

# Jesus, Our Powerful King



## SABBATH—JULY 8

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Ephesians 1:15–23; Ephesians 1:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:20–22; Ephesians 6:12.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And you will know that God’s power [strength] is very great [mighty] for us who believe. That power is the same as the great strength God used to raise [wake up] Christ from death and put him at his right side in heaven” (Ephesians 1:19, 20, ICB).

**MOST HUMANS** want something more powerful than they already own. Many people want faster, more powerful cars. Devel Motors makes powerful cars. They came out with a car named the Devel 16. The Devel 16 is a very fast car with a powerful engine. Then there’s the Peterbilt company. This company built a truck with three jet engines! The truck can do a quarter mile in only 6.5 seconds. The truck also can go up to a speed of 376 miles per hour before its two parachutes unfold and spread open.

Paul prays that Christians in Ephesus will understand that God is the One who gives them strength and might. This strength comes from Jesus. Jesus sends His Holy Spirit to His followers to give them His strength. This strength is more powerful than any jet engine or magic.

Four Bible truths in the New Testament help us to understand that God is very powerful. These four Bible truths are: (1) Jesus wakes up from the dead; (2) Jesus sits next to God in heaven; (3) God gives Jesus control over everything; and (4) God makes Jesus the Leader of the church (Ephesians 1:19–23). God does so much to help us.



**Paul prays that Christians in Ephesus will understand that God is the One who gives them strength and might.**

**PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING (Ephesians 1:15–23)**

Paul tells the Ephesians that he is happy to hear that they are growing strong in their faith in God. Their love for each other grows stronger, too. Paul also tells the Ephesians that he prays for them.

**Compare Paul’s two prayer reports in Ephesians 1:15–23 and Ephesians 3:14–21. What same ideas do you see in both reports?**

Paul’s reports show us that our prayers should be filled with thanksgiving. God gives us many blessings. We should thank Him for that. We must do our best to see God at work during the hard times in our lives. We must praise God for His mercy and strength because He can change our lives and make them better (Ephesians 1:20–23). We must thank God for blessing the people in our lives, too. Prayer teaches us to praise God and to be thankful to Him for all His many blessings.

Paul tells the Ephesians, “I always remember you in my prayers and thank God for you” (Ephesians 1:16, ERV; also, read Philippians 1:3, 4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; and 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).

What does Paul mean when he tells Christians, “Never stop praying” (1 Thessalonians 5:17, ERV)? For sure, Paul isn’t saying that we must pray and do nothing else! What Paul means is that we must thank God for everything He does for us. We must take all our problems and worries to God. We must ask His advice. We must not be strangers to God. We must choose to be His children and to allow Him to lead us.

Too often we pray to God only when we are in trouble or when we need something. Paul teaches us a different idea about prayer. Paul prays for the Christians in Ephesus. Paul thanks God for them (Ephesians 1:16; compare Ephesians 1:3–14) and asks God to help them (Ephesians 1:17–23; compare Ephesians 3:14–21). Paul believes that prayer is an important part of being a Christian. Paul’s verses in Ephesians 1:15–23 and Ephesians 3:14–21 invite us to pray more. When we pray, Paul encourages us to ask God to help other people.

**Why is it important always to thank God in prayer for the things He gives you?**



**God gives us many blessings. We should thank Him for that.**

### THE WISDOM THAT COMES FROM THE SPIRIT (Ephesians 1:16, 17)

**“I have not stopped thanking God for you. I always remember you in my prayers. I pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the glorious [wonderful and mighty] Father. I keep asking him to give you the wisdom and understanding that come from the Holy Spirit. I want you to know God better” (Ephesians 1:16, 17, NIV).**

Paul says that God gave His Spirit to the Ephesian Christians when they accepted Jesus (Ephesians 1:13, 14). Now Paul prays for God to bless the Ephesians with the Spirit again. Paul asks God to give the Ephesians spiritual wisdom. Then they will understand more about Jesus (Ephesians 1:17).

