

Series: Ephesians  
Title: Exceeding Greatness  
Text: Ephesians 1: 19-23  
Date: February 14, 2013  
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Read Eph 1: 19-23. From eternity, God entrusted into the hand of his Son, the work of making his elect one with God, Christ has and is bringing his elect together in him by the exceeding greatness of his power.

**Title:** Exceeding Greatness

**Divisions:** We will see the exceeding greatness of his power in three ways: 1) Redemption; 2) Regeneration; 3) Reconciliation

## **I. THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TOWARD US WHO BELIEVE IN REDEMPTION**

The exceeding greatness of power by which God raised Christ from the dead was the power of God's faithfulness to fulfill his promise to Christ. (Turn to Isaiah 53: 10.)

**Isaiah 53: 10: It pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief**—on the cross, Christ pleased the LORD, satisfying the justice of God for God's elect, so God is just and their Justifier. Here is the everlasting covenant promise, God made to Christ the Seed, after that work of redemption was accomplished.

**Isaiah 53: 10: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong days**—As the fruit of his sufferings, God promised Christ would see all that great number of elect children raised to eternal life with him by raising Christ from the dead.

**Isaiah 53: 10:...The pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in [Christ's] hand.** 1) The pleasure of the LORD is that which pleased God—it pleased God to bruise him—to satisfy justice for his elect by the work of Christ's hand. Christ hand accomplished it on the cross, the pleasure of the Lord prospered in Christ's hand.

**Isaiah 53: 11: He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.** God promised his righteous servant that by bearing their iniquities, the elect would certainly be justified before God.

**Isaiah 53: 12: Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great,--**When Christ had accomplished his work on the cross, God promised Christ an inheritance with God the Great. **and he shall divide the spoil with the strong because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.--**God promised Christ it would be Christ's glory to divide his inheritance with those he redeemed—making us joint-heirs with Christ.

Christ finished the work on the cross so with the exceeding greatness of his power, God raised Christ from the dead. And this power was exceedingly great toward us who believe, because when God raised Christ from the dead, he raised all the elect of God with him.

**Ephesians 1: 20:...[God]...set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,... Ephesians 2: 6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:**

Now, believer, we have the good news of redemption and inheritance in Christ.

**Ephesians 1: 7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;...11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ...14 [we have] that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.**

So first, we see the exceeding greatness of his power in redemption.

## **II. NOW LET'S SEE THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TOWARD US WHO BELIEVE IN REGENERATION**

Though the work of redemption was already accomplished, God's elect came into this world spiritually dead.

**Ephesians 2: 1: And you...who were dead in trespasses and sins;**

We were under "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Some of us took on "a form of godliness, but we denied the exceeding greatness of his power." The dead bones which Ezekiel prophesied unto had a form—they came together and had skin upon them. But they were still dead, until the Spirit came into them. (Eze 37: 8-10)

So how are God's elect made alive and Christ given all the glory? Remember in Isaiah 53: 10, God promised Christ, "the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand."

First, just as it was the pleasure of the LORD to redeem his children through the hand of Christ, it is the pleasure of the LORD to save through faith in Christ, apart from any works of righteousness which we have done.

Hebrews 11: 6: For without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

John 8: 24: I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. Joh 14:6...no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

But God promised Christ that "the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in Christ's hand." Therefore God raised Christ, gave him to be Head over all things to the church, so Christ could fill all, in all his unregenerate children, giving us faith and repentance.

Acts 5:31: Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. [the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in Christ's hand.

Secondly, it is also the pleasure of the LORD to give faith through the preaching of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 1: 21: For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

God promised "the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in Christ's hand." Therefore, God raised Christ to send his messengers to preach the gospel to his lost children, that he might fill all in all.

**Be sure you get this:** This is God's pleasure, it pleased God, to give to Christ in glorified human nature, this gift and glory for finishing his cross work. Christ sending his gospel and writing the words of the everlasting covenant on the hearts of his people through the Spirit is as much a part of the way Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant as is his work on the cross.

Colossians 1: 18: He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all [things] he might have the preeminence. 19: For it PLEASED God that all fullness dwell in him.

So Christ our Head exercises exceeding great power by bringing the gospel to us. It is Christ's glory to do so.

Ephesians 1: 13: In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

Ephesians 2: 17: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

**Ephesians 4: 8: Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.**

Christ fulfills the prophets. Paul is quoting from Psalm 68. It adds, "yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them" that you might be born of his Spirit and become a habitation of God. "20:...unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death."

