

EPHESIANS 1:21
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 31, January 23, 2000

INTRO: Our text for this morning speaks of principalities, areas of rule; authorities, powers and dominion. As I understand it, these speak of things in the realm of angels and demons. In our text I take it to refer to the demonic realm for in verse 22 Paul say God has put all these under Christ's feet. That is a picture of one who is victorious over an enemy and good angels are not an enemy to Christ (1 Cor. 15:25).

Paul wished for the Ephesians to know three things. What are they? Now the third thing he wished for them to know was the exceeding greatness of the power toward them. I proposed to you that he wanted them to know this power so that they might understand the power that is required to live a godly life. And further, that they might then tap into this power and live a godly life.

We spoke in our last message about the magnitude of the power required to raise Jesus from the dead and then transport Him trillions of miles into the presence of God when God exalted Him to His own right hand.

Verse 20 tells us that God seated Jesus Christ at His right hand. We will look at this position when we come to verse 22. We note here only that it is the position of honor and power. We speak of someone being the bosses right hand man (Read Matt. 20:17-23). At the right hand of God in heaven is Jesus Christ but when Jesus comes to reign on earth after the tribulation it appears some human being will sit at His right hand and another at his left. I can hardly wait to see who it will be can't you? Who do you think it will be?

Well, this morning we want to consider the extent of the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

b) The comparison of God's power

-Christ is set over all

Now notice in verse 21 that not only has great distance been overcome by this power but great beings have been

overcome by God's ability. Christ has been exalted above ALL principality and ALL power and ALL might and ALL dominion and EVERY name that is named in EVERY age. Our question is, "What are these?"

-ALL PRINCIPALITY

The word translated *principality* (rule, NIV) in my Bible is the Greek word *archee*. It often carries the idea of a beginning. John 1:1, "In the beginning..." or in Greek, "En archee..." When used with regard to rule it speaks of first in rank. For example, a high priest is an *archeirous*. The first in the ranks of priests. The Zondervan Bible Dictionary says regarding the word principalities (pl.), "Six times the NT uses the word in the English Bible to refer to powerful angels and demons (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 6:12)."

The word in our verse is in the singular and refers to an area of rule. The Ryrie Reference Bible says regarding the words principality and power and might and dominion, that the Rabbis of the day used these words to describe different orders of angels.

From Scripture it can be understood that God has given various areas of rule to various angels. It also becomes clear from such passages as Ephesians 6:10-12 that the devil and his demons, which are fallen angels, are highly organized and placed in ranks.

When Paul speaks of the power of God he tells us that God exalted His Son FAR, ABOVE ALL principalities. He is not only above all principalities. He is FAR above all areas of rule,

whethere demonic or good. What is your battle today? It may well be an area of demonic power that is in question in your life and the encouragement is that God has exalted Christ to a position far above any area of rule that is seeking to destroy you.

-ALL POWER

The word translated *power* is *exousia*. In my understanding power is not the best translation of this word. Exousia has to do, not with power, but authority. Recently, in our Wednesday Night Bible studies, we were studying Romans 13. The first verse says, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers..." That verse speaks of our secular governments and the word *powers* is *exousia*. The government is God's appointed authority over others in secular matters.

Now you will say, "So. What's the difference if you call it a power or authority?" I tried to illustrate the difference to the group like this. Some time ago my wife and I were in High Level. We had turned off the main highway and were heading for the hospital. Before we got there a young school-aged boy dressed an official looking vest and a stop sign in his hand stepped out and raised the stop sign. He had been vested with the authority to stop traffic to let the school children safely cross the street. When the children had crossed he allowed the traffic to proceed.

That boy was stopping cars and trucks. He had no power to stop them. Anyone could have driven right through because he was powerless to stop them if they wished to proceed. However, he had the authority to stop them. He had

been given the right to stop them. And if anyone should have driven right through he could have jotted down a license plate number and turned them in. That is the difference between power and authority.

So the word *exousia* in our text here does not speak of ability but authority. Out of this I want to issue a warning. When I or when you sin, the devil gains authority over that part of our lives. God cannot override the devil's authority in that area. The only way that area of authority can be taken away from the devil and given to God is by dealing with the sin.

