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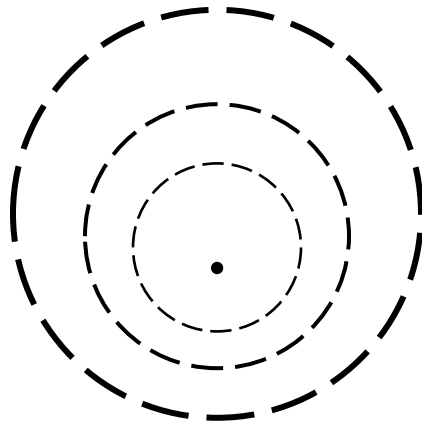
C0432 -- August 18, 2004 -- Eph 1:21-23 -- Christ Over All and Head of the Church

Last week, we looked at the Doctrine of the Session. This doctrine is a part of Paul's prayer for the Ephesian saints (1:15-23). Paul wants the Ephesians to understand the power of God toward us. And to communicate God's power toward us Paul gives us a demonstration of that power in the Doctrine of the Session. God raised Christ and seated Him at His right hand (Eph. 1:20). The Doctrine of the Session refers to when God seated the Son at His *right hand*. At the *right hand* is the place of "authority". Christ, in His resurrected humanity, has the place of "authority" in the universe. When was Christ seated at the Father's *right hand*? On the day of Pentecost as evidenced by the sending of the Holy Spirit. Christ had to be in the place of authority in order to send the Holy Spirit (John 16:17). And so, a human being is sitting at the helm of the universe. And this is very important in our time because of SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) and NASA. SETI and NASA are programs designed to find extra-terrestrial life forms in the universe. What we as Christians can be certain about is the fact that neither SETI or NASA will ever find an intelligent life form that is superior to the human race. Human beings were designed to have dominion and to rule the universe (Gen. 1-2). Salvation was designed for the race of humans and not for other life-forms. That is why the cross took place on planet earth and that is why Jesus Christ was a God-man and not a God-alien, God-animal, etc. He had to take the form of a man, He had to take upon Himself true humanity and this is what Paul was talking about in Phil. 2:5-11 (READ). Now, this is the key passage on the Doctrine of the Kenosis or Emptying of Christ. The Kenosis doctrine is usually stated as the fact that Jesus Christ gave up the independent use of His divine attributes. He didn't give up His divine attributes but He gave up the independent use of His divine attributes. Verses 7-8 describe the four aspects of this doctrine. The "emptying" consists of not a subtraction but an addition to Himself of four things;

- 1) taking the form of a bond-servant,
- 2) being made in the likeness of men,
- 3) being found in appearance as a man, and

4) He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Notice that Jesus was made in the likeness of men, not angels, not aliens, not animals. He was found in appearance as a man, not angels, not an alien, not an animal. Salvation is designed for human beings, not for angels, aliens, or animals. We are designed in both our body and spirits to have relationship and fellowship with God. When that was lost at the Fall God had already decided before the foundation of the world to remedy the problem by sending His Son in the likeness of men. This is why all men, ALL men had to descend from Adam, and that includes Eve, she had to be made out of Adam. There has to be a solitary origin of the human species so that there can be a solitary redemption for the human species. Angels are individual creations and they do not procreate. Animals are distinct kinds. If God wanted to redeem angels, He would have to have a Redeemer made in the likeness of Angels and the Redeemer could only die for one angel because every angel is a separate species (no procreation; See Aquinas *Summa Theologica* or Arthur Custance, www.custance.org). If God wanted to redeem animals, He would have to send one Redeemer for each kind of animal. Each Redeemer would have to be in the likeness of that animal kind. So, God knows what He is doing, and He set out to redeem human beings. So, we don't have to worry about finding higher life-forms in the universe. There's not one. Redeemed human beings will take the high ground with the person of Jesus Christ at our resurrection. We will sit above the angelic realm and will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3). So, you can see how radical this idea is in our day, how boastful it may appear to the world that we are claiming to be of such prominent position in the universe. So prominent that planet earth is sitting at the center of the universe as demonstrated by the quantum red-shift (observed) in a bounded universe (biblical assumption).



