

Ephesians 1:20-21 Commentary

PREVIOUS

Ephesians 1:20 **which** He **brought about** in **Christ**, when He **raised** Him from the **dead** and **seated** Him at His **right hand** in the **heavenly** *places*, ([NASB: Lockman](#))

NEXT

Greek: [en energeesen](#) (3SAAI) [en to Christo egeiras](#) (AAPMSN) [auton ek nekron, kai kathisas](#) (AAPMSN) [en dexia autou en tois epouraniois](#)

Amplified: Which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His [own] right hand in the heavenly [places], ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: That power is the same divine power which was demonstrated in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and gave Him the place of supreme honour in Heaven ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: which might was operative in the Christ when He raised Him from among the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ([Erdmans](#))

Young's Literal: which He wrought in the Christ, having raised Him out of the dead, and did set Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

WHICH HE BROUGHT ABOUT IN CHRIST: en energeesen (3SAAI) en to Christo e: (Eph 2:5,6; Romans 6:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11; Philippians 3:10; 1Peter 1:3)

Which ([3739](#)) (**hos**) refers to the resurrection and ascension power—the divine energy that lifted Christ from the grave to the earth, and from the earth to heaven—is the power that will lift us to glory

He brought ([1754](#)) (**energeo** [\[word study\]](#) related to the noun **energeo** just used in Ep 1:19-note) refers to that which is effectively working. The idea here is that this might or power was operative in Christ when God raised Him from the dead. It operated to raise Him from the dead." The **aorist tense** speaks of effective action in the past or past completed action.

Energeo - 19x - Matt 14:2; Mark 6:14; Rom 7:5; 1 Cor 12:6, 11; 2 Cor 1:6; 4:12; Gal 2:8; 3:5; 5:6; Eph 1:11, 20; 2:2; 3:20; Phil 2:13; Col 1:29; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 2:7; Jas 5:16. accomplish(1), brought about(1), effective(2), effectually worked(2), performs...work(1), work(6), working(2), works(7).

WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD: geiras (AAPMSN) auton ek nekron (Psalms 16:9, 10, 11; John 10:18,30; Acts 2:24-33; 4:10; 10:40; 26:8; Romans 1:4; Hebrews 13:20)

Raised ([1453](#)) (**egeiro**) means to waken, rouse from sleep here to wake up from death, of which sleep is the emblem "AORIST (effective action - the raising) ACTIVE (God performed this action) PARTICIPLE (having raised = aorist speaks of a definite event in the past ~ the resurrection)

Dead ([3498](#)) (**nekros** from **nekus**) (Eng - necropsy, etc) refers to physical death. Jesus did not "swoon" or "fake" death. He died physically, that we might live eternally with Him.

In the Old Testament, God's power was measured by the creation (Isa 40:12-27) or by His miracle of opening the Red Sea to allow Israel to escape Egypt, Jeremiah for example recording

Therefore behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when it will no longer be said, 'As the LORD lives, Who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt'" (Jer. 16:14).

But today, we measure God's power by the miracle of Christ's resurrection. Much more was involved than merely raising Him from the dead, for Christ also ascended to heaven and sat down in the place of authority at the right hand of God. He is not only Saviour; He is also Sovereign (Acts 2:25-36). No authority or power, human or in the spirit world, is greater than that of Jesus Christ, the exalted Son of God. He is "far above all," and no future enemy can overcome Him, because He has been exalted "far above all" powers.

AND SEATED HIM AT HIS RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES: kai kathisas (AAPMSN) en dexia autou en tois epouraniois: (Eph 4:8, 9, 10; Psalms 110:1; Matthew 22:43, 44, 45; 26:64; 28:18; Mark 14:62; 16:19; John 17:1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Acts 2:34, 35, 36; 5:31; 7:55,56; Ro 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 2:9; Hebrews 10:12; Rev 1:17; 5:11, 12, 13, 14)

Seated ([2523](#)) (**kathizo** from **katá** = down + **hizo** =sit) Having caused Christ to sit down. The **aorist tense**

speaks of effective action in the past or past completed action.

Right (1188) (dextros) right as opposed to left. A person of high rank who puts someone on his right hand gives him equal honor with himself and recognizes him as of equal dignity

Heavenly places (2032) (epouranios) means above the sky, celestial, heavenly, high. A spiritual battle is going on in this world and in the sphere of "the heavenlies," and you and I are a part of this battle. Knowing this makes "being strengthened standing firm" vital!"