**Paul prays that the Holy Spirit will give special understanding to the Ephesian Christians. What three topics does Paul want them to understand? Read Ephesians 1:17–19 for the answer.**

Paul prays that the Ephesian Christians will “know the hope that God has chosen to give us” (Ephesians 1:18, ICB). Paul also prays that the Ephesians will remember the things God already did to save them (Ephesians 1:3–9, 11–13). Paul wants the Ephesians to know about the wonderful future God plans for them, too (Ephesians 1:10, 14).

Paul says, “I pray that you will know that the blessings God has promised his holy people are rich and glorious [wonderful]” (Ephesians 1:18, ICB). In this verse, Paul is remembering the Old Testament idea that God’s children are His special treasure (Deuteronomy 9:29; Deuteronomy 32:9; Zechariah 2:12; compare Ephesians 1:11). God wants the Ephesians to know that God has treasures for them, too. At the same time, Paul wants his readers to remember that they are God’s special treasure. Paul wants the Ephesians to understand their worth in God’s eyes.

Paul prays for the Ephesians to “know God’s great power. It [God’s power] can’t be compared with anything else. His power works for us who believe” (Ephesians 1:19, NIV). Paul knows the Holy Spirit will bring this understanding to God’s people. In all his prayers, Paul wants the Ephesians to know in a personal way everything that God gives them in Jesus.



**Paul says, “I pray that you will know that the blessings God has promised His holy people are rich and glorious [wonderful]” (Ephesians 1:18, ICB).**

## WAKING UP FROM THE DEAD WITH JESUS (1 Corinthians 15:20–22)

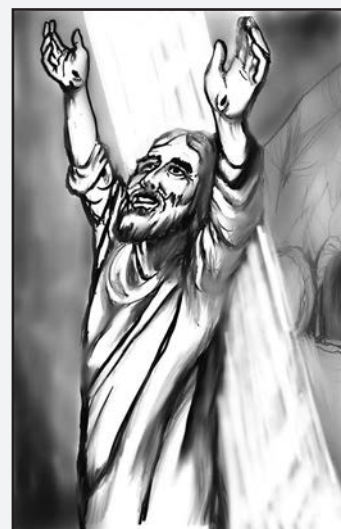
Now we come to the final part of Paul’s prayer report in Ephesians 1:20–23. In these verses, Paul hopes that the Holy Spirit will help his readers understand that God is very powerful. Paul wants his readers to know what God has done for them. Paul starts by talking about two things that show that God is very powerful: (1) the time when Jesus woke up from the dead and (2) the time when Jesus sat next to God on His throne in heaven (Ephesians 1:20).

**How does Jesus’ waking up from the dead show us that God is very powerful? Read Ephesians 1:20; 1 Corinthians 15:20–22; Philippians 3:8–11; Hebrews 13:20, 21; 1 Peter 1:3 for the answer.**

Jesus woke up from the dead. This belief is important to the Christian faith (1 Corinthians 15:14, 17). For sure, it’s not possible to be a Christian if we don’t believe that Jesus woke up from the dead. When we accept that Jesus woke up from the dead, we also will have hope that our loved ones will wake up from the dead at the time that Jesus comes back (1 Corinthians 15:20–23). We also can look to Jesus today for all the blessings He promised. One of these promised blessings is the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Paul says that God’s might woke Jesus from the dead and “put Christ [Jesus] at God’s right side in heaven” (Ephesians 1:20, NLV). This word picture about “God’s right side” is a quote from Psalm 110:1. New Testament writers use this quote from the Old Testament more than they use any other quote in their writings. Paul tells us that “God raised [woke] us [up] from death with Christ Jesus and gave us a place to sit with him in heaven” (Ephesians 2:6, WE). Also, Paul says that Jesus went to heaven to keep God’s promises and to give gifts to His church (read Ephesians 4:8–11).

In Ephesians 4:8–11, Paul warns us not to get the wrong idea about Jesus sitting on the Father’s throne. Jesus is always busy, even when He is sitting. Paul wants us to see Jesus “working with His Spirit. Jesus sends His Spirit to everyone on earth to save them and to help them win the fight against sin.”—F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), page 133, adapted. So, Jesus sits on the throne in heaven to give us everything we need.