There is meaning and purpose in the universe because ultimately behind the Cosmos is an Infinite Personal Creator to whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus

Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father (Phil. 2:10-11). The ultimate backdrop of is not an Infinite-Impersonal Cosmos, but an Infinite Personal Creator to whom men owe their allegiance. The application of the Doctrine of the Session was demonstrated by Stephen, a man full of faith, elected to the first Deacon board in Church history (Acts 6:1-6). A Deacon was the first martyr in Church History. And in Acts 7:54-60 Stephen demonstrates the power of understanding the Doctrine of the Session. How could Stephen do it? How could Stephen sit there and maintain perfect consciousness and DVP mentality while being stoned to death? His enemies wouldn't even listen to the vision, they had already made up their minds. Don't confuse me with the facts Stephen, we've already made up our minds. But Stephen, gazing into heaven saw the Son standing at the right hand of the Father. Stephen knew who ruled the universe. He didn't have to fear any human authority or any stone. He could stand in the face of anyone and never have to fear anyone no matter how high their status, rank, or authority. Now, you too can have this kind of boldness and confidence. You never have to fear anyone anywhere anytime. You can stand up against the world forces of darkness and rest assured that they are really only world forces, they aren't universal forces see. There's a higher authority than these world forces and the Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity is that authority. Where is He seated? Where is the humanity of Christ located? end of v. 20

evn toi/j evpourani,oij, “in the heavenlies” refers to the location where the humanity of Christ dwells. This means that Christ's humanity is located somewhere in the created universe. In v. 3 we saw that all our spiritual blessings find their source *in the heavenlies* in the person of Christ. Our blessings are not in some location where they are unavailable but are readily available finding their source in some dimension of the universe *in Christ*. Since we are *in Christ*, we also are positionally seated *in the heavenlies*. Additionally, we saw that the forces of darkness, the spiritual rulers have access to the *heavenlies*. However, none of these satanic forces are at the right hand of the Father. The *right hand of the father* is reserved for Christ alone. To sit at the *right hand* is to sit in the place of rule or authority and designates the one who has sovereign rule over the universe as we will see more clearly in v. 22.

Paul's point is that God exercised His power in raising Christ and seating Christ at His right hand and that this same power is available to all believers today (Eph. 3:20).

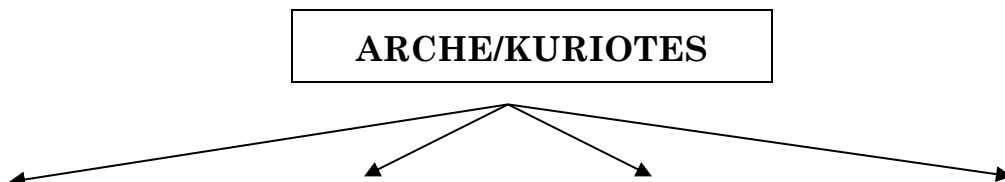
Greek Text: 1:21 u`pera,nw pa,shj avrch/j kai. evxousi,aj kai. duna,mewj kai. kurio,tthtoj kai. panto.j ovno,matoj ovnomazome,nou(ouv mo,non evn tw/| aivw/ni tou,tw| avlla. kai. evn tw/| me,llonti

Translation: 1:21 far above every ruler and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the intended/coming/future one.

u`pera,nw pa,shj avrch/j kai. evxousi,aj kai. duna,mewj kai. kurio,tthoj, “**far above every ruler and authority and power and dominion**” ..*far above* is the compound Greek word *huperano*. *huper* meaning “over, beyond” and *ano* meaning “above”. This word doesn’t really mean **far above** (NASB). Translators have thought that *huper* must be an intensifier so they translate it **far above**, but that’s not what Paul is saying. Turn to Heb. 9:5 where the author of Hebrews uses *huperano*. Notice it is used of the Cherubim on top of the Ark of the Covenant whose wings were spread “over and above” the mercy seat (i.e., the propitiation seat). The Cherubim wings were not **far above** the mercy seat, but they were “over and above” it. So, it doesn’t mean that Christ is **far above** every ruler, etc., but that He is “over and above” (horizontally and vertically) every ruler, authority, etc. So, it has to do with Christ’s rule at the **right hand of the Father**, His authority. Christ’s authority is “over and above” **every ruler and authority and power and dominion**.