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Why The Ascension? - God raised Jesus from the grave and exalted Him to His right hand in heaven (Ephesians 1:20). Yet for 40 days Jesus made many bodily appearances to His disciples. But the 40th day was different. With His disciples looking on, He slowly ascended into the sky until a cloud hid Him from view (Acts 1:9).

Why didn't Jesus continue His visible appearances on earth? He had told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would not begin His work until after He left (John 16:7). The time had come for His followers to trust His word instead of relying on their physical senses (John 20:25,29). Their Master's slow, visible, and final ascent was a dramatic way of saying to them that a new era was about to begin.

From heaven Jesus would send the Holy Spirit to replace His bodily presence. Christ would form the church and rule as its Head (Ephesians 1:22-23). By His Spirit, He would live within His followers and fill them with peace and power. In heaven He would intercede for them before the Father's throne (Hebrews 7:25). He would no longer be visibly present, but He would still be with them in a very real way (Matthew 28:19-20).

The same is true for every believer today. That's why we can be thankful that Jesus ascended to heaven. —HVL ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

He who came to save us, He who bled and died,
Now is crowned with glory at His Father's side;
Nevermore to suffer, nevermore to die,
Jesus, King of glory, is gone up on high.
—Havergal

**Jesus ascended to heaven
that He might continue His work on earth.**

(How? In us as we depend on and draw from the power of the Spirit of Christ.
Who's power are you relying upon to live the Christ life and minister in His Name?)

Ephesians 1:21 **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.** (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [huperano pases arches kai exousias kai dunameos kai kuriotetos kai pantos onomatos onomazomenou \(PPPNSG\) ou monon en to aioni touto alla kai en to mellonti;](#) (PAPMSD)

Amplified: Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named [above every title that can be conferred], not only in this age and in this world, but also in the age and the world which are to come. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: Now He is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or in the world to come. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: a place that is infinitely superior to any conceivable command, authority, power or control, and which carries with it a name far beyond any name that could ever be used in this world or the world to come. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: over and above every government and authority and power and lordship and every name that is constantly being named, not only in this age, but also in the one about to come. ([Eerdmans](#))

Young's Literal: far above all principality, and authority, and might, and lordship, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in the coming one;

FAR ABOVE ALL RULE AND AUTHORITY AND POWER AND DOMINION: huperano pases arches kai exousias kai dunameos kai kuriotetos : (Philippians 2:9,10; Colossians 2:10; Hebrews 1:4) (3:10; 6:12; Daniel 7:27; Romans 8:38,39; Colossians 1:15,16; 2:15; Hebrews 4:14; 1Peter 3:22)

Christ's exaltation by His Father has resulted in His supremacy over everything...

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. (See **note Colossians 1:16**)

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (See **note Philippians 2:8; 2:9; 2:10; 2:11**)

But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all. (**1Corinthians 15:23-28**)

The Jews believed angels controlled human destiny, but Scripture sees Jesus Christ as the Creator and Sustainer Who upholds all things by the Word of His power.

Far above (5231) (huperano from **hupér** = above + **ano** = up) So Christ is not just ABOVE but FAR ABOVE. Also includes idea of rank or dignity. Christ is in a class by Himself so to speak. The demonic rule, authority, etc aren't even in the same ball park!"

All (3956) (pas) all. Terms that follow were traditional Jewish terms to designate angelic beings of great rank might. Power of Christ applied in the believer's behalf cannot be defeated because it far surpasses that of the hosts of Satan who design to defeat it"

Rule (746) (arche [word study]) means the first ones, preeminent one or leaders. **Arché** speaks of those first in order of rulership in a community, "the first ones" in the town. The **arche** is an an authority figure who initiates activity or process. In this context **arche** reflects a high order of demonic creatures that assist Satan in his warfare against God and His children! (See **notes** on spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:12)

Authority (1849) (exousia [word study]) is derived from **éxesti** = it is permitted, it is lawful meaning liberty of action. **Exousia** refers to delegated authority and combines the idea of the "right and the might", these attributes having been granted to someone.

Vine explains that **exousía** evolved

"from the meaning of "leave or permission" or "liberty of doing as one pleases" and passed to that of "the ability or strength with which one is endued," then to that of the "power of authority," the right to exercise power or "the power of rule or government," the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others." ([Vine, W E: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. 1996. Nelson](#))

Vincent adds that "Authority or right is the dominant meaning in the New Testament." (Word studies in the New Testament. Vol. 1, Page 3-171)

Exousía means the power to do something and was a technical term used in the law courts, of a legal right.

