

• *God's power in Christ's resurrection*

Paul now wants to explain what he means by the 'exceeding greatness of God's power'. He has three ways of doing it. He will show God's power in the resurrection of Christ^{☐1} in the spiritual resurrection of the Christian^{☐2} and in the creation of the church.^{☐3}

☐1 1:19b-23
☐2 2:1-10
☐3 2:11-22

1. From the dead

1. **You see the exceeding greatness of God's power in what Christ has been raised from.** The resurrection of Jesus was the greatest demonstration of the power of God. Paul says: '*This power is in accordance with the working of his mighty strength^{☐1} which He accomplished in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places^{☐2}, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age which is to come*'.^{☐3}

☐1 1:19b
☐2 1:20
☐3 1:21

Death itself is a mighty power. 'The cords of death entangled me' said the Psalmist (see fully in Psalm 18:4-5). Death has rights over us, because it is the salary paid by sin.^{☐1} Death dragged even Christ down to its depths. But God has greater power!

☐1 Romans 3.23

2. To the Father's right hand

2. **You see the exceeding greatness of God's power in what Christ has been raised to.** God did not only overcome death. And He did not only bring Jesus back to where He was before. He took Jesus higher and higher until He was King of the universe. He is at the Father's right hand. That is, He executes the Father's will. He is above every conceivable power, every thing that you can put a name to. He is seated because His work of atoning for sin is finished. He now is enthroned and reigns in heaven, bringing about the Father's will.

3. Above all opposition

3. **You see the exceeding greatness of God's power in the demonic powers Christ has conquered.** He is above 'all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named'. These terms refer to various kind of opposition that attacks God and His people.

4. For his church

4. **This exceeding greatness of God's power is at work on behalf of God's people.** Paul says, '*And God put all things under His feet, and appointed Him to be the head over all things for the church^{☐1} which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*'.^{☐2} Jesus has defeated every enemy that might be against us. All circumstances, all the powers of sin, everything is defeated by Jesus. He reigns for His church, to enable His church to share with Him what He is doing for the rest of world-history.

☐1 1:22
☐2 1:23

5. Life and energy to his body

5. **The power of Jesus flows into His church.** The church is His body. It is joined on to Him with all of His life and energy given to the body. Just as a body shares life and energy and blood and breath, so all the people of God share Jesus' heavenly, resurrection-power.

• *The church – the fullness of Him*

The church is 'the fullness of Him who fills all in all'. 'Fullness' means 'that which makes something complete'. This is mysterious teaching. The idea is that the church is a kind of extension of Jesus. Jesus is not here in His literal earthly body. The church is His body!

• **Extending Jesus to the world**

Of course Jesus is never incomplete in Himself. But in a sense Jesus needs the church. What is the use of a head without a body? What is the use of a husband without a bride. Jesus needs His church. He has organised things such that the church is His 'completion', the one by which He extends Himself to work in this world.

• **Joined to Jesus**

The church is joined on to Jesus. The church is in **union** with Jesus. It is like a body with its limbs. It is like the 'one flesh' relationship between husband and wife. It is like the joining of branches on to a tree. The power of Jesus flows into the church.

• **We rely on our vision with Christ**

This is the secret of the Christian life and the secret of church-life. We learn to rely on this union with Christ. It is already there. We learn to trust Him. We believe that we can do all things because Christ empowers us moment-by-moment with His resurrection power. We are strong 'in' the Lord. We have a connection with the head (as Colossians 2:19 puts it). He is the vine; we are the branches. We are the wife; He is the husband who leads us, guides us, provides for us, cares for us, empowers us.

• **The body of Christ – not a 'human organisation'**

All of this should affect the way in which we think about the church. The church is not some mighty human organisation. Nor is it just a fleet of little congregations all doing their own thing. The church is the body of Christ, the body through which Jesus gets things done in this world.

• **Power over everything**

Jesus 'fills all in all'. It means that He has a position of power in all respects in every part of the universe. The one who has power over everything in every way puts forward that power in and through the church.

• **The greatness and importance of His church**

We shall never understand the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ until we understand how great and important to Him is His church. He is our heavenly leader. He is leading His people through the world, through the history of the world, and on to the fulfilment of His plan for the world. The story has not ended yet. But we shall be involved in that story if we are involved with Jesus and therefore involved with His worldwide church. Our task is to see what He is doing and be used by Him in what He is doing. There is more to come. There will be a 'latter-day glory' in which the church will come to a greater level of blessing than has ever been known. Jesus is taking His people to where He wants them to be. Whatever happens in this world, we need to know that 'God put all things under His feet, and appointed Him to be the head over all things for the church'.



Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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