**Ephesians 4: 10: He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11: And he gave, some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God...**

Pay attention to verse 13.

Acts 3:21:...heaven must receive [Christ] until the times of restitution of all things.

"Restitution" means "restored to our former state." In eternity, when God put his elect in Christ we were one with God in Christ. But we lost that state in sin. God gave Christ the glory to make restitution—to restore to our former state—by gathering his elect in him. The "dispensation"—the stewardship "of the fullness of times"—is in Christ's hands until the "times of restitution of all things" is accomplished by Christ. So time will not cease until Christ brings all his lost sheep to believe on him through his gospel, **v13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God.**

Now, let's consider the last half of verse 13. Christ is the Head and his church is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Christ's body will not be complete until Christ has brought all the members of his body to faith in him. **V13:...unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.**" So this is in Christ hand to send his preachers with the gospel of him.

And Christ does not merely send his preachers, Christ himself preaches through his earthen vessels to the hearts of his people.

**Ephesians 4: 16: From whom the whole body [is] fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working [of Christ] in the measure of every part, [Christ] maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.**

But no man can hear the gospel and believe until regenerated, faith cometh by hearing. So it is also Christ's glory to send the Holy Spirit by whom we are born again from above and given faith. Peter declared on the day of Pentecost,

Acts 2:33: Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

As soon as chapter 1 ends saying, Christ is Head of his body, "who filleth all in all," chapter 2 opens with, **"And you [hath he quickened,] who were dead in trespasses and sins."**

The same exceeding great power which raised Christ from the dead raises us from the dead in regeneration. And Christ gives us faith to believe on him.

**Ephesians 2: 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**

Ezekiel 36: 24: For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. [that was when the elect were raised in Christ into our own land in heavenly Jerusalem] 25: Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26: A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: [this is regeneration through the gospel.]

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Acts 5:31: Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

This pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in Christ's hand. Christ adds to the church daily such as should be saved.

**Application:** Brethren, the chief reason Christ's churches below are independent and have no church below over us is because we have come, "unto mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant." (Heb 12: 22, 24) From above, our Head makes all provision for his church below, providing pastors, giving us life, faith repentance and he gives us material blessings so his church can continue sounding forth his gospel. His saving us through preaching lasts all the believers life. We have to have his gospel. He is the Mediator of the new covenant. By the exceeding greatness of his power, Christ filleth all in all. So we see his exceeding great power in regeneration. And this is how Christ makes us to be reconciled to God and one with our brethren.

### **III. NOW LET'S SEE THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER IN RECONCILIATION.**

**Ephesians 2: 11: Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12: That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:**

For God to gather all things in Christ, by Christ, there had to first be separation and division. But by allowing great division to enter, God gives greater glory to Christ for reconciling all things together by his hand. Think of how much division and separation our sin has caused.

**First, Our Sins Separated Us from God in the Garden.** The one seed God chose for himself remained one in Christ spiritually. But because of Adam's sin, and being born of incorruptible seed, we were separated from God, dead in trespasses and in sins, hating God and hating one another.

**Then Languages, Nations and Continents Further Separated his People.** After the flood there were but three sons of Noah from whom all people on the earth were born, all spoke the same language. But at the tower of Babel, man tried to build a tower to God. Therefore, because of our sin, God further separated all men by giving us separate languages. And somewhere around that time, God divided the earth into continents. Therefore, the elect were further separated from each other by different languages, and nations and continents.

**Further Separation Came Through Israel and the Gentile Nations.** God revealed the gospel to Abraham, that in, Christ the Seed, God would save one holy nation, saved from among all the nations of the earth. God alone creates his one holy nation. To illustrate it, God formed one earthly nation—Israel—from among all nations. Also, God sanctifies his people into his holy nation by writing the laws—the words, the doctrine, the gospel, of the everlasting covenant of grace on our hearts. So four hundred and thirty years after saving Abraham by covenant through faith, God illustrated it by making an earthly covenant with earthly Israel full of earthly promises. God did so giving laws, not in the heart, on tablets of stone at Mt. Sinai. By that covenant God separated Israel from the rest of the nations. Yet, understanding only the letter, not having spiritual discernment, the majority used circumcision in the flesh and their pretense of law-keeping, not to worship Christ, but to exalt themselves over the Gentiles. They called Gentiles the uncircumcision and Gentile dogs—we are holier than you. So then further separation divided the elect in Israel from the elect in the rest of the Gentile nations.

