

Ephesians 1
The Significance of Jesus Christ
How powerful is God's Work/Word!

In a sense God's Work and God's Word are the same thing. God does what He says and says what He does. God speaks and things happen. God's Word is always creative (Gen 1:3; Heb 1:3). God means what He says. We will be judged for the use of idle words (Mtt 12:36). 'Idle' here means inactive, un-acted on, useless, unprofitable, careless speaking. God's Word does not return to Him void; it accomplishes that for which it is sent (Is 55:11). This is the spirit principle of the power of the tongue: we get what we say. By faith things are spoken into being. 'For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea', and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is happening, it will be as he says' (Mk 11:23). This requires radical believing because there is a positive and a negative result. We can believe (speak) for a positive or we can believe (speak) for a negative. To doubt is to tolerate alternatives. We cultivate for ourselves spiritual escape routes. Asking questions is not doubt, unless it comes out of unbelief. (Compare Zechariah and Mary in Luke 1:18, 34)

The book of Proverbs speaks about the tongue:

6:2 You are snared by the words of your mouth
10:11 The mouth of the righteous is a well of life
12:18 The tongue of the wise promotes health
13:2 A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth
13:3 He who guards his mouth preserves his life
15:4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life
18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

Spirit truth is spoken into physical reality. We live out of our spirit. Our physical life depends upon our spirit content. There is a tension between the physical and the spiritual, earth and heaven, Man and God. The tension is that the visible can deny the invisible. The visible is assumed to be reality and the invisible is assumed to be fantasy or unreality. However, faith requires that we 'see' the invisible. 'For the things that are seen are temporary, but the things that are not seen are eternal' (2Cor 4:18). Abraham believed God as the One Who raises the dead and 'calls the things not being as being' (Rom 4:17). Again, 'God chose the things that are not (being) that He might nullify the things that are (being)' (1Cor 1:27). We can be bound by the tyranny of the visible and we can refuse to move, by faith, to the invisible. We are ruled by our feelings, perceptions, attitudes and experiences. Faith in Jesus Christ can take us to another place which becomes a source of life in us. 'He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures have said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water. This He spoke of the Holy Spirit who would be given to those who believed in Him' (John 7: 38-39).

In **Ephesians**, Paul is describing the invisible world created by God for the Christian. To believe in Jesus Christ is to be taken somewhere. Our life is hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3).

Sentence 1 (1:3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. God has prepared a place and an experience for us. When we are baptised we enter into God's provision. The Christian life is not invented as we go along: the Christian life is already prepared for us. In our spirit there is a place where we go. Occupying this spirit territory (the heavenlies) is a blessing for our spirit, soul and body. It speaks health to our body and wholeness to our mind. We abide in and

minister from this place. The heavenly is our security: the earthly is not secure. The **heavenlies** are mentioned as places only in Ephesians:

1:3 blessed in the heavenly places in Christ

1:20 Christ is seated in the heavenly places

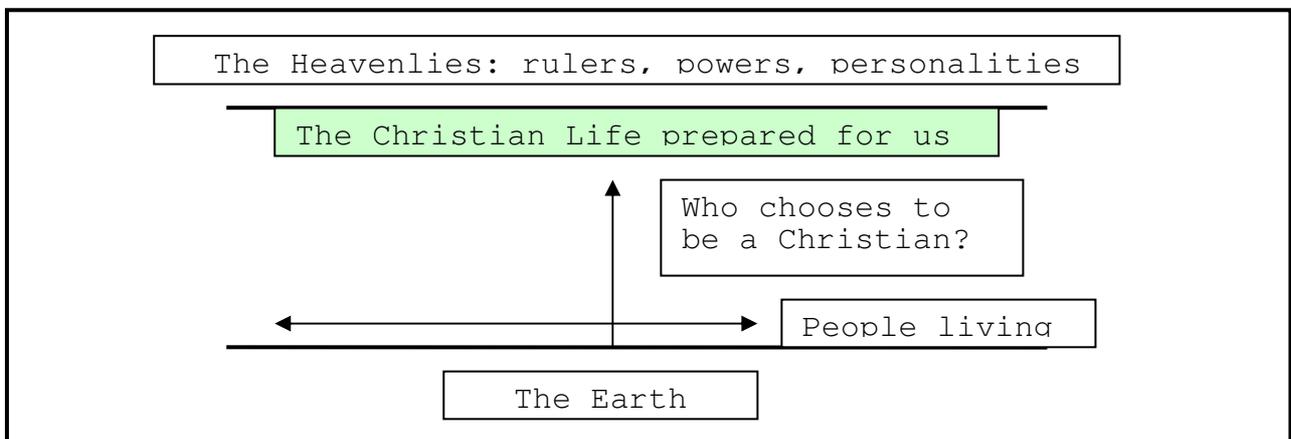
2:6 we sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus

3:10 the manifold wisdom of God is made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places by the church

6:12 we wrestle against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (realms).