**Jesus woke up from the dead. This belief is important to the Christian faith (1 Corinthians 15:14, 17).**



**JESUS IS HIGH ABOVE EVERY POWER (Ephesians 6:12)**

Paul tells us that God the Father “put Christ [Jesus] over all rulers [leaders], authorities [experts], powers [governments], and kings. He [God] gave him [Jesus] authority [control] over everything that has power [might] in this world [earth] or in the next world [heaven]” (Ephesians 1:21, ERV).

**Compare Ephesians 1:21; Ephesians 2:2; and Ephesians 6:12. What does Paul say in these verses about spiritual powers? Why do you think Paul wants to talk about these powers?**

In Acts 19:11–20, we read the story about the seven sons of Sceva. This story shows us that Ephesus at the time of Paul was an important place for people who wanted to learn how to use magic. “During New Testament times, people in the Kingdom of Rome believed in spirits. The Roman people believed that spirits control every part of life. A magician’s job was to figure out which spirits were helpful and which spirits hurt people. The magician learned how the spirits worked. The magician also knew about the different skills and strengths that the spirits had. With this knowledge, a magician controlled the spirits and commanded them to do things for him. The magician used special jewels or words to command the spirits. With the right words, a magician could heal a person that an evil spirit made sick. Or a magician could ask a spirit to help someone win a horse race.”—Clinton E. Arnold, *Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians*, page 18, adapted.

Magicians knew the names of the different spirits and what each spirit did. It was important for magicians to know this information. Then the magician would know which spirit to ask for help. This knowledge was an important part of religious life in Ephesus (read Acts 19:13). Paul wants the Ephesians to know that Jesus is more powerful than all these spirits (Ephesians 1:21). Jesus’ control over everyone and everything continues forever. That is why Paul says that Jesus has “authority [control] over everything that has power [might] in this world [earth] or in the next world [heaven]” (Ephesians 1:21, ERV).

**The evil spirits that worked in Paul’s day continue to work today. In what ways do we see them at work? What can we do to make sure we don’t give them any control over us?**



**The magician used special jewels or words to command the spirits.**

## JESUS, ALL THINGS, AND HIS CHURCH (Ephesians 1:22, 23)

As we saw already, Jesus is more powerful than anyone or anything in heaven or on earth (Psalm 110:1). God put all things under the control of Jesus (Psalm 8:4, 6). All things include Satan and his evil angels.

Paul also tells us that God made Jesus the leader of the church (Ephesians 1:22).

**The Father asked Jesus to sit down on His throne in heaven. Jesus' sitting there shows us that He has control over all things in heaven and on earth. What special gifts and blessings does the church get because Jesus sits on His Father's throne with Him? (Read Ephesians 1:22, 23 for the answer.)**

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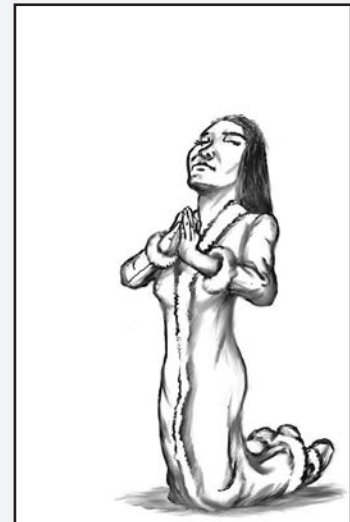


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God gave Jesus success over all evil powers. God promises the church that it will, also, win against Satan and his evil army. Jesus gives the church everything it needs. God gives Jesus to the church. The church is joined so close with Jesus. That's why the Bible says that the church is the same as Jesus' own body.

How can we, as Christians, know Jesus our King? How can we experience God's strength in our lives? Paul doesn't write down for us any special plan to follow or thing we must do to make this experience happen. But Paul gives us a hint in his prayer report about **how** we can get God's strength. Paul prays that God will help the Ephesian Christians to know Him and His strength. Paul believes that God will answer his prayer. So, we see that Paul believes that any experience or knowledge we get about God comes because we have a strong prayer life.