Here we have four words that describe the personalities at work in the universe (Personal vs. Impersonal Universe). These four words describe those persons whom Christ rules “over and above”. (History is like a ball game with all these different personalities involved in effecting history). These four words can refer to men or angels, good or evil or both. Probably some combination is intended (cf. Eph. 3:10; 6:12). In Eph. 6:12 it is clear that evil angels are in view. However, in Eph. 3:10 it is not clear whether they are good or evil, perhaps both are included. Probably both are included in Eph. 1:21 and these four words are used to describe two categories of angelic beings. Ellicot says, “the evil angels would more naturally recognize His power, but the good ones His wisdom.” Our point here today is that there is a hierarchy here in the angelic realm that we have to take a look at. And ultimately, there are personalities behind what most people consider impersonal natural processes.

The first word **ruler** refers to a higher authority, **authority and power** refer to a lower authority and **dominion** refers to the higher authority. So, if we were to rank these, we have 1, 2, 2, and then 1 (e.g., Chiefs and Indians). A careful word study of these four words reveals that Paul is talking about a hierarchy in the angelic realm.





EXOUSIA/DUNAMIS

Hierarchy of angels in Eph. 1:21

First, let's look at the word **ruler**. It is the Greek word *arche* (from which we get *hierarchy*), and it usually refers to the "beginning of time" (e.g., John 1:1); but it can also refer to "rank or position". That is the way it's being used here. The *arche* has the highest rank in the angelic realm. He is therefore called a **ruler**.

The second word is translated **authority** and it's the Greek word *exousia*. *Exousia* is used in the New Testament of the apostles' relationship to Christ. The apostles were delegated **authority** by Christ. See, the apostles were not the top dogs, but Christ delegated authority to them to carry out His will (e.g., 2 Cor. 10:18). So, *exousia* refers to an angel who has delegated authority. So, these are second class angelic **authorities** that have been delegated authority by the *arche*, the chief **ruler**. Now, turn to Col. 2:15 so we can see Jesus Christ's relationship to these **rulers and authorities** of the demonic realm. Remember, here in Eph. 1:21 we saw that Jesus Christ is *huperano*, He is "over and above" all these principalities and Col. 2:15 is the historic demonstration of when Jesus Christ announced that He was victorious. Notice that Christ **disarmed** the **rulers and authorities**. They don't have any weapons anymore. It's like He defeated them and then took their weapons and then publicly walked around and said, "Look here, you didn't get me. You tried but you lost and you look like a bunch of fools. Who are you to take on the Creator of the universe? Oh, you thought you had me on the cross but God raised me from the dead and seated me at His right hand." I can just see it now on the faces of the Jewish leadership when Peter preached Jesus' death and resurrection. Those Jews wanted Jesus on the cross because they thought He was a criminal. Peter in his sermons in early Acts was saying, "the guy you put to death as a criminal, in the worst fashion, God placed that criminal at His own **right hand**. God made this so-called criminal that you killed the ruler of the universe." Can you just imagine the boldness Peter had when he preached that message? It was equivalent to telling them they put to death the God of the universe. That's a serious charge. You wouldn't like it one bit if Peter was telling you that. So, the One who they put to death announced this death as a victory over the demonic realm.

The third word is **power** and it further describes the second class of angels, those of lower authority. It's the Greek word *dunamis*. You say, oh, that word was used of God in v. 19, you're right, it was. *Dunamis* is the word that means "potential energy or power". It has the capacity to do work. Now, that's why this word describes the second class of angels.

