

Christian Students Association Bible Study

October 28, 2020

The Apostle's Prayer for the Church regarding Revelation (1:15-23)

I. His Thanks for the Church (vv. 15-16)

15 Therefore I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you and your love to all the saints,

16 Do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers,

II. His Supplication for the Church, that the saints may see (vv. 17-23):

A. The Hope of God's Calling (vv. 17-18a)

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Note for "eyes" in verse 18 - eyes to see the spiritual things. We have wisdom, the ability to know, and revelation, the revealing of spiritual things. However, we still need eyes, the spiritual faculty of sight (Acts 26:18; Rev. 3:18). To have the eyes of our heart enlightened requires that our conscience, mind, emotion, and will, which are the components of our heart, be thoroughly dealt with. First, we need an open spirit with a conscience purified by our confessing and dealing with our sins and by the sprinkling of the redeeming blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14; 10:22). Next, we need a sober mind (2 Tim. 1:7), a loving emotion (John 14:21), and a submissive will (John 7:17) in order to have a pure heart. When we have such a spirit and heart, the eyes of our heart will be able to see.

Note for "hope" in verse 18 - The hope of God's calling includes (1) Christ Himself and the salvation He will bring to us when He comes back (Col. 1:27; 1 Pet. 1:5, 9); (2) the rapturous transfer from the earthly and physical realm to the heavenly and spiritual sphere, plus glorification (Rom. 8:23-25, 30; Phil. 3:21); (3) the kingly enjoyment with Christ in the millennium (Rev. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:18); and (4) the consummate enjoyment of Christ in the New Jerusalem, with the universal and eternal blessings in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5).

B. The Glory of God's Inheritance in the Saints (v. 18b)

C. God's Power toward Us (vv. 19-21)

19 And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength,

20 Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,

21 Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;

Note for “raising” in verse 20 - First, the power that God caused to operate in Christ raised Christ from the dead. This power has overcome death, the grave, and Hades, where the dead are held. Death and Hades could not hold Christ (Acts 2:24) because of God’s resurrection power.

Note for “seating” in verse 20 - Second, the power that God caused to operate in Christ seated Christ at God’s right hand in the heavenlies, far above all (v. 21).

D. The Church -- The Body, the Fullness of Christ (vv. 22-23)

22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Note for “subjected” in verse 22 - Third, the power that God caused to operate in Christ subjected all things under His feet. Christ’s being far above all is one thing; His having all things subjected under His feet is another. The former is Christ’s transcendency; the latter, the subjection of all things to Him.

Note for “gave” in verse 22 - Fourth, God’s power that He caused to operate in Christ gave Christ to be Head over all things to the church. Christ’s headship over all things is a gift from God to Him. It was through God’s surpassingly great power that Christ received the headship in the universe.

It was as a man, in His humanity with His divinity, that Christ was raised from the dead, was seated in the heavenlies, had all things subjected to Him, and was given to be Head over all things.

Thus, there are four aspects of the power that operated in Christ: resurrection power (v. 20a), ascending power (v. 20b), subjecting power (v. 22a), and heading-up power (v. 22b). This fourfold power is transmitted to the church, the Body of the Head.

Note for “to” in verse 23 - To the church implies a kind of transmission. Whatever Christ, the Head, has attained and obtained is transmitted to the church, His Body. In this transmission the church shares with Christ in all His attainments: the resurrection from the dead, His being seated in His transcendency, the subjection of all things under His feet, and the headship over all things. Toward us who believe (v. 19) and to the church indicate that the divine power, which includes all that the Triune God has passed through, has been installed into us once for all and is being transmitted into us continually, causing us to enjoy Christ richly and to have the proper church life as His Body, His fullness, the issue of God’s blessing mentioned previously.