Power (1411) (dunamis [word study]) from **dunamai** = to be able, to have power) refers to power, especially achieving power. It refers to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function, the potential for functioning in some way (power, might, strength, ability, capability), the power residing in a thing by

virtue of its nature. In the present context *dunamis* almost certainly refers to **evil spiritual forces** which possess this inherent power.

Dunamis is the implied ability or capacity to perform. It conveys the idea of effective, productive energy, rather than that which is raw and unbridled. Note that words derived from the stem **duna**— all have the basic meaning of “being able,” of “capacity” in virtue of an ability. **Duna-** is the root for English words like dynamic, dynamo, dynamite, etc.

Barclay writes that **dunamis**...

can be used of any kind of extraordinary power. It can be used of the power of growth, of the powers of nature, of the power of a drug, of the power of a man's genius. It always has the meaning of an effective power which does things and which any man can recognize. ([Ref](#))

Dominion ([2963](#)) (**kuriotes** from **kurios** = lord, mighty one) here is a reference to evil angelic powers. Jewish writings used to designate angelic powers their ranks."

No authority or power, natural or supernatural (in the spirit world), is greater than that of the exalted Son of God, the glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

Victory, not defeat, should be the norm in the Christian life. God sees every believer as being in Christ, whom He raised from the dead and seated "at His right hand...far above all principality and power". Because He is the Victor and we are "in Him," we too can be victorious over sin. We can be "more than conquerors" when we yield ourselves to the all-conquering Christ.

Charles Wesley alluded to Jesus' rule from above in his famous hymn of many, [Rejoice the Lord is King](#)

*Jesus, the Savior, reigns, the God of truth and love;
When He had purged our stains He took His seat above;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice! ([play](#))*

AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED NOT ONLY IN THIS AGE BUT ALSO IN THE ONE TO COME: kai pantos onomatos onomazomenou (PPPNSG) ou monon en to aioni touto alla kai en to mellonti; (PAPMSD): (Matthew 28:19; Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:9, 10, 11; Revelation 19:12,13) (Matthew 25:31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36; 28:18; John 5:25, 26, 27, 28, 29; Hebrews 2:5; Revelation 20:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)

Name ([3686](#)) (**onoma**) name [implying authority, character] NT the name concisely sums up all that a person is. Name in the Bible means much more than in our modern culture. One's whole character was somehow implied in the name. Furthermore, in this context, name implies authority, and it was used this way as when one would come or do something in or by the name of someone (the name conveying that person's authority).

Named ([3687](#)) (**onomazo**) means to name, call by name. Jesus is the Name above all names forever.

The most famous passage regarding the exalted nature of Jesus' Name, like the present passage, is in the context of Christ's sacrificial offering of Himself to God...

"And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (See **notes** Philippians 2:8; 2:9; 2:10; 2:11)

'Let any name be uttered, whatever it is, Christ is above it; it is more exalted than that which the name uttered affirms' (Meyer)

Only ([3440](#)) (**monon**) means alone.

Age ([165](#)) (**aion [word study]**) denotes duration of time. "age," referring to the present sinful age, the world system now dominated by Satan. Aion is the popular culture and manner of thinking that is in rebellion against God which will try to conform us to its ungodly pattern.

The Jews of Paul's day understood the end times to be divided into two time periods, the age in which they lived and

the coming age. The Messiah, called "the Coming One," would rule in the age which is to come.

One to come ([3195](#)) (**mello**) means to occur at a point of time in the future which is subsequent to another event and closely related to it (see note below under "**age**") The present tense pictures this age to come as on its way.

This "**age**" would be the age Paul wrote in and is the same age believers live in today, the age most commonly known as the "**church age**". In a scheme which adheres to a literal interpretation of prophetic passages, the church age is followed by a seven year period commonly referred to as the "Tribulation" but more biblically correctly designated as "**Daniel's Seventieth Week**". This period of seven years is not actually called the "Tribulation" in Scripture, although Jesus clearly designated the last 3.5 year period as the "**Great Tribulation**" (Mt 24:21). Revelation 4-19 describes primarily the events that will transpire during this seven year period which will terminate with the return of Christ, Who will establish His 1000 year kingdom (the **Millennium**) on earth. This 1000 year period is also known as the **Messianic Age**, which is the time when God fulfills ALL of His promises to Israel, which is in marked contrast to what many teach because they do not interpret the Scripture literally. At the end of the Messianic Age God will have vanquished every enemy