

**“And what is the exceeding greatness of his POWER to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty POWER, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.”
Ephesians 1:19,20.**

The operative word of this text – and of this sermon – is POWER. And a better translation in a slight degree would be, *“And what is the exceeding greatness of his POWER to us-ward who believe, according to the WORKING OF THE MIGHT OF HIS POWER, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.”* Eph. 1:19,20. Beloved, we are talking here about *“the exceeding greatness of His power”* and *“the might of his power,”* and how it applies in the prayer of the apostle Paul for the church members of the church at Ephesus; to wit: *“I...cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the FATHER OF GLORY, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him* (i.e., the spirit of wisdom and revelation as to the exceeding greatness of His POWER to us-ward who believe, according to the working of the MIGHT OF HIS POWER, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead).” Eph. 1:15-20.

Paul says he is praying continually for the saints at Ephesus, that God would open the eyes of their understanding that they might know how great and mighty God’s POWER working in them was – that the power that caused them to accept and believe the true Gospel was the same power – (no more, and no less, – even the same – the exact same power) – that raised Jesus from the dead; i.e.:

***“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and (Satanic) POWER, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that (world) which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”* (Eph. 1:20-23)**

Wow! Now, Beloved, THAT is POWER. I’ll try to put it simply (though it is one of the most profound doctrines of God); to wit: The exact same POWER that raised Jesus from the dead and that created worlds – caused each of the Elect to accept and believe the Gospel and thereby be saved from the wrath to come. I say, this doctrine is profound, and hence the apostle prayed continually for the church members of the church at Ephesus that God would give them wisdom and revelation and almighty understanding by having the eyes of their understanding opened further by the power of God. Even so should we pray for each other – continually. We must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and seek His wisdom, revelation, understanding, and knowledge.

Remember, that the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity also dwells with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit. **Isa. 57:15.** And remember, ***“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”*** **Jas. 1:5.** Throughout Scripture the theme is struck again and again to show how great a POWER it was that wrought grace in the hearts of the Elect, and how much God’s heart was in it when He did it. Thomas Goodwin says:

*“God hath showed as much power in working grace in your hearts, as in working all things else; his heart is as much in this thing as in doing all things else. How do you prove that to be the scope? I will give you a scripture for it; it is **Phil. 3:21**; he speaks there of the changing of our vile bodies, which requireth a mighty POWER, to make them like Christ’s glorious body. How doth he express the greatness of this POWER? By just such a phrase as this here: ‘**who shall change our vile body,**’ saith he, ‘**that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.**’ How? ‘**According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.**’ This phrase cometh in to show that God putteth forth the same POWER in changing our vile bodies and making them like the body of Christ – the same POWER I say, and no less than that POWER – that must subdue all things, that created the world, that ruineth the world in the end, and annihilateth or bringeth down kingdoms, and doth everything. Well, you have grace wrought in your hearts here; **HOW HAD YOU IT WROUGHT?** By him, saith he, that worketh all things; no less POWER than that which goeth to work all things, goeth to work this; the same proportion of POWER that goeth to work all things else, goeth to work grace (in the hearts of God’s Elect). ‘**Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.**’ **Eph. 1:11.**”*

Right down to the last most trivial thought of the last most obscure and most insignificant person alive on earth – all things are decreed and governed by the great God Almighty, and are subsumed by this, His following law; to wit: ***“The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.”*** **Prov. 16:1.** And, Beloved, there is great comfort for God’s Elect embedded in this doctrine. Down to the least detail in God’s caring for us is comprehended in it; to wit: The hair – a single tiny hair – (and Jon the resident expert, says the ear has hundreds of thousands of tiny hairs in it, which play a part in the hearing process; and, one must bind several thousands together to make one hair the size of those on top of the head) – I say, such a thing as a tiny ear hair, is a small matter; but all such, and even smaller (think, microscopic) – even smaller things are covered by the Father’s interest and personal management; to wit:

“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” (Matt. 10:29-31)

I say, there is great comfort here for God's Elect, as at **Phil. 3:21**; to wit: *"For our conversation"* – (rather, as all authorities agree – citizenship) – *"For our CITIZENSHIP is* (note, IS – not may be, but IS) – *For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall"* – (SHALL, not might, but SHALL) – *"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."* **Phil. 3:20,21.**

A glorious *"working"* within the very warp and woof of these vile bodies will most certainly and supernaturally take place, because we are citizens of Heaven, where our glorious and eternal inheritance is said to be *"reserved in heaven for you... ready to be revealed in the last time ...at the revelation of Jesus Christ."* **1 Pet. 1:4,5,13.** But, Beloved, all these glorious things are what the Puritan theologians referred to as *"temporal promises,"* and depend for their fulfillment upon the Sovereignty of God – that is, His absolute POWER to effectually rule the wills of men. And just here lies the meat in the coconut – if I may so say. Here is the heart of the matter. He *"worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."* **Eph. 1:11.**

The meaning is, that He worketh all things EFFECTUALLY. In fact, such is the signification of the word there translated *"worketh."* He worketh EFFECTUALLY all things after the counsel of His own will, and that will shall stand, it shall not be resisted; what God wills to do, He does effectually; to wit:

***"Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."* (Psa. 135:6)**

***"For I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure...yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it. (This is critical.) Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness...I will place salvation (only) in Zion (only) for Israel my glory."* (Isa. 46:9-13)**

