

Ephesians

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[0 : 0 0] If you will look at your sheet of 3E, we are concluding Ephesians chapter 3, and the Apostle Paul is talking about his prayer for them.

And by the way, if you want a real appreciation for the progression of doctrine as you move through the New Testament, and actually from the Old to the New, it is very apparent when you get into Paul's letters how the emphasis from the physical to the spiritual has really come to fruition.

And as you work your way through the Old Testament, and even in the Gospels, you see so much physicality. You see so much face-to-face kind of confrontations between God and those whom he would choose to use.

And the unmistakable narratives that are found in the Old Testament and in the Gospels, with the emphasis on the physical, is just really stunning.

And when you think in terms of God's dealing with Israel, everything was on a physical plane. You know those miracles that God brought, the plagues upon Egypt? They were all physical things.

[1 : 1 8] And leading them out of the nation of Israel was a physical thing. And they crossed over that physical body of water in which Pharaoh's army was drowned. And they spent all this time in the physical desert and everything.

And the emphasis is upon the land and getting back to the land. And as you move on through the Old Testament, everything is physical in God's dealings with people.

And it continues in the Gospels because Christ's emphasis was on the material, on the physical. Not that he disregarded the spiritual. He certainly didn't.

But what was the emphasis? It was on the physical. All of the miracles that Christ performed were of a physical nature. I mean, sight to the blind, the lame walking, the stilling the wind and the waves.

All of these things are physical. And as you move through the Acts, it starts out physical. And about halfway through, there is a transition that begins to take place.

[2 : 1 6] And the emphasis moves away from the physical and the miraculous physical healings into more and more of the spiritual.

And that is really significant. It's almost as if there is a progression that is followed where God begins with humanity on an elemental plane, the physical, the material, the solid, in-your-face kind of thing.

And then there is a gradation that is moving up, onward and upward, and it is less and less on the physical and more and more on the spiritual. So when you read things about prayer requests that the Apostle Paul has to share with his audiences to whom he's writing, or the prayers that he wants them to remember him by in prayer, the emphasis, again, is away from that physical and into the spiritual.

And we've got an example of that right here in Ephesians chapter 3. And it did not come here just by coincidence. And look, if you will, in 3D at verse 14.

For this cause I bow my knees. Now he's talking about an attitude of prayer. I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you what?

[3 : 58] That he would grant you that you would be healed from all of your physical infirmities, and all of your lack of finances, and all of the... No, no. Moving away from the physical, this is quite dramatic, because we tend to get caught up in what I call our gimme prayers.

And we want God to give me this and give me that, and provide this and provide... And let's face it, most of our emphasis has to do with things material. It's either a lack of finances, or it's a lack of health, or something.

And yet, Paul experienced that. He knew what it was to be physically deprived. He spent all kinds of time in deprivation, and persecution, and everything else.

And even that thorn in the flesh, which obviously was a physical thing, and he asked that it be removed, and God said, I'm not going to remove it. I'm going to give you something that will enable you to contend with it.

I'm going to give you grace that will be sufficient for it. So, and when Paul was ready to move out from one place, he was going to take Epaphroditus with him, and he says, I don't know if it's Epaphroditus or Epaphroditus, one of those fellows, he said, I have left him at Miletus, sick.

[5 : 22] You ever wonder, why didn't Paul lay hands on him and heal him, so he could go with him? But he said, I left him at Miletus, sick. Apparently, too sick to travel.

Well, where was the miracle? Why wasn't there some special healing there? And I think it is because humanity is progressing, and we are moving away from the basic elemental, the earlier introductions of humanity where God is doing everything in a physical way.

It's almost like school, starting out in the kindergarten, where God is making everything as plain and simple as he can, and there it is. So, it's a very materialistic world until you get into the place where Israel has been set aside in their unbelief, and a new thing is happening called the dispensation of the grace of God, and we are moving from the physical and material to the spiritual and the immaterial.

And I see this as an undeniable kind of progression. And yet, fellas, when you get into the general epistles, Hebrews, and 1st and 2nd Peter, and James, what do you find?

You find a return to the physical. What's happening here? And here is a perfect example. The church, the body of Christ, is this parenthesis here in the middle.

[7 : 12] We've got the age and dispensation of Israel, and the promise of the kingdom of heaven coming to earth. All this is going on here, and then all of a sudden, there is an abrupt cutoff, and something completely different is inserted, and that is called the mystery, the church, which is the spiritual body of Christ.

And that continues on through the last half of the book of Acts, and those letters that Paul is writing to the churches, and that's going to end.

