

Prayer for Revelation

~ Ephesians 1:15-23 ~

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Everybody **close your eyes**...keep them closed...

NOW

... **how many fingers** am I holding up?



The answer to the slide is 124 (not including thumbs).

Without having our eyes opened, nothing is revealed. If this is true about the physical realm, how much more is it true of the spiritual realm!

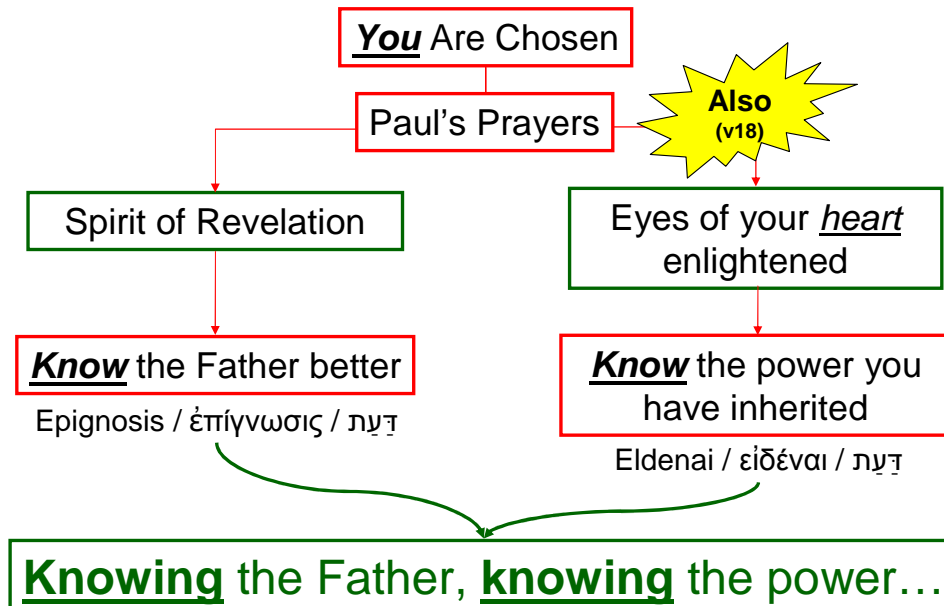
And that is the focus of our time together in God's living Word as we look together in more depth at Paul's 'prayer for revelation' for the Ephesians in chapter 1, verses 15 - 23.

And yes, as with the slide, you may be surprised at what God has to show us!

Ephesians 1:15-23

“For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s chosen ones, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, **remembering you in my prayers**. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, the glorious **Father**, may give you **the Spirit of wisdom and revelation**, so that you may **know him better**. I pray also that the **eyes of your heart** may be enlightened in order that **you may know** the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his **glorious inheritance** in the saints, and his incomparably **great power** for us who believe. **That power** is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Messiah when he **raised him from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in **the present age** but also in **the one to come**. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the Assembly of His chosen ones, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”

Flow of Themes



Wisdom and Revelation

(verse 17)

חֵכְמָה / σοφία

Understanding based
on diverse and practical
experience

עֲרֹה / ἀποκάλυψις

That which is revealed;
lit. made 'naked' or
'bare' before you

Get Hold Of This:

- Intellect alone is **DANGEROUS**...
- How can we, mere men, expect to grasp the mysteries of God with only our own intellect and understanding?
- So pray that the “eyes of your heart may be enlightened” (v 18)

Wisdom: חֵכְמָה / σοφία - Chochmah is not pure intellect. It is understanding based on diverse and practical experience of situations.

'Revelation': עֲרֹה / ἀποκάλυψις - See 1 Samuel 20:30 – Saul gets angry with Jonathan and says he has shamed himself like “the *nakedness [lit. revelation]* of his mother”.

PERSONAL:

Did you feel at all nervous recently with the news of the Large Hadron Collider near Geneva?

•Cost **£4.4 billion - £500 million** from the UK; took **over 35 years** to build;
Involved **over 8,000 scientists** from **over 85 countries**.

When asked “**Is it safe?**”, **Stephen Hawking** said “yes, of course, we are only recreating what happens frequently in the earth’s atmosphere every day with no negative effects”. When, in the same interview, another scientist was asked “what do you expect is going to happen?”, he said, “**We don’t