

## ***The incomparably great power of God in Christ*** (Ephesians 1:20–23)

At Pentecost Jesus Christ poured out the promised Holy Spirit showing that the Father had truly exalted Him to His right hand (cf. Acts 2:32–35). Pentecost can become a reminder to us that despite the evil which we see and which seems to be increasing, despite the greater evil of the unseen world, God has set Jesus on the throne according to His great power to rule and bring all things to its final glorious conclusion. The believer can rest in His rule even in the midst of turmoil. And the power by which God worked in Christ, exalting Him to the utmost position and giving Him universal jurisdiction is available to the believer today.

### **I. By God’s mighty power Jesus has the utmost position of honor and authority (1:20–21).**

1. *To exalt Jesus it was necessary to resurrect Him to immortality*, establishing the satisfaction of His sacrifice and making Him the firstfruits of believers (1 Cor 15:20; cf. vv. 23, 42–57).
2. *By seating Jesus at His right hand, the Father gave Jesus a position of honor and authority*, a position from which to rule. It fulfilled the prophecy concerning the Messiah in Psalm 110:1.
3. *The honor and authority far exceeded that of any and all spirit beings* (1:21; cf. 3:10).
  - a. The terminology is of ranking in the spirit world, where the real spiritual battle takes place (6:12).
  - b. His position (name) is higher than any name that can be named. (This relates to the thinking that naming names of deities or spirit beings exercised influence over them and over destiny, cf. Acts 19:13.)
  - c. Now and forever, in this age and the next, Jesus is exalted above any and all power and authority.

### **II. By God’s mighty power Jesus has universal jurisdiction for the sake of the church (1:22–23).**

1. *Consider the relationship of the world to Jesus: subjection.*

God the Father placed all things under the feet of Jesus.

  - a. This is an allusion to Psalm 110 and a quote of Psalm 8:6 which finds fulfilment in Jesus Christ as the perfect man after sin corrupted the dominion of mankind over creation.
  - b. So the Father subjects all things to Jesus the Messiah, thereby granting both authority and power over all things. (Cf. Romans 8:38–39 for Paul’s sense of “all things.”)
2. *Consider the relationship of Jesus to the world: rule.*

The Father appointed Jesus head over everything.

  - a. To be ‘head’ is to rule, mirroring the concept of subjection (cf. Ps 8:6a). Using ‘head’ instead of ‘rule’ introduces His relationship to the church, His body.
  - b. Jesus Christ has authority and power to rule over absolutely everything in the created universe. He is ‘head’ over everything: the physical world, the spirit world, human life, everything.
3. *Consider the relationship of Jesus to the church: sovereign benefactor.*

The Father gave Jesus as head (over everything) to the church.

  - a. The church benefits from the universal headship of Jesus Christ. Nothing can stop Jesus from building His church as He has determined to do.
  - b. The church benefits by being united with Jesus Christ as her head, caring for her as His body and reacting to her treatment as to Himself.
  - c. The church benefits by being filled by Christ. He Himself has the fulness of Deity which He gives to the church (Colossians 2:9–10), for which Paul also prays (Ephesians 3:19).

The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost revealed the exaltation of Jesus Christ and also marked the beginning of the body of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13). The power of God which exalted Jesus is available to be truly known. And that is possible only by faith in Jesus Christ. Those who have believed may pray to know it, that is, truly experience it in Christ, through Christ, unto Christ, and for the glory of God.

### *Questions for further thought and discussion:*

- What hinders people from finding hope in their life situations in the resurrection of Christ? What can help? How can we help one another?
- Who or what rules your life? Is Jesus is Lord in your life? What is the evidence?
- How are you relating to the church? Does it reveal a solid understanding that the way you relate to the church is the way you are relating to her Head, Jesus Christ?