

Apostolic Prayers – Ephesians 1:17-19

(NASB), “17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might”

I. Book of Ephesians Context

- a. The book of Ephesians is a letter written by Paul to the saints who were in Ephesus. He wrote this letter in AD 60-63 while he was in prison. Paul was previously in Ephesus on his third missionary journey from about AD 54-57.
- b. Ephesus was a port city, which likely meant many were coming and going. The pagan god Artemis (Diana) was prominently worshiped (the temple of Artemis, which is one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world, was located in Ephesus). There was a heavy influence on practicing magic and dealing with spirits in Ephesus and many of the newer believers were coming out of their pagan worship and magic practices and bringing some of that mixture into their walk with Christ.
- c. Acts 19 provides insight into Paul’s time in Ephesus during his third missionary journey. While Paul is in Ephesus He was baptizing people in the Holy Spirit, casting out demons, and doing great healing miracles. So many people were being converted that it greatly affected the pagan silver shrine business. In return, business owners (and followers of Artemis) threatened Paul and his companions and eventually a town clerk calmed everyone down. Shortly after Paul went on to Macedonia.

II. Basic Outline of the Apostolic Prayer

- a. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him
- b. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know:
 - i. What is the hope of His calling
 - ii. What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints
 - iii. And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.
- c. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might.

III. Verse 17

(NASB) – That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the, Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

(NIV) - 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

(AMP) - 17 “[For I always pray to] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that He may grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation [of insight into mysteries and secrets] in the [deep and intimate] knowledge of Him,”

(TPT) - 17 “I pray that the Father of glory, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, would impart to you the riches of the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of revelation to know him through your deepening intimacy with him.”

a. Key words in this section:

- i. **Glory** – *Doxa* – a seeming; appearance; a notion, imagination, opinion; the opinion which obtains respecting one; reputation; honor; dignity
- ii. **Spirit** – *Pneuma* – wind, air in motion, Jn 3:8; breath, 2 Thess. 2:8; the substance spirit

(John 3:8 NASB), “8 The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:8 NASB), “8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;”

- iii. **Wisdom** – *Sophia* – wisdom in general, knowledge (ability); practical wisdom, prudence.
- iv. **Revelation** – *Apokalypsis* – a disclosure, revelation, Rom 2:5; manifestation, appearance. Spiritual enlightenment

IV. (Romans 2:5 NASB), “5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,”

- i. **Knowledge** – *epignosis* – the coming at the knowledge of a thing, ascertainment, a distance perception or impression, acknowledgment, insight

- b. **God of our lord Jesus Christ** – Jesus is the son of man humbled before His father and His God. Paul speaks of Him as the God of the Lord Jesus because his desire is for the saints in Ephesus to be further acquainted with the Jesus and for them to be enlightened in regard to the great work of Jesus.

(John 20:17 NASB), “17 Jesus said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’”

(Colossians 1:15 NASB), “15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”

(Philippians 2:8 NASB), “8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

- c. **The Father of Glory** – He is the father of infinite glory, which is seen when we look into the face of Jesus who is the glory. He is the father that is worthy of all honor.

(2 Corinthians 4:6 NASB), “6 For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

- d. May give to you a spirit of wisdom – That through the Holy Spirit He may give you a greater measure (for some already had a measure) of faith or confidence in the divine knowledge of Christ. This is like a gift of general illumination to the heart and mind.
- e. And of Revelation – The Holy Spirit is the revealer and impartor of God’s will. Paul prays that that the Holy Spirit would impart, disclose, and reveal the spiritual mysteries to them and to remove the veil of natural ignorance. It’s a prayer for the shining of light into their minds to see specific details of Christ and His will, which they once had not seen.
- f. In the knowledge of Him – The prayer is for the Holy Spirit to impart wisdom and revelation of the perfect and thorough knowledge of Him. The term used for knowledge is used in, Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:9-10; Colossians 2:2; Colossians 3:10 to refer to the deeper things of God coming from distinct revelation. (Epignosis) Like in used in 1 Corinthians 13:12, knowledge is used to describe the knowledge that is not exclusively intellectual but also spiritually experiential.

(1 Corinthians 13:12 NASB), “12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.”