They have the capacity to do work, the potential, but they can't do the work until given the authority by the *arche*, the ruling demon. This hierarchy is important to recognize, especially in 21st century America. I want you to see how radically opposed the Bible is to the concept of mother nature/natural law. (e.g., Matt. 6:26 I want you to note how the Lord Jesus talks about natural processes; animal life, Matt. 6:30 plant life; it's a personal process Matt. 8:26, this is the storm scene, read 23-26, this verb for "rebuke" is only used of persons. Why is the Lord Jesus talking to the winds, was He just talking to natural processes? Did He just manipulate the natural processes? Oh no, He was talking to the delegated authorities behind the winds, He was talking to angelic personalities who are given authority over the winds; these are not chance natural processes). There are personalities behind the forces and the tribal guy in Africa is more correct in his thinking about these forces than western Americans. At least he recognizes that there are spiritual forces behind the physical forces. He recognizes that, but modern American's have depersonalized the universe. They've so mechanized our thinking that we lose sight of the personal backdrop of the universe. This is evolution working its way out in the idea of man and the world as a machine. Carnal man will do whatever he can to depersonalize the universe. Why? Because the more we can depersonalize the universe the less we have to think about God. And if we kill God then who are we responsible to? No one. And that's what the carnal man wants, he wants a world where he's not responsible, a world where he is safe to sin without any consequences. So, back behind the universe we have a hierarchy of angelic beings who are carrying out specific functions. Some are messengers, some are guardian angels, some are in charge of what we often think of as natural processes, but they are actually very personal processes. So, there are personalities outside of our 4 dimensions that can work on our 4 dimensions. It seems to be the clear teaching of Scripture that if we could tear back the sky and peer into the fifth dimension, we would see a huge traffic jam of angels around the earth engaged in all sorts of activities (Isa. 34:4; Eph. 3:10; Rev. 6:14-16).

The fourth word is *dominion* and further describes the *arche*, the chief angelic rulers. It comes from the Greek word *kuriotes* and means "lordship". Certain angels have a dominion over which they rule and they are therefore "lords".

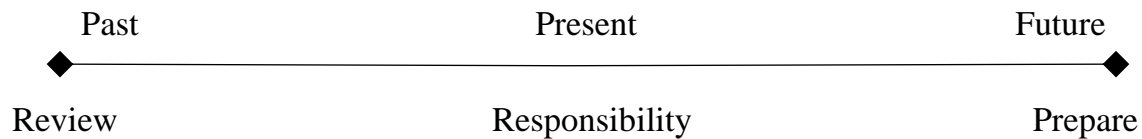
In conclusion, the higher-class angels (*arche, kuriotes*) delegate authority to lower class angels (*exousia, dunamis*) in their realm that have the ability to carry out their work. But Jesus Christ is ruler "over and above" all of them as demonstrated by the resurrection of Christ, when He openly proclaimed His victory over death and sin, disarming the demonic realm and then ascended, passing through the heavenlies "above and beyond all principalities and powers and took the prime position in the universe as He sat down at the

right hand of the Father. This all happened by the power of God, the absolute omnipotence of the Creator God who has made His *dunamis* power (potential power) available to you (2 Cor. 13:4; Eph. 1:19).

kai. panto.j ovno,matoj ovnomazome,nou(, “*and every name that is named,*” *And every name that is named* refers to the “names” God gives to specific rulers in the angelic realm. Man is not the one who names the rulers, but God is the “namer”. God is the one who named everything from days one to four (Gen. 1:1-19), God determined the number of stars in the heavens and gave them all of their names (Ps. 147:4), God gave Abram a new name (Abraham; Gen. 17:5), Jacob a new name (Israel; Gen. 32:28), God will give those who overcome a new name (i.e., those who overcome the particular problem at Pergamum; Rev. 2:17). God is the one who names these angelic rulers and Christ is sitting “over and above” all those named. *This is a comprehensive statement of Christ’s authority; regardless of one’s position or title in heaven or on earth, Christ is superior, far superior because He sits at the **right hand of the Father***. This corresponds to Phil. 2:9 where it says God has given Him [Christ] a name which is above all names. No one will ultimately bow the knee to anyone else, Christ alone will have every knee in the universe bowing to Him because His name is above all names (Phil. 2:10).

ouv mo,non evn tw/| aivw/ni tou,tw| avlla. kai. evn tw/| me,llonti, “*not only in this age but also in the intended/coming/future one.*” This is another comprehensive statement that teaches us that Christ is not only in the position of authority *temporarily* but He is in the position of authority *permanently*. Christ is not only above every name in the present but also above any name that is named in the future. This of course would include the ultimate end-times personality, the Antichrist. Remember, Isa. 14 and the “Destiny of the Antichrist”? Even he [Antichrist] will become like the other kings of the earth. They will be in awe of his weakness. God sits in the heavens and He laughs at every name that is named as a ruler or power (Ps. 2; Isa. 40). They are weak, He is strong. This is why we should never rely on or place our trust in any created thing. We should never place our trust in a vision, an angel, our president, our mayor, the educational system, or any created authority. All created authorities are derivative authorities, our trust and reliance should rest in Christ alone who is the one who delegates authority to any who possess it. And His authority is permanent. All other authorities are temporary. Do not trust them, trust God. If you do trust them you will be let down. Support them, pray for them, but do not trust them. The government does not save, the government, contrary to democratic thinking is not a way of salvation.

