

## THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

### EPHESIANS – PART 2

Introduction - In the longest sentence in the Bible (Ephesians 1:3-14), our predestined purpose is presented in a Christ-centered and community way versus an individual one. This passage is a classic Jewish *Berakah* (prayer of praise and thankfulness to God).

#### A. Paul's prayer for the Ephesian congregation – Ephesians 1:15-17

1. In all of Paul's letters he emphasizes the trinity of Christian virtues: faith, hope, and love. He uses them to evaluate the spiritual lives of congregations and individuals.
2. He has received good news about their faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all God's people.
3. The ministry of prayer and remembrance of others is a neglected spiritual practice today.
4. It is the indwelling Spirit received at baptism that provides wisdom and revelation so we can know God better.

#### B. Christian Hope is Resurrection Hope – Ephesians 1:18-23

1. The real enlightenment is not our modern scientific rationalism, but the one empowered by the Spirit of God.
2. The Christian message is a call to a specific hope. The Greek word for hope is the combination of "confident" and "expectation."
3. First we must anticipate a future glorious and rich inheritance as the family of God.

2 Peter 3:13

Revelation 21:1-5

4. Secondly in the present we have resurrection power at work for those who believe.
5. God demonstrated his power in the life, resurrection, and ascension to rule of Christ our Messianic King.

6. It was God who redeemed and exalted Jesus far above all rule, authority, power, dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but the one to come.
7. There is only one head of the church and his headquarters are in the heavenly realm.

Conclusion – The church is intended to be the visible presence of Christ in the world. By the Spirit we are filled with resurrection power which enables us to be the living and breathing Body of Christ in our time.

### Discussion Questions

1. What were the strong characteristics of the Ephesian congregation? In what area did they need improvement?
2. What are your strong and weak areas according to Paul's three point analysis?
3. What do many people hope for in this world? Why are they so often disappointed?
4. What is our confident expectation as Christian believers?