And it ends with the rapture, with the removal of the spiritual body of Christ from the earth, 1st Thessalonians 4, and then there is a reversion back to the physical and material.

And guys, as you go through the book of the Revelation, it is very physical, very material, and it has to do with the judgment of God upon this earth, and it's going to be a physical judgment upon a physical earth.

So there is physicality in the beginning, then spirituality, sandwiched in between, and then a reversion back to the physical once again, and we're going to see tremendous, well, I guess, I hope we're not going to see it, I'm not planning on being here, but there's going to be a tremendous return to the physical and material in the book of the Revelation, and things are going to really be very in your face.

[8 : 46] So, I think that is a progression that is virtually undeniable. And it ties in with what Paul is going to be saying here in verse 14, when he prays for these people at Ephesus, he says, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, this is Paul's prayer request for the Ephesians, this is what he's praying for, for the Ephesians, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.

Now, he's not talking about body building, he's talking about soul building, he's talking about building you up on the interior of your being.

And fellas, this is where all of the physical action of our body has its beginning. It all starts in the human spirit with your determination, your will, your volition, your decider.

So, what needs to be fed and nourished is that thing called our volition, which is going to be making decisions, and they need to be the right decisions.

They will be right decisions if they are based upon biblical principles, and this is what Paul is praying for. Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. That inner man is your human spirit.

[10 : 21] That is where you really are. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. And we talked about that last time. It means that Christ will be at home in your hearts.

That he will feel at home. That you will give Christ the run of the house in your heart. So that you, being rooted and grounded in love, and this, of course, has to do with stability, because if a plant, if a vegetative plant, is not properly rooted, it will not be stable.

It may not be able to survive. The heat of the sun or the blowing of the wind or whatever needs to put down roots. And the same way with grounded in love, that you may be able to comprehend or appreciate, understand, to receive power to grasp what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know.

This is to know in an understanding, experiential way. To know by personal experience. To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge that you might be filled with all of the gold and silver and diamonds and rubies and no, no, no.

That's petty Annie stuff. The thing that really counts is to be filled with all the fullness of God. That's what really matters.

[11 : 59] Now, Paul is not depreciating or saying the physical doesn't matter. He's not saying it doesn't make any difference whether you have food to eat or anything like that. He's not demeaning that at all, but he's saying there is a higher priority.

And you know, I've often wondered if people would give one half of the attention of their internal being that they give to their external being, what a revolution that could make in our world or even in the body of Christ.

Because we go to such extremes for the outward man and often ignore the needs of the inward man. And yet, the inward man is where everything originates.

That's where everything that's going to be outward comes from. Because as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. So, it is our thinking that needs to be encouraged, enhanced, and in most cases, improved.

Now unto him, verse 20, we're going to turn the page here in our new sheep. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, and it is according to the power that worketh in us.

[13 : 24] And what is that power that worketh in us? The power that works in us is the very same power that God used when he raised Jesus Christ from the dead and infused a new life into him.

And that is the same power that is resident in us that God employed when he reached into our human hearts and regenerated them.

He made us alive in Christ. And Paul is pouring out his heart here in what his prayer is for these people in Ephesus.

All that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us unto him that is unto unto God be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end.

We are talking about drawing upon the resources of the infinite God. And I don't know if you've ever taken time to really think too much about the infinite and what it involves.

[14 : 39] But when we talk about God being infinite, we simply mean he has no limitations. We just cannot conceive of a being like this.

Do you realize, and let's just dwell here for a couple of minutes because this is a staggering kind of concept. When we talk about God being infinite in his wisdom, in his power, in his knowledge, these are his attributes that have no limitations in connection with them.

And when you just talk about God's wisdom, his omniscience, that means his all-knowing. Omniscience is a compound word, omni, which means all.

And science is a word from which we get science, and it simply means all-knowing. And this means that God knows everything he chooses to know.

He knows what each one of us is thinking right now. And we're just a few people in a small room. And God knows what everybody is thinking.

[15 : 52] And this is appropriately mind-boggling. What have we got? Seven billion people? God knows what seven billion people are thinking?

And he also knows what they're going to be thinking before they think it. I mean, who is this being anyway? Is this possible?

He is said to be the residence of all knowledge so that all human knowledge that is gained has arrived at that knowledge by doing nothing more than drawing from the knowledge of the almighty.

Because he possesses all knowledge and all knowledge that is learned by anyone over time is derived from that one ultimate source and the same with his power. God possesses all power and all energy so that the electricity that I use when I plug in my bandsaw and power that thing up so that I can cut wood.

The power of that electricity is derived from the being who possesses all power. It's an incredible concept.