Many, many temporal promises abound in the Scripture. E.g., *"According as his DIVINE POWER hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue"* (or, by the putting forth of a glorious energy, whereby we hear and obey the irresistible call); *"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious PROMISES (i.e., temporal promises): that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."* **2 Pet. 1:3,4.** Surely the inference is that without these *"precious (temporal) promises,"* we could not escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. But, if I may so say, God could not keep those promises if He could not rule the wills of men. The grand structure upon which our salvation depends comes crashing down. If God did not most effectually rule the wills of men, the inclinations of men's spirits, when they had all opportunities, all the reasons in the world, all the advantages, – yet should reject Christ and go to Hell – every last single one of Adam's ruined seed. No wonder Goodwin said in a great passion; to wit:

“MY BRETHREN, I PROFESS I WOULD NOT SERVE THIS GOD, IF HE DID NOT RULE THE WILLS OF MEN IN THIS WORLD. Why? Because I could have no temporal promise fulfilled; for most temporal promises depend upon men’s will. If He did not rule the hearts of all the men in the world, of kings, of parliaments, etc., – what a confusion would this world run into? How could I sue out any promise that God makes, wherein I have to do with the wills of men, as in most we have?”

Let us consider today’s text again; to wit: *“And what is the exceeding greatness of his POWER to us-ward who believe, according to the WORKING OF THE MIGHT OF HIS POWER, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.”* Eph. 1:19,20. What a mighty thing it is, in God’s ruling the wills of men in working grace and supernatural faith in the heart of His Elect. Paul’s stubborn and hateful will in his rebellion against God was conquered and subdued on the road to Damascus – and the event is the standing monument to the POWER of God to absolutely rule the human will.

The amazing story is recounted by Paul himself years later in his pro se defense before kings Agrippa and Festus; to wit: *“Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself”* – (i.e., pro se) – *“Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself.”* Acts 26:1. After giving that Roman court some background material about himself, Paul said, *“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”* Acts 26:9. Behold Paul’s stubborn will ! It is hard to imagine a harder heart than Paul’s. Listen:

“Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests (the same jackasses who murdered the Lord Jesus); and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests...”

(Note, here, Beloved. The last thing in the world Paul was interested in doing was repenting of his sins and accepting Jesus Christ as the holy messiah of Israel. Surely, just the opposite. Moreover, every instinct, every thought of his mind and heart were strongly set in inordinate strength of purpose to stamp out Christianity.)

“...Whereupon (said Paul to Agrippa), At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest...”

(Note: Do it unto the least of my beloved, and you do it unto me.)

“...But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.” (Acts 26:10-20)

What an about-face! The adamant, antichristic, self-will of Paul was totally conquered and subdued by the sovereign will of God – instantly. And, simultaneously, the POWER of God wrought grace and salvation in Paul’s heart – *“according to the working of the might of his POWER, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.” Eph. 1:19,20.*

What a mighty thing is this in God’s ruling the wills of men ! Does not our God work effectually in all things ? When it is thus shown that He has thus ruled in the hardest case of all, involving the hardest MAN of all? Now take the most ticklish case of all that the Scripture affords, involving the greatest number of men of all and the most complex arrangement of issues of all, as found at **Ex. 34:24** and **Deut. 16:16**; to wit:

“Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty.” (Deut. 16:16)

You see here that the Lord commanded them that at three set times in the year all the men should appear before the Lord in Jerusalem. And, remember, that the Jews lived in Canaan then, – much as they do now, today – in the big middle of their warlike enemies always looking and lusting for weak spots in their perimeters of defenses, in order to attack and spoil and destroy them. Now at those three well-advertised set times every year, when all the men are away for weeks at a time worshiping and serving the Lord at Jerusalem, might not those hostile enemies plot together and say, Now that the men are all gone at this or that set time, for these number of days, let us go up and raid and destroy the helpless women and children? What should hinder them? Why, saith God, you go up three times in the year, and I will order it so that ***“NONE SHALL DESIRE THY LAND.”*** To wit:

“Thrice in the year shall all your menchildren appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: NEITHER SHALL ANY MAN DESIRE THY LAND, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year.”
(Ex. 34:23,24)

Several million men of the hostile nations surrounding the Jews must have their every thought and desire of the heart so effectually manipulated as not to have the least impulse to invade the vulnerable Jewish women and children while the men were gone. If God did not have a strong hand upon the wills of men, that he can turn them which way He pleaseth, how could he make that promise beforehand that they should not desire their land? And, if God did not effectually rule the wills of ALL MEN, the opportunistic and vicious nations surrounding Israel were certain to strike murderous blows each time the males went to Jerusalem to worship at three SET TIMES in the year.

IF THE WILL OF EVEN ONE MAN of those surrounding millions was not totally and effectually controlled by the strong Hand of the Lord God upon him, none of the promises would succeed. Again I say, What a mighty thing is this! This is none other than that holy POWER of our Almighty – that is, Sovereign – God:

“Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor AND POWER EVERLASTING. Amen.”
(1 Tim. 6:15,16)

Look again at the words of our text; to wit: *“And what is the exceeding greatness of his POWER to us-ward who believe, according to the WORKING OF THE MIGHT OF HIS POWER, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.”* Eph. 1:19,20.

Look, Beloved, at how simply our Lord Jesus Christ dealt with this issue of divine POWER and its relation to our activities in serving Him; to wit:

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ALL POWER is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye THEREFORE, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Mat. 28:18-20)

Amen.