

Ephesians 1:19-2:9

Last week we looked at the prayer Paul prayed for the church there in Ephesus. We saw that he prayed these things and recorded it so we would know that it was possible for us to appropriate those same qualities in our own lives. Paul continues his dialog by giving us the reason for the power that God promises us. Several things are stated here as facts that had already occurred.

1. ***Christ was raised from the dead – vs. 20*** – The resurrection is the single most important element in our belief system. Without it, we are not different than any other religion. Without it, Jesus was just a good man, who lived a good life, cared about people, gave some good advice, performed a few miracles, suffered and then died. But so did Buddha, Muhammad, Gandhi, and many others. Without the resurrection, there really isn't anything special about Jesus' life and His ministry. It is the resurrection that makes the difference and gives Jesus the real power to save us from hell and provide a place in heaven for us.
2. ***Christ was seated on the right hand of God – vs. 20*** – Being seated on the right hand of the father is also very important for the Jewish believer, because this fact ensures that Jesus is the true son of God and equal with God. It is verification that Jesus received a position of honor when He ascended into heaven. It is the place where Jesus and communicate with the Father and they can fulfill the promise of us being in Jesus and therefore no one can take us out of the Father's hand.
3. ***Christ was given rule and authority over all – vs. 21*** – We have to understand that while we have the Bible to read and help us understand all that Jesus said during His ministry, these early Christians did not. Jesus said He would set up His kingdom and He would rule over everything. This passage proves that God has given to Jesus the power and authority to do just that. Rule. And one day, we will rule with Him.
4. ***Christ will never lose His position – vs. 21*** – Political leaders come and go in our world today. That was also true in Jesus' day. Political leaders seldom stayed long. If they did, it was because they did favors and people owed them things. Jesus is different. He will be over everything and will remain over everything for two reasons. One, God placed Him over everything and gave Him the power and responsibility for it. Second, Jesus and God are one. A concept that is critical to our faith and belief system.
5. ***Christ is and will be over the church (the body of Christ) – vs. 22*** – This is another major difference between Christianity and other religions. Christianity is the only religion that has Jesus and the authority over the body of believers and that makes our leader supernatural. We serve a living God and savior, and other religions worship someone who is dead. Just like the Bible says, idols and dead people who cannot speak, move, listen, or help you in your time of need.

We see in Chapter 2 that Paul then begins to remind the Christians about their past, their present and their future as Christ see it. Here we have a great dissertation on why we need Christ, why He is important for us today, and why we have hope in the future.

1. **Our past** – vs. – 2:1-3 – Our past is the same in the eyes of God. It doesn't matter who we are or what we have or haven't done. In God's sight we are all sinners and in need of salvation. Now here is where we differ from Stephen Hawking. As you may know, Hawking just published a book, *The Grand Design*, declaring that "creation does not need God to be involved". *"Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going."* In fact, he is adamant about the beginning of life not having God or any divine creator at all. He thinks it is possible for matter to create matter, which violates science and that the effect can be greater than the cause. The importance of this is critical to our need for salvation. If God did not create us and the universe, then we could not be guilty of having a sin nature, and therefore, we do not need a savior and Jesus could have just been a good man. His death was not necessary and therefore just a myth. You see, if God did not create the universe, we are not personally responsible to God and His word. We can live anyway we want. The way in which the worlds were created is of interest, but what really matter is that we acknowledge that we are sinners and our past is full of sin and unrighteousness, and that Jesus is the only way to salvation and therefore eternal life.
2. **Our present** – vs. 2:4-6 – Christianity is a "present, here and now" religion. Unlike many of the other worlds religions who either live in the past, and only can talk about what happened years ago, nor do we only have a hope that our works here on earth will be good enough for our future if we succeed in achieving some uncertain goal, like witnessing for 7 years or killing some infidel. Our faith believes that Christ is living and working in our lives this very day and continues to do that until we die. AS we saw in the last chapter, Christ is living in heaven at the right hand of God the Father to intercede on our behalf. That is present!
3. **Our future** – vs. 2:7-9 – The future of the believer is the only religion that has the confidence of ever becoming a reality. Look at the others. Some say do this or do that. Well, how much is enough. If I witness for 7 years and only convert 99 instead of 100 people, is that good enough? If I blow myself up and kill only 49 people instead of 50 people, will I still get the 70 virgins? If I just do what is right, by what standard is that to be judged? My idea of right or yours? How do we ever really know how much in enough? Believe me, I want to know my future, not just hope, guess, or just take my chances. While we all know I am not perfect, I do know that my sins are forgiven and that is what my future is based upon.