**What has been your own experience with prayer? Have you had a powerful answer to prayer in the past? If yes, what answer did God give you? How does prayer bring us closer to God and the strength that Jesus offers to us?**



**Paul believes that any experience or knowledge we get about God comes because we have a strong prayer life.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read the following two quotes about Jesus from Ellen G. White:

“Jesus walked through the gates in heaven. Then He sat on a throne. Angels were all around him. The angels worshiped Jesus. When this celebration was finished, God gave the Holy Spirit to His followers. Jesus was praised and honored. This honor and praise was the same glory that Jesus shared with His Father before time started. God sent His Spirit to show that He accepted Jesus as our Savior. God promised to send His people the Holy Spirit from heaven to show them that Jesus was their spiritual Leader and King. Jesus controlled everything in heaven and on earth now. God chose Jesus to lead His people.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 38, 39, adapted.

“The Father puts His arms around His son. Then God commands, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him [Jesus].’ Hebrews 1:6 [ERV].

“Every leader in heaven accepts that Jesus is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Jesus is the Prince of life. The angels fall down and worship Jesus. Then the angels fill heaven’s court with their glad shout: ‘All power, wealth, wisdom, and strength belong to the Lamb who was killed. He is worthy to receive honor, glory, and praise!’ Revelation 5:12 [ERV].

“Songs of joy mix with the music from the angels’ harps. Heaven flows with joy and praise. Love wins. God has saved His lost ones. Heaven is now filled with voices that announce, ‘All praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever to the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!’ Revelation 5:13 [ERV].”—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 834, 835, adapted.



**Jesus is the Prince of life. The angels fall down and worship Jesus.**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① In what way is Jesus already the Lord of all things now? That is, what things does Jesus have control over now? What control will He have in the future? Read 1 Corinthians 15:24–28 for the answer.
- ② Is Jesus the Lord of your life? How are you living under His full control? Or are you living under the control of fallen spirits? How do you know who has control of your life? How can you get away from the control of evil spirits?

## THREE BOOKS, ONE ANSWER

When I was a child, I had lots of spiritual questions and no answers. Why did I need to confess my sins to a priest or spiritual leader? Why must I pray to saints or holy persons when I believed Jesus could hear my prayers? Will God burn people in hell forever? I liked going to church. I was happy to believe in Jesus. But I didn't get answers to my questions when I went to church. So, I went to other Christian churches. Every church said they believed the Bible. But none of these churches answered my questions.

When I was 16, my older brother gave me a book. My brother joined another church that did something strange. The members worshiped on Saturdays. But I saw that my brother was happy. So, that made me think that the book he gave me was worth reading. I promised my brother to read the book. My brother said the book was about history and the end times. But I didn't finish the introduction. Several years later, my brother asked me if I had read the book. I told him I had not. So, my brother gave me another copy. I promised to read this copy. This time I read most of page 1. Then I put the book down. I meant to read the rest of the book later. But I never got back to it.

More years passed. I left New Zealand, my home country, and went to England to live. On a trip to Ireland, I went to church. I wanted to know God so much. But as I stepped out of the church, I told God I was never going to church again "until You show me Bible truth!" When I got back to London, a package waited for me. Earlier I asked my brother if he had any idea about where I could find the book that he gave me twice already. I looked in several bookstores. But I couldn't find a copy. In the package was the third copy of the book that was going to change my life forever. That book was *The Great Controversy*. This time I started reading in the middle of the book. When I got to the end, I went back to the beginning and read what I missed. I found the spiritual truth of God's Word, the Bible, in this book. *The Great Controversy* explained the Bible's special messages about the future. The book also connected me with Jesus. I found a Seventh-day Adventist church in London. That was the start of my real friendship with Jesus that continues to this day. No other book, except for the Bible, changed my life more than *The Great Controversy* changed me.

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John Bradshaw is a preacher and president for *It is Written*, an Adventist TV show.

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**In the package was the third copy of the book that was going to change my life forever.**