- g. Summary - *looking to the face of Jesus (the glory of God) Paul prays to the Father worthy of all honor that the Holy Spirit would meet Ephesian saints with general illumination, and that He would unveil divine mysteries for the sake of (the saints) intimately knowing the fullness of God as the embrace what they previously knew (experienced) in Him.*

V. Verse 18

(NASB), “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,”

(NIV), “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,”

(AMP), “18 And [I pray] that the eyes of your heart [the very center and core of your being] may be enlightened [flooded with light by the Holy Spirit], so that you will know and cherish the hope [the divine guarantee, the confident expectation] to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints (God’s people),”

(TPT), “18 I pray that the light of God will illuminate the eyes of your imagination, flooding you with light, until you experience the full revelation of the hope of his calling—that is, the wealth of God’s glorious inheritances that he finds in us, his holy ones!”

- a. Key words
 - i. **Heart** – *kardia* – the heart, regarded as the seat of feeling, impulse, affection, desire
 - ii. **Enlightened** - *photizo* – to light, give light to, illuminate, shine upon
 - iii. **Hope** - *elpis*– expectation; hope

- iv. **Saints** – *hagios* – separate from common condition and use; dedicated; most holy thing, a saint, holy one

- b. The eyes of your heart (understanding) being enlightened – The eyes of your heart are the place of affection and desire and the inner man in its entirety. In the scriptures heart is often in reference to affections without excluding intelligence, thought, and will. Paul is praying for illumination to shine in to the depths of the saints. He is praying for an experiential encounter with the three specific things.

- c. That you may know the hope of his calling – This is the first thing Paul prays that the saints would have an experiential encounter with.
 - i. “That you may know” is an immediate effect of the illumination.

 - ii. The hope of His calling is the Voice of Divine Grace, prevailing upon the will of man. It is also unto the appearing of Jesus the blessed hope. The prayer to know the hope of his calling is a prayer to understand fully what Christians should eagerly expect as they walk with Christ.

(Titus 2:13 NASB), “13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,”

- d. And what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints – This is the second thing Paul prays to have an experiential encounter with.

Due to ambiguity in the English and Greek there is often a dichotomy presented with this portion of the scripture where some say it speaks of an inheritance God has for the saints and others say it speaks of the saints being His inheritance. I say it’s both (based on surrounding context of the scripture). We are certainly Christ’s inheritance and there are benefits of being His inheritance.

- i. His glory is not limited and the saints get to enjoy the privileges. Because He Fathers glory He gives this glory as a compassionate father.

(Colossians 1:26-27 NASB), “26 that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, 27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

- ii. He has an inheritance deposited in the saints, which we should all be aware of, but there are benefits, favor, and blessings that belong to us because of the wealth of His glory For, he has deposited His wealth inside of us.

- e. Summary - *Paul prays for an illumination or enlightenment at a sort of intellectual and experiential heart level to know 3 things (2 of them in this verse). The first is the expectation and anticipations of knowing and walking with God while longing for His glorious appearing and fulfillment of perfect hope. Secondly, while being the treasured inheritance of Christ, the saints (The Holy Ones) are to experience the glorious wealth of Christ being our inheritance.*

VI. Verse 19

(NASB), “19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might”

(NIV), “19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength”

(AMP), “19 and [so that you will begin to know] what the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His [active, spiritual] power is in us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of His mighty strength”

(TPT), “19 I pray that you will continually experience the immeasurable greatness of God’s power made available to you through faith. Then your lives will be an advertisement of this immense power as it works through you! This is the mighty power”

a. Key words

i. **Power** – *dynamis* – power; strength, ability, force, miraculous power (Translated 7 X in the bible as Miracle)

ii. **Believe** – *pisteuo* – to believe, give credit, to have mental persuasion, to be of opinion

b. And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe – This is the third thing that Paul prays for the saints to have an experiential encounter with. Power in its context here is in reference to miraculous resurrection power. The prayer is for saints to be fully acquainted with the power of not only salvation but also what the gospel is able to accomplish.

Many commentators will only observe power (in this scripture) in relation to the power of salvation but we have to remember that only a few years before writing this letter Eutychus fell out of a 3-story building died, and Paul operated in resurrection power to bring him back.

(2 Corinthians 4:17 NASB), “17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,”

(1 Corinthians 4:20 NASB), “For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power. 21 What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?”

c. According to the working of His mighty power – This is in reference to the fact that the full measure of His power was already in motion in their midst and is available to the saints to operate in.

(Ephesians 6:10 NASB), “10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”

d. Summary - *The third thing Paul prays is for the saint to know (experience) and have faith in the surpassing miraculous resurrection power (beyond conversion) according to His power that is already on display (in action).*