

EPHESIANS 1:22b-23  
The Wonderful Work of Salvation  
Message 33, February 27, 2000

INTRO: This will be the last message in Ephesians for some time. If we get into chapter 2 someday the first message will have to be titled, "The Mystery of The Missing Verb." As we come to the close of this first chapter I must confess I did not know how packed full of spiritual information this little book is. When I consider the content of this letter and the fact that the Apostle Paul taught here for only two years I am overwhelmed by the truths he must have communicated in that short time. I can hardly fathom a teacher writing material of this depth and this loaded with intricate truth to those with whom he has been for only two years. It is very obvious that Paul takes many things for granted as he writes this letter and the only ground for that must be that which he expects them to know from his teaching.

Now this morning we are considering the second of two things that are the outcome of God's power. In our last message we considered the words, "And He put all things under His feet..." I proposed to you that this is a positional statement and that at this time not yet all things are put under His feet.

So the first event as an outcome of God's power was that God put all things under Christ's feet. The second, which we want to look at this morning, is that God gave Him to be head over all things to the Church.

c) The outcome of God's power

-Christ as head of the Church

"...and He gave Him..." In the original text the pronoun *Him* is emphatic. It reads like this, "...and Him He gave..." I am reminded of the words, "There is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved." But notice that God gave Him. We notice next that God gave Him to the Church.

Now before we go on we must identify the Church. The word in the original language for church is *ekkleesia*. This word is made up of two words. First the little preposition *ek* usually meaning *out* and *kleesis*, a calling. It refers to those who are called out. Now this calling is first OUT of the world. When the NT

speaks of the world it does not usually refer to the earth. It refers to the mass of unsaved mankind. When the Bible says, "For God so loved the world..." we do not understand it to speak of the earth. No, it speaks of the mass of unsaved mankind. Therefore Jesus said in John 15:18-19, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were OF the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you OUT OF the world, therefore the world hates you." (Read John 17:1-18 for futher thoughts on the world and the Christian.)

So the first part of *ekkleesia* is *ek*, meaning *out*. The second is *kleesis*, from *kaleo* meaning to call. The call is the call of the Gospel. When a person hears the Gospel and he/she responds to the Gospel at that very moment a person becomes a *called out one* or as the Bible puts it, one of the elect, and thus a part of the *ekkleesia* or Church. One does not become a part of the universal Church by baptism or even church membership. If one is not truly saved and one is baptized and a member of a good Christian church one is still not a part of the true Church. You see, there are two ways in which the Church is viewed in Scripture. There is the local church. TEC is a local church. But TEC is only a very small part of the universal church which is the second way in which the Church is viewed.

Now in our text we read that God gave Jesus Christ to the Church as head over everything. The final and ultimate authority of the Church is Jesus Christ. He is pictured here as the head. When we speak of a head there is in view a physical body. Our text says that God gave Christ as head over all things to the Church. Then it goes on to explain that the Church is His body. Now you can take a body and remove a toe or an ear etc... and still have a living body with the same personality as before. In our age of modern science we can now even

remove a person's heart and replace it with another. I have heard recently of hand transplants. But you cannot remove the head and have a living body. We have not yet achieved the ability to do head transplants.

When we transplant an eye we still have the same person. I remember time before heart transplants had been performed. I remember wondering how it would change personality if one person had another person's heart. Then in 1967 the first heart transplant was performed. From there the practice continued and eventually people lived several years after a transplant. Today it is not new to hear of a heart transplant. Well, the personality does not reside in the heart for heart transplants do not change the personality to that of the person who gives the heart. The book of Leviticus tells us that the life of the flesh is in the blood. But we can do blood transfusions and the one who receives the blood remains the same person. The real person does not reside in the heart or in the blood.

But, if could we transplant the head which personality would we have? Would we have the personality of the one to whom the body belonged or would we have the personality of the one to whom the head belonged? Well, we do not know because to date this is unheard of. However, I believe that if it were possible to do head transplants the personality would be that of the one to whom the head belonged. In this respect the head is the most self determining part of the body.