[17 : 18] When we talk about him being all knowing and all power and all wise, all wisdom resides in him. And all human wisdom that is achieved is derived from that one source.

and what this does and what it ought to do is make God greater and greater and make man less and less in significance.

And that's the truth of the matter. And sometimes it is absolutely mind-boggling to consider that puny human beings sometimes are ready to demean the almighty with his wisdom and with his power and whatever.

And we second-guess God and we charge him foolishly and we wonder, we ask him why he doesn't do this or why he doesn't do it. Is this any way to run a world? You see all the people who are being put to death.

You see all the injustice in the world and why aren't you doing something? And we have little or no idea that God is actively involved in his creation to the extent that he knows best.

[18 : 29] Nothing escapes his thinking, nothing escapes his doing, nothing escapes his knowledge. He is on top of it even when he doesn't appear to be.

And the deficiency is in us. It's not in him. And once we understand this incredible gulf that exists between infinity and finiteness, we can take our proper place below him where we belong.

And it is an amazing thing to consider. Absolutely. We're talking about the character and the being of this almighty God that Paul is saying.

He wants us, his prayer for us is to be filled, with the fullness of this being. And fellas, if we grasp this and we experience this, it is going to profoundly impact our attitude and our actions.

And it will create within us a sense of well-being, a sense of gratitude, thanksgiving, a sense of appreciation, and I suspect that it is very often a lack of knowledge of the almighty that produces so much grumbling, bellyaching, complaining, or as we used to say in the army, bitch, bitch, bitch about this or that or whatever.

[19 : 57] We lose sight of the being of this God. And it's Paul's prayer that we understand this and that we know this. Thoughts or comments?

Anybody? Questions? Anyone? I've got a comment. Okay. Just a second. Dan and then Kevin. Go ahead, Dan. When you first started, you talked about the transition.

Could you review that? You go from the physical to the spiritual? Yeah. What? Yeah, that's... Well, it's a fascinating concept, but I'm sure there's...

I look at it this way. God's dealings with mankind in the beginning were on what we would call a very superficial kind of level.

Now, I know we tend to think that, hey, what's superficial about crossing the Red Sea? I mean, there's no superficiality there. This is pretty great stuff. No doubt about it. But what I'm saying is, it is physical and it is upfront stuff and it is something that the Israelites could really get a handle on.

[21 : 06] You know the old expression, seeing is believing. And when this stuff is done right before your very eyes, that's powerful. That really communicates.

That really gets through. And when... It's a literal as opposed to a spiritual. And we've got a lot of hands-on stuff that is undeniable man from heaven and the crossing of the Red Sea and the water out of the rock.

All of these things are physical and they are addressing a very elemental infantile humanity. This is mankind in his very early stages.

And I take it what God is doing is graciously condescending to get down to the ABCs for man so that he can appropriate and appreciate what is taking place.

What is going on. And you know, you can see this in infancy, in children, in growing up. Children tend to think very literally.

[22 : 20] Don't they? If you tell a little three-year-old that moon, that moon is made of green cheese. You know they're going to believe that? They take everything very literally and they have almost no appreciation at all for things that are not literal, for concepts, for ideas and things.

It's difficult for them because the brain simply hasn't matured to the point where they can begin to grasp things that are not physical and are not material. They just don't think in that vein.

But as they mature and grow, they develop an appreciation for the non-material that they didn't have when they were younger. And I see all of humanity that way.

And Christ addressed this. And he answered with miracles. And he's talking about that kingdom of heaven come to earth.

That's a very physical kingdom and it's coming to a physical earth. And the Jewish people to whom that was promised, they understood that. And when Christ came, he had to provide credentials to authenticate his claim to be the Messiah.

[23 : 37] So what did he do? He did miracles. Because when the kingdom of heaven comes to earth, justice is going to prevail and things are going to be right and nobody is going to die from starvation and nobody is going to suffer the kind of injuries and things that go on today, it's going to be a virtual paradise on earth.

And the people had every right to ask Jesus, well, if you are the king, if you are the Messiah, okay, prove it. Where's the kingdom?

And Christ brought the kingdom with him. He brought kingdom conditions in his own person. And this is what enabled him to heal the blind, give sight to the blind, heal the lame, raise the dead.

All of these things were physical. They were right in your face. And remember Thomas, who was not convinced of the resurrection, and he said, I'm not going to believe it unless I can put my hand in his side and feel the wounds and see the prisoners.

And later Jesus said, Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are they who having not seen will believe.

[24 : 59] That's us. That includes us. And you know when Paul writes to the Corinthians, he makes this contrast. He says, he talks about we walk by faith, not by sight.