**Further Separation Came Between Those within Israel.** Through sin, the 12 original tribes divided against each other. Thereby, greater division came about. Some of the elect would be in the house of Judah and some would be in the house of Israel.

**Further Separation Came Based on Carnal Differences.** By the lusts of the flesh, the eye and the pride of life, nations already divided, warred against each other exalting themselves by strength of hand. Divisions based on carnal differences visible to the natural eye abounded: between vain religions and vain practices, between male and female, between educated and uneducated, bond and free, rich and poor. No civil law has ever made unity.

**Our Sin Has Separated Us.** Our sin has separated us from God and from one another. Sin only divides. There is no end to the divisions created by our sin.

Here in Ephesians 2: 11, Paul says, that is where you and me were. We were hating God and hating one another. But all God's elect in our flesh, were without Christ, without hope, without God in the world. And men continue using the letter of the law unlawfully, "till Christ the Seed comes to whom the promise was made;" (Gal 3: 19) God let this whole world become thoroughly divided from God and from each other then he sent forth his Son. Christ reconciles us through his blood and through his Spirit.

**Ephesians 2: 13: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14: For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition;**

In fact, Christ has broken down the whole earthly temple, earthly priesthood, earthly sacrifices, and all the beggarly elements of the old covenant, abolishing it all henceforth, forever. How so?

**Ephesians 2: 15: Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16: And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:**

First he fulfilled the law in his flesh nailing it to his cross then Christ comes in the gospel, the Seed enters his elect, then we are born of the incorruptible Seed and he makes us willing to be reconciled to God and our brethren. He makes us to see that we are worms. Then we stop exalting ourselves with our law-keeping and our carnal distinctions. Then we become nothings.

**Ephesians 2: 17: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18: For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19: Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;**

Christ makes his people, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, bond and free, one family, in one body, by one Spirit, on and on, all in One. Oneness is the theme of this letter.

Ephesians 3: 14: For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15: Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,...Ephesians 4: 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all...25: Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another...Ephesians 5: 30: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones...32: This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Let me end with this. During the days of the old covenant, whenever Israel faced some great foe, they were always reminded of the great power which God had worked for them.

They were reminded of how God used Moses, instructed them concerning the Passover lamb, to get in the house under the blood, when God saw the blood on the doorpost of their house, he passed over them, slaying all the firstborn in Egypt and by that God delivered them from Pharaoh's hand out of Egypt.

Or they reminded of that mighty power God exercised when using Moses, God led them to the Red Sea, and the LORD told Moses to tell them, "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." Then the Lord divided the sea and brought them across, drowning Pharaoh and his great army in the sea.

Or they reminded of how the LORD used his priests to hold up the ark, telling them to look to the ark and God dried up the Jordan, bringing them across Jordan on dry ground.

They were continually reminded of the great power of God by which he delivered them (which all were pictures of Christ.) And by being reminded of God's power, they were strengthened and united together against every foe they encountered.

But the prophets foretold that there was coming a day when God would manifest His power in way exceedingly greater than ever before. When that power is made known, the earthly deliverance would be no more spoken of, because this power is exceedingly greater, spiritual deliverance.

Jeremiah 23: 5: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6: In

his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7: Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; 8: But, The LORD liveth, which brought up AND which led “THE SEED of the house of Israel” out of the north country, and from ALL countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

My brethren, we will want Christ to reign and prosper in this glory as our Head, the weaker we see ourselves and the weaker we become: as you grow weaker in your flesh; as you face trial, sickness and death; as we face false preachers preaching letter of law, building up carnal walls, fleshly distinctions; or when the church again is persecuted, which she shall be for a little season. Paul says “look to the exceeding greatness of his Power.”

Colossians 3: 1: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3: For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4: When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

The exceeding greatness of his power redeemed us, regenerated us and reconciled us to God. Christ our Head is ruling all things in heaven and in earth, good and evil. No one and nothing is hindering his progress in his work.

In the fullness of times, from all that divided people, Christ the Seed shall present to the Father, one united holy seed—gathered together in one—all by the work of his hand by the exceeding greatness of his power.

Then shall we rejoice in Christ forevermore in the new heavens and new earth wherein all shall be the righteous creation of our GodMan Mediator, to the praise of the glory of God.

Amen!