In conclusion of verse 21 “The Bible divides time into three periods: the past, which cannot be changed but which the saints are encouraged to review for lessons of faith (1 Cor. 10:11); the present, where people are responsible to God and his will; and the future, for which people are urged to prepare.”ⁱ



In the Bible, the *age to come* always refers to the Messianic Age when the Messiah will rule with justice and put down all other powers or authorities [i.e., names] that oppose him. Messiah will demonstrate that even though many will try to usurp His power, He has a *permanent* position of authority.ⁱⁱ

Greek Text: 1:22 kai. pa,nta u`pe,taxen u`po. tou.j po,daj aurtou/ kai. aurtou.n e;dwken kefalh.n u`pe.r pa,nta th/| evkklhsi,a|

Translation: 1:22 and He put into subjection everything under His feet and He gave Him as head over everything to the church,

kai. pa,nta u`pe,taxen u`po. tou.j po,daj aurtou, “and He put into subjection everything under His feet”. V. 22 demonstrates two additional things God’s power accomplishes. First, God put all things in *subjection under His feet*. In v. 19 the first thing God’s power did was resurrecting Christ and secondly, seating Him in the place of authority. The next two things God’s power does is show Christ’s power over all creation and in particular the Church. It is one thing to be given authority, it is another thing to exercise that authority. For example, David had been given the place of authority as King but he did not exercise that authority until a later time when Saul was removed. The verb *hupetasso* is a military term meaning to “rank under a leader”. 1 Cor. 15 says that the one who put all things under Christ’s subjection is of course not subjected. So, the Father is not subjected, but the ranks in the universe in our present day look like the following:

God (1 Cor. 15)

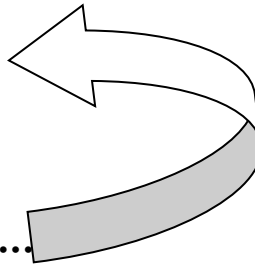
Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:22)

Resurrected Men

Angels (Heb. 2)

Men

Nature

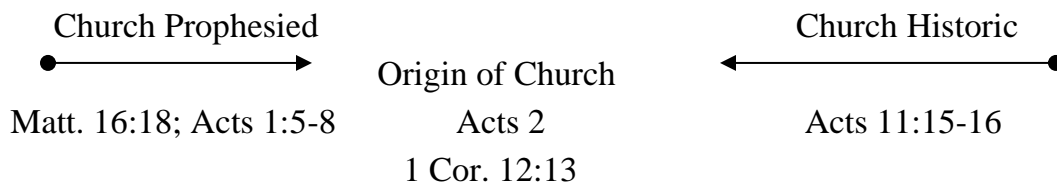


At the incarnation Jesus Christ was made a little lower than the angels (Heb. 2:9). When He was buried, He announced His victory proclamation to the fallen angels. Then He was resurrected by God, walked with and taught His disciples for 40 days, ascended to heaven, and God seated Him at His right hand. Thus, Christ passed through the heavenly realms (Heb. 4:14; i.e., where the angels dwell) taking the high ground. Militarily the ascension and session of Christ are important because the high ground is always a superior position for swiftness and force of attack. Hence, Christ has been given the authority to rule over all of creation, animate and inanimate, human and angelic. The phrase *under His feet* is a metaphor which has the idea of victory over one's enemies (it comes from Ps. 8:7). It was used of the winner of a duel who placed his foot on the neck of his enemy who had been thrown to the ground. Joshua had his generals place their feet on the necks of their enemy's generals in Josh. 10:24.ⁱⁱⁱ It was a sign of victory over Christ's enemies. Everything in creation is under Christ's control and authority, whether friends or enemies. This coincides with 1 Peter 3:22 which connects *hupotasso* with the resurrection (1 Pet. 3:21).