What does he mean by that? He means we don't have to see what God has done in order to believe him. We just believe him because he says it.

We walk, we conduct our daily lives on the basis of simply believing God. I don't have to see miracles and witness miracles. I just take it by faith.

God said it, I believe it, that settles it. So we walk by faith, not by sight. And that indicates a gradation, because the Israelites, walked by sight. They were taught to walk by sight.

Through all of those miracles that God performed, they cut their teeth on miracles. And this is, again, this is what Paul meant, I think, when he said, for the Jews require a sign.

[26 : 04] A sign. The word semion is the word from which we get the word semaphore, like they use in the navy, the flags to send messages back and forth. And he says, the Jews require a sign.

Why would they require a sign? Because God conditioned them and taught them to look for signs. He gave them signs of plenty. And when Christ came, if he really was the one promised by Moses and the prophets, he better have something to back it up.

He better have some signs, because the Jews look for a sign. And he gave them signs. But you know what? It was never enough. It was never enough.

They saw all kinds of miracles that he did, but it was never enough. And Christ rebuked him, and he said, Woe unto you, city of Chorazin, Bethsaida, for if the mighty miracles that had been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented.

Where's Tyre and Sidon? Tyre and Sidon were Gentiles. They were heathen, pagans. And Christ is saying, mighty miracles done in you, Jewish cities, used to signs.

[27 : 27] If the signs done in you had been done in those pagan lands, they would have been on board, and would have believed long ago. But not you.

Not you. And he rebuked them for their unbelief. And he said, no more signs. No more signs. Well, I'll give you one.

It'll be the sign of the prophet Jonah. As Jonah was in the great fish for three days and three nights, the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.

That's the only other sign you're going to be given. Because you see, fellas, and here's a real key. Their problem with the unbelieving heart is not a lack of evidence.

It is a lack of will. There are multitudes of people who will not believe because they don't want to believe.

[28 : 26] Because they understand the implications and where that would take them. And one of the leading atheists made the statement that Henry Morris quoted in his book that their words may be used against him.

This fellow was going on and saying how that evolution was responsible for everything and that there was no God. And then he said, and besides that, I don't want there to be a God.

Wow! That's kind of revealing, isn't it? That is a demonstration of the attitude of the heart and the will. And this is exactly why a lot of people will not believe because they choose not to believe, not because they don't have enough evidence.

And wasn't it the famous atheist philosopher, whose name escapes me now, he was asked by an interviewer, suppose you're wrong and you stand before your maker one day whom you believe did not exist, and he asked you why you did not believe, what would you tell him?

He said, I would tell him that he didn't give me enough evidence. Bertrand Russell. Bertrand Russell. Thank you. Noted philosopher, mathematician, a man with an IQ high enough to buy and sell mine three times with change left over.

[29 : 51] But that was his attitude. That was his, you know, this is, you know, the intellectuality of a man can be his own undoing, and it is in the case of many of these so-called geniuses.

So, Kevin, you had a comment, thought? Yeah, man, from the beginning to the end, everything that you have brought forth in this place, man, it centers around these three verses, but, man, the one thing that you said was about how things are going on in this world, and a lot of us, even those that are saved, become baffled, like, Lord, how are you letting this stuff go on?

I mean, some of you say, how, what, you know, why is this, why is this happening? Yeah, I would stop it if I could, why don't you? Yeah, yeah, but, yeah, that is our way of thinking, but, with Christ, there's no room for human reasoning.

That's right. No room at all. Because the Bible says, wait on the Lord. We want things, just like that, we see something, God, you're supposed to be done this, what, five minutes ago, ten minutes ago.

But, this word right here, these, probably, these three verses, Mark, if you don't mind. From the book of Romans, the 11th chapter, and the 33rd, and the 34th, 35th verse, it says, oh, the death on everything that Mark said, it hit me, and God took me straight to it.

[31 : 40] It said, oh, the death of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable, that means you can't find it.

Amen. Are his judgments and his ways past finding out. That means, there ain't no sense of you even trying to contemplate, putting all your human reason together to find out why God's doing what he's doing, why he ain't come.

When he comes, he'll come, make that your business, my business, nobody's been, when he come, he comes. Amen. Amen. Am I right, Mark? Be still and know that I am God. You still know that I am God. Then it says, then it says, or who hath first given to him, oh, Lord, thank you, Jesus, and it shall be recompensed unto him again.

What is that saying, Mark? Help me out with that a little bit. You can't outgive God. Whatever you give to him, it will be returned by him in many fold.