So when God gave Christ to the Church He did not give Him as the all-seeing eye; He did not give Him as the feet or the hands or the blood or even the heart. He gave Him to be the head and the head He will ever remain. And He is the head over all things. What is to be done in every case in the Church is to be determined by the head.

So we have been told that Christ is the head of the Church. We have been told that the Church is His body. And now we have an even further explanation of all this. The Church, which is His body, is the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Now these are the most difficult words of this entire passage.

Let us look first at the easier aspect, that of the fullness. The original word is *pleroma*. It comes from *pleeroo*, meaning to fill. The fullness then is that which something is full of. In verse 23 it is the Church which is Christ's body which is His fullness. The On-Line Bible says that one of the uses of fullness in the NT is "... the body of believers, as that which is filled with the presence, power, agency, [and] riches of God and of Christ."

And I cannot help but think that this fullness is accomplished by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Ephesians 3:19 speaks of the possibility of believers being filled with all the fullness of God and 4:13 speaks of believers achieving the stature of the fullness of Christ. Then Ephesians 5:18 commands believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now the last clause of this chapter speaks of Him who fills all in all. The words "all in all" are difficult. The Greek reads, "panta (neut.) en pasi (masc. or neut)." It could be translated, "All things in all things or All things in all places or all things in all (believers)." My conclusion after many hours of study is that it simply means that God is filling every member and area or person in Christ. Some hold that the *all things* refers to the entire universe. Although that might be true in a sense I think it refers to every member of the body which is the church.

The word *to fill* in this clause is in the present tense. The idea is that He is constantly filling every part of every member. We have a book in our library

called *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. This book deals with the human body and the processes of growth and renewal in the body. It explains how when a person hurts the body, say a cut, how an army of little things are sent via the bloodstream to attack any enemies that might enter the body through the cut. It speaks of the amazing thing we call skin or bone or even the dreaded thing we call fat, which the book points out is not a bad thing, and the cells that make all these up.

The words in our text which speak of Him who fills all in all I think are explained better in the book *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* than in the theology books. The writer speaks of the white blood cells which lumber about in the body like science fictions, "The Blob." But as soon as some enemy like bacteria enters the body it is as though the white blood cells can smell the danger and all of a sudden all kinds of these appear and attack the green bacteria. They spread themselves over the green bacteria. Now this white blood cell contains chemical granules. And as soon as the white blood cell absorbs the green bacteria the granules detonate and destroy the green invaders. The book says, "In thirty seconds to a minute only the bloated white cell remains. Often its task is a kamikaze one, resulting in the white cell's own death."

Every minute of the day millions of things happen in our bodies and we hardly even think about it. So it is in Christ's body the Church. Constantly He is filling all things in every area of His body.

CONCL: Now I want us to consider these two things that are the outcome of God's awesome power. He put all things under Christ's feet, i.e., that is positionally. Second, God gave Christ to be head over all things to the Church which is His body. Now the church is the body of Christ. Since the Church is Christ's body, and this is a mystical truth, it remains that God has put all things under the Church. This passage does not say that God put all things under the head. This would include the Church. The passage says that God put all

things under His feet, and the Church makes up His feet. That means that when God put all things under Christ's feet, He also put it under the Church, which is His body. This means that positionally we have the victory in Christ already but in practice it still needs to take place.

I have been encouraged for many years by a verse found in Matthew 16. It is the 18th. verse which says, "And I say to you that, 'you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'" When all is said and done, the Lord Jesus will return from heaven with the souls of each departed saint and He will come down from the third heaven to the first heaven. And when He enters the atmosphere (air 1 Thess. 4:17) the dead in Christ will be raised and their soul and spirit will be reunited with their newly resurrected body. And immediately after the dead are resurrected, all Christians who are alive at the time of this event will have their physical bodies made just like those who were just resurrected. And from there, the Lord Jesus will take His bride to His Father's house, the place He has been preparing for her.



















