

Ephesians

The Gift of Authority

Ephesians 1:22-23

March 2nd, 2025

I. Introduction: Christ the _____

Paul uses the mystery of God revealed in Christ to unlock Old Testament prophecies. The early Christian theologians (e.g., Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen) would speak of Christ as the key. Christ opens up the Law and Prophets. The Old Testament is all about Jesus, but now after Jesus has been revealed, the riches of the Old Testament are opened for us so that we can understand them more fully. In our passage this morning we hear an echo of the Old Testament; in particular, we hear what David said in Psalm 8.

This psalm reflects on God's creation of man, and how God made man from the dust and set him as head over all the earth. After He made us, God commissioned Adam and called mankind to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth, and exercise dominion over all the life that lives on earth. Mankind was and is set over the _____. It is our domain. But when Paul reads this in the light of Christ, he sees a still more greater fulfillment of God's purposes for mankind's domain.

II. Summary of the Text - Ephesians 1:22-23

He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Jesus is to exercise dominion and subdue, not just the earthly realm, but the entire created _____. All things are to come under His rule, even Death and Hell (1 Cor. 15:25). At the end of this age, there shall be an end to all rival rule and power, and God shall be all in all. God is bringing about a glorious peace in this world, and it is a peace accomplished by the reign of Jesus Christ. God rules by His Word, and His Word is a Man who sits upon the throne. And He will by His gracious presence in our midst carry out what the Father has decreed.

III. The Gift of Authority

The grand lesson that this passage teaches us is that authority is a _____. Jesus was enthroned as King over all things, and He was given in this capacity to the Church. He was made our collective Head. And this is good news. Christ's authority is a gift from God.

The kingdom of heaven is not anarchist or egalitarian, and the new heavens and the new earth will not be an anarchist or egalitarian paradise. In fact, there will be more authority there. And with more authority will come more freedom. These two are not at odds, for God has made the world with authority structures. He did this in the beginning, and in the world He is renewing He will perfect these authority structures (e.g., Luke 19:17-18).

IV. In the Beginning . . .

In the beginning the good authority and the good order that God had written into the fabric of the created cosmos was torn. As a result, the world broke. _____ is at the very root of all the world's woes. The serpent defied the authority over him—mankind. The woman defied her husband's authority over her. The man defied the authority of God. And so the earth shut itself up and hardened its surface. The serpent was cursed. The woman would give birth to children with pain, and the raising of children would bring sorrow. And death reigned over all.

But in the beginning it was not supposed to be like this. In the beginning, the world sang; there was harmony and peace. All were to play their part, sing their part, and the result would be a glorious life of innocent harmony, where mankind would live at peace with one another, at peace with animal life, at peace with the earth, and at peace with their Maker and their Lord. But instead of all this, we rebelled against all good order and woe entered in. We broke with our Creator and broke with one another.

Authority, as God originally created it, sets us up for actual flourishing, but it requires humility, trust in God, and love for one another. When everyone plays their part, mankind is able to bring about something far more glorious than some anarchist paradise where every man does whatever is good in his own eyes. The result of God's good order being observed is something like a _____ where all the instruments come together and create something more glorious, more beautiful than any single instrument could accomplish on its own. Society is richer and freer, and mankind can accomplish more and reach greater heights when there is a well-ordered, harmonious pursuit of the good work God has set before us.

V. Authority

Question 1: Why is authority needed? To put it simply: God has given us _____ things to do. And if you want to accomplish anything of significance in this world, authority is needed. All the various tasks we've been given fall under the umbrella of the cultural mandate which mankind received at the very beginning. And this overarching mandate cannot be carried out without authorities organizing and directing our efforts. God created a world of raw material, and He said get to work—and get to work together. Adam couldn't do it by himself. He needed a helper. And so God gave him Eve. The two of them were not enough. They needed more workers, and so they were to multiply. From the small, well-run household was to arise all the nations of the earth, which would in organized effort accomplish the overarching task of filling the earth and subduing it. Christ did not eradicate this charge. But He presides over its renewal. The Great Commission is just the cultural mandate taken up under Christ's new headship. And what is more, our task under Christ has only expanded in scope. Not only things on earth must come under our feet, but the devil himself must bow down before Jesus.

Question 2: How do we properly pursue authority? We do so by coming _____ authority. All authority is under authority. Look at Jesus Himself. Jesus who is very God of very God, in becoming Man He submitted Himself entirely to the Father (Phil. 2:6ff). He spoke the words the Father gave to Him. He did the works the Father prepared for Him. He died the death His Father called Him to. Jesus was fully and completely under the authority of the Father, and in due time, the Father _____ Jesus to be Head over all things. We do not come into authority by grabbing it or taking it or seizing it. We get it by putting ourselves under the authorities God has set over us. And like our Lord, in due time God exalts us. Respect and honor go toward those who render respect and honor (1 Sam. 2:30).

Question 3: How ought we to wield authority? We can answer this by considering how Jesus wields the authority He has been given. All authority on earth and in heaven was given to Him, and He wields it in order to see this world filled with God. This is the purpose of the authority Christ wields, that He would bring all things into submission to the will of God, so that God is _____ (1 Cor. 15:28). We, therefore, must wield the authority we have been given to the end goal of God being all in all.

VI. Come & Welcome to Jesus Christ