I would like to put out a little caution here from my perspective. I hear of preachers who go to minister in a certain area and then they look over the area and claim it for Jesus Christ. Others pray over countries or towns or schools and claim them for Christ. I listened to a tape this past week where a certain woman had a vision of Jesus Christ regarding a certain school. And she saw Him with head thrown back in sheer delight and He was laughing and saying, "This is my school." Now, if I know anything about Scripture and God's way of working, that woman's vision was not of the Jesus Christ who is God's Son. You see, that school was not His school. My caution to you this morning is, before you buy into such kind of teaching, look for the biblical ground for it. I know that in Ephesians 1:22, the very next verse, Paul says that all things have been put under Jesus' feet. Let me say here simply that this does not mean that all things belong to Jesus Christ. No, the biggest part of our countries, the biggest part of our governments and the biggest part

of our schools lies, not in Jesus' hands but in the hands of the wicked one. 1 John 5:19 says in the Greek text that the whole world lies in the wicked one. Does Jesus have authority over all these? Yes! Does He own all these things? Do they belong to Him? No! For the most part they have sold themselves to Satan by sin.

I do not find in Scripture that we can claim countries or areas for the Lord. Nor do I find that Scripture says these all belong to Him. But we can, like Joshua in the OT pray, "Lord give me this mountain." And when we pray like Joshua did then we must enter the battle like Joshua did.

Now here is the encouraging thing in our text. No matter how much ground the devil has gained in your life, if you deal with it, God has exalted Christ far above all the authority of Satan or his demons.

-ALL MIGHT

The word of our text now is *dunamis*. I mentioned to you earlier that there is a difference between power and authority. Our last word was authority. *Dunamis* speaks of power. It speaks of ability. There is a passage of Scripture that speaks of the power of both good and bad angels and the continual battle in the heavenlies (read Daniel 10:1-13, 20).

I have mentioned to you in an earlier message that we are no match for the Devil or his demons. Their power exceeds ours to such an extent that we have no chance. But when we yield our lives to God and tap into His power, then even the demons have to flee.

We are exhorted in Scripture to resist the Devil (Jms. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9). When we tap into the power of God we can overcome Satan and his hordes because God has exalted His Son FAR above all powers!

-ALL DOMINION

The next consideration is the word *dominion*. The Greek word is *kurioteetos*. The root word is *kurios*, meaning Lord. So the idea is that of dominion or lordship. Most, if not all angels, whether good or bad, are given areas of lordship. That area is their dominion. And again our text says that Christ has been exalted over ALL dominion.

When I thought of dominion, and how the devil seeks to gain dominion over our lives my mind went back to 1982 when Argentina took over the Falkland Islands. So I did a little research. Compton's Encyclopedia says, "In 1982 a military conflict took place between Argentina and Great Britain over control of the Falkland Islands, known in Argentina as the Islas Malvinas. Although the islands lie about 300 miles (480 kilometers) off the east coast of Argentina, they have been controlled by Britain since 1833. Argentina also claimed the Falklands, and in 1982 Argentine troops invaded East Falkland. A British naval force counterattacked soon after the Argentine occupation, and the British quickly regained control over the islands."

What I remember of the news at that time was that Brittain sent in their naval force and the news said they established a beachhead. Funk &

Wagnalls College Dictionary says a beachhead is, "An area on a hostile shore established by an advance force for the landing of troops and supplies and the launching of subsequent operations." In order to regain control of these Islands Britain had to first gain back a little bit of beach where they could land troops and supply the troops with all they needed.

When the devil seeks dominion of our lives, he can gain a beachhead in our lives if he can get us to sin. The moment we have an area of sin in our lives he can gain further advances from that area. Many Christians never gain full victory in their lives because the beachheads remain. But through repentance and a full dealing with sin, those beachheads can be removed.

Now our text says that God has exalted Christ far above all dominion. It remains now for us to tap into the power of God because there is no beachhead in our lives that He is not sufficient to overcome if we obey His Word.

-EVERY NAME OF EVERY AGE

At the head of every principality is a name. At the head of every area of authority is a name. At the top of every power is a name. At the head of every dominion is a name and far over and above every name is the name of Jesus Christ. And in the last age, when you search for the name which will head the list of all names, it will be the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

CONCL: Paul wanted the Ephesians to know the exceeding greatness of the power of God toward them. In this verse that power has been compared to every dominion, authority, power and dominion; and to every name of every age. And this power has been shown to have been sufficient to exalt Christ far above all these.

I ask you this morning: Is there some area in your life that is a big battle? Maybe worldliness, as we spoke about in another message. Maybe anger or the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eyes? Maybe bitterness? Maybe hate? Maybe gossip or a bad tongue. Maybe TV or bad language. I am amazed sometimes at the language Christians use. There are a number of words used that do not have a rightful place in the Christian's vocabulary. I am not talking about just severely bad language. Did you know that "Gosh" is a Christian way of swearing without really saying God? Or golly or Gee whiz.

What our text says this morning is that since Christ has been exalted above every area, we can have victory over every area. Oh, may the Lord guide us and ever clean up our lives.