Sentence 2 (1:4-6) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace by which He made us accepted in the beloved.

God's design, from the foundation of the world (which has a created foundation) was that the Christian should be holy and blameless standing before God in love (not arrogance). I will be arguing that what God is pre-destining (pre-designing) is not who will become a Christian but what they will be like when they become a Christian. God, through Jesus Christ, is forming the Christian life and possibility. So we walk in it; we enter it. God may know who becomes a Christian but I argue that God does not determine who will become a Christian. (This is debated.) Watchman Nee wrote a short commentary on Ephesians entitled 'Sit, Walk, Stand'. This title emphasises a place where we sit (2:6), we walk (5:8), and we stand (6:13). This diagram suggests that the Christian life is prepared for us to walk in: we do not invent it as we go along. Alternatively, the Christian life is not a fate with a fixed personal outcome on earth. Rather we are established in grace. Each believer has a purpose/walk in the grace of God.



Sentence 3 (1:7-10) In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound (lavished) toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself that in the dispensation (management) of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one (bring to a head) all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth - in Him. This Christian life that God has already prepared for those that believe is packed with all the riches of God: grace, wisdom, prudence. There are superabundant riches which only God can create. This is good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running

over (Lk 6:38). God has revealed a mystery: that He will bring everything to a head in Jesus Christ. Everything will be summed up in, and made subject to, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the key Person and Event in history (both earthly and heavenly). To Christ belongs power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing (Rev 5:12 - the worship scene in heaven). Christ is exalted above every conceivable thing, whether it has been thought of or still is to be thought of. Every conceivable thing will find its meaning and end in Jesus Christ. This is His Lordship over the creation and He is worthy to receive it.

Sentence 4 (1:11-12) In Him also we have obtained (been made) an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first hoped in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

The original inheritance was the Promised Land that God promised to the children of Israel. The land was made an inheritance for the Israelites to enter. God acts sovereignly according to the advice (counsel) He gives to Himself. God has pre-designed our inheritance in Christ and that is the destiny for all believers.

Sentence 5 (1:13-14) In whom you also, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee (down payment) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession (us) to the praise of His glory.

The word of truth quickened in us the possibility of our salvation which we received (entered into) by faith. This believing brought the Holy Spirit (who would be given to those who believed in Jesus Christ (John 7:39)). The Holy Spirit is the seal (deposit, down payment) showing God's intention to buy or redeem to Himself His treasured possession (us). This is the redemption of our bodies, the salvation of our souls and the renewing of our minds.

Sentence 6 (1:15-21) Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding (heart) being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but that which is to come.

Paul prays for the saints that they may receive a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. Wisdom is for the soul and revelation is for the spirit. Revelation shows us what God has prepared for us (1Cor 2:10-16) and wisdom gives us the ability to handle it, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. We need light so that the eyes of our heart will see and recognise things and we will not be plunged into darkness (Mtt 6:22-23). The idea is that we will know (or be shown) 1) the hope (the stirring) that is created by God's calling on our life; that we will be shown 2) the wealth (extravagance) of the glory associated with the inheritance that God has prepared for those who believe; that we will be shown 3) the incredible power (ability, force) of God toward (acting on the behalf of) those who believe. This force of strength God exerted when He raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies. This is an amazing

expression of physical and spirit power. When Jesus Christ is in the heavenlies He is placed (located, enthroned) above any conceivable rival. The spirit realm is an authority realm. When we move in the spirit we move in an authority that is given to us in Jesus Christ. It is very important for us to stay under the particular authority (anointing) that we are given. Authority is always given, not usurped. We do not run with the authority we would like but with the authority that we are given. The spirit realm contains various spirit forces which express principality (ruling), power (authority), might (ability) and dominion (lordship). Whatever the spirit power or ability or influence or authority that exists, Jesus is the Lord over it. The name of Jesus is greater than any other name that can be named. There is power in the name of Jesus. A name refers to a person or personality, so Jesus is Lord over personal forces of evil or the force (impact) of an evil personality in the heavenlies. (This need not be a human personality but a spirit personality. In fact, personality/behaviour is generated by a spirit. (What spirit are you of? Lk 9:55). This also applies to the coming age. This emphasises the spirit source of good and evil. We speak out of the abundance of our heart (Mtt 12:34). When people do good or evil they are obeying a spirit. We are responsible for the behaviour provoked by what we see in our spirit. May I be filled with the Holy Spirit of God who is the source of holiness!

Sentence 7 (1:22-23) And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be (as) head over all things for the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all things.

Somehow on earth, the Church is the Body of Christ. Christ has a body seated next to the Father, but the Body as an identity and as an authority best expresses God's will and intention for the Church. Our power as the Church lies in the earthly integrity of the spirit impact of the bodily presence of Christ. The Church is Christ on earth. The Church is the serving presence of Christ on earth. This is a high doctrine of the Church.