
    - i. They are attempting to fight the forces of evil with their own weapons and with real concern that all could be lost
    - ii. Paul’s prayer, however, is that the Ephesians would see that Jesus has already done it and, therefore, that they would walk in the truth of His victory and obey His commands in faith that He is victorious, just as God has declared
3. Christ reigns everywhere
- a. Verse 23 has proven to be a bit difficult for some commentators to comprehend but I struggle to see why
  - b. The phrase “the fullness of Him who fills all in all” is contextually understood

- c. In light of Paul's larger sentiment about the subjection of all things to Christ and Christ's headship over the church and in keeping with the larger biblical witness that we, as Christians, are to proclaim His excellencies to the world with conviction that we will disciple the nations, this phrase becomes clear
- d. Paul is simply reassuring the people that Jesus is Lord and He will be proclaimed as Lord everywhere!
- e. Piper states this well, "The glory of Christ will pervade "all in all"; that is, the glory of Christ will pervade everything in every way that the wisdom of God ordains for his maximum renown and splendor. There will be no place where his power does not hold sway to accomplish exactly what he wants for the dissemination of his all-filling glory."
- f. Jesus is omnipresent now, which means we do not have to worry about outrunning or hiding from His power
- g. Jesus is victorious now, which means we don't have to worry about suffering ultimate defeat
- h. Jesus will be praised globally, which means we are assured of eventual triumph
- i. These truths are a balm for the soul and I pray they encourage you to keep on today