Oh, Lord Jesus. Amen. When he said we can't be God-giving, can't be God-giving. God cannot be in our debt. Oh, hallelujah. Thank you, Jesus.

[32 : 51] And the last one says, for of him and through him and to him are all things to be the glory for heaven. Amen.

Amen. Thank you, brother. Thank you. Dana, you had something. Go ahead. I'll go ahead. Okay. Okay. This could be a long time.

Are you aware of what's going on over in Jerusalem at the mound? No. A Sanhedrin was created about seven, eight, nine years ago.

Oh, yeah. I remember that. Yeah. Reinstated the Sanhedrin. Sometimes called the council, but it's the Sanhedrin. Yeah. Yeah. But it's the first Sanhedrin since Biblical age, Christ's time.

Mm-hmm. And that they are making preparations to resume the sacrifices. Yes.

[33 : 55] And, first of all, it's a miracle that the Jews permit the Palestinians the use of the mound for the dome.

Oh, yeah. Yeah. But, if they, during their allotted time, there are certain times that they're allowed to go into the, into, I keep calling it a mound, it's the dome.

The dome of the rock? Yeah. But, the fact that they allow the Palestinians to go in there, which is probably the holiest, well, according to Palestinians, it's the holiest spot on earth.

It's the third holiest in Islam. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. But, what's going to happen if the Sanhedrin begins to resume sacrifices, animal sacrifices?

It's, it's kind of hard to believe that, that that's really going to happen. I can understand they're having that as a goal. But, the problem is, Israel, there, there, there is but one place where Israel was able to offer sacrifice to the Lord.

[35 : 10] And, that was in the temple. And, and the temple, of course, doesn't exist today. The Jewish temple doesn't exist. Now, of course, there's talk about the rebuilding of the temple.

And, you know, there's, ideas about that. But, eventually, that, eventually, that will come to pass because that's going to be very definitely involved in the tribulation period when the Antichrist breaks his vow, breaks his treaty with the Jewish people in the middle of that 70th week of Daniel.

and he will cause the sacrifice to cease. The Jews will be offering sacrifice and he will cause the sacrifice to cease. In other words, he will shut down the thing and he will reveal himself to be who he really is and he will violate that covenant.

This is all in Daniel 9, 27, I think, through 30. And, that's something that is yet coming. It's during that great tribulation period. So, there will be animal sacrifices resumed under Israel that time.

Dana? You're talking about physical with the spiritual. It seems to me a lot of Christ's miracles were both gave sight to the blind, it's a physical sight, but he gave them spiritual sight also.

[36 : 33] Or, now it's a spiritual sight. Loaves and fishes, he fed the physical body, but he was also feeding the spiritual body. So, that helped for that transition.

Yeah. Now, there is a contrast of the physical and the spiritual all the way through and Christ really drew upon that. When he said, man shall not live by bread alone, that's simply another way of saying man is more than a physical being that needs physical food.

But by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, that's spiritual content. And, when he talked about water, water has these wonderful life-giving properties that we cannot do without.

And, we take water to slake our thirst and our body is made up of a huge percentage of water. And yet, Christ said to the woman at the well, he who drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst again.

And, he's talking about spiritual water. So, there's spiritual food and spiritual water and spiritual light in the temple and the connection with the lighting of the temple area.

[37 : 43] Christ stood up and I think it was in John 8 and announced himself and says, I am the light of the world. And, he was saying that against the backdrop of the physical light that they were enjoying there in the temple when all the candelabras were lit.

And, he introduced himself as the light of the world. But, he is spiritual light. So, all the way through these things are contrasted, the physical and the spiritual. And, the tendency is for people to get so caught up in the physical and the material because you can see that.

You can handle that. You can touch that. But, the spiritual, you can't. And yet, it is just as real as the physical. And, that sometimes gives us a problem.

Larry? Yeah. In John 14, 12, he says, I assure you the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and he will do you and do the works or these because I'm going to the Father's.

And, was that just to the apostles? To the works, the miracles? Or, is that meant for us?

[38 : 49] That's a, that's a really loaded verse. I'd love to go into that. Let's, let's do that for, let's consider that a homework assignment. Okay? For everybody.

Next week, uh, the reference again is John, 14, 12. John 14, 12. And the works that I do, they shall do even greater.

All right. Let's research that a little bit. I'll be interested to see what you come up with and we'll just camp there for next week. Good point. Good question. Deserves more time than we can give it now because the food's here.

Okay. Thank you all guys for being here. Really appreciate it. We'll take this up next week. Thanks Very Good point. Quite Nice.