The theological and cosmological question we must ask here is "if Christ is full authority then why do we have present calamity, injustice, etc., in the universe? Paul makes it clear in Eph. 6 that the principalities and powers, the world forces of darkness are still actively attacking Christians and the world at large. How then can we say that Christ has the authority? Well, it is certain that He has assumed to place of authority and has the right to exercise that authority at will, and even that He does to an extent. There are at least three evidences of His present exercise of His authority; 1) sending of the Holy Spirit to indwell all believers, 2) bringing people to Christ to build up the Church, and 3) restraining sin to a large degree. It would be a lot worse if He were not doing these things. However, it is clear that He is not exercising His full authority. Thus, we can say that He is reserving the full exercise of His authority until the Second Coming where He will visibly reign. Christ

is ruling *indirectly* now *directly* not yet. At the Kingdom we will see the full manifestation of His authority before He hands the kingdom over to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28). In the Kingdom immediate judgment for infractions of God’s holy character will be poured out and justice will be immediately pronounced.

kai. auvto.n e;dwken kefalh.n u`pe.r pa,nta th/| evkklhsi,a| (“*and He gave Him as head over everything to the church,*”). This is the second demonstration of God’s power in v. 22. *didomi* means “to give”, *kephale* is most commonly a reference to the physical “head”. Here it stands for “leadership and authority” so that Christ is the one who has been given “leadership and authority” as the husband is the leader and authority over his wife so Christ is the leader and authority over the Church. The Greek word for **church** is *ekklesia* and always refers to an assembly. It is first used in Matt. 16:18 and then in Matt. 18:17. Both of those references were given by Christ after He had pronounced judgment on Israel which took place in AD70. So, Christ’s usages were looking forward to the day of Pentecost when the Church began (cf. Acts 1:5-8→Acts 2←Acts 11:15-16).



Locating the Origin of the Church

The Church is marked by the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). The Church could not have begun until Christ was ascended because Christ had to be ascended before He could send the Holy Spirit. Since Acts 1:5 looks forward to that event and Acts 11:15-16 looks back to that event, the most logical place that this took place was Acts 2. There was no church in this sense in the OT.

However, the word *ekklesia* did have a previous meaning that referred simply to an “assembly” of people. This meaning continued to be used in a non-technical sense. For example, in Acts 7:38 Stephen refers to Israel as a “congregation” wandering in the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt. *Ekklesia* is also used in this non-technical sense of an “assembly” in Ephesus while Paul was there. Remember, Paul’s ministry was so effective, teaching the Bible 5-6 hours a day for 2 ½ years that it began to cause economic problems for the silversmith business along the Arcadian Way. Demetrius, an important silversmith, began to lose business because of the gospel. Demetrius and many others were making silver trinkets of Diana/Artemis and the Temple. This is how powerful Paul’s

ministry was. The gospel destroyed the economy of a large group of Ephesians because Paul was turning them away from idolatry. It made these silversmiths so mad that they got an assembly of 25,000 confused Ephesians together in the Theatre to get rid of Paul. And in Eph. 19:30 the word Dr. Luke uses to describe that mob was *ekklesia*. So, it's clear that the word *ekklesia* can have a technical sense referring to a Jew or Gentile who believed in Jesus Christ and was baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ or it can refer to a simple "assembly" of non-Christians as in Acts 19:30. *Ekklesia* in its technical sense is nowhere to be found in the OT. It is not prophesied, it is not mentioned, it is totally unknown in the OT as we'll see in Eph. 3.

3 USES OF EKKLESIA

- 1) "Congregation" of Israel in wilderness (Acts 7:38)
- 2) "Assembly" of riotous Ephesians (Acts 19:30)
- 3) "Church Universal" as body of Christ (most references in the NT)

So, notice what v. 22 in Ephesians is telling us, it is telling us that God made Christ the leader, the head over everything and then gave Christ to the Church. That's right, God gave Christ to the Church. The Church here obviously refers to the universal church, all believers of all places over time since the day of Pentecost to the present. Christ has been given to the Universal Church as a possession. The Church itself is given further explanation in v. 23.

ⁱ Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 281.

ⁱⁱ Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 282.

ⁱⁱⁱ Davis and Whitcomb's work *ISRAEL: From Conquest to Exile* (Winona Lake, WI: BMH Books, 2002), 70, says that "Such an act was a symbol of the complete subjugation of the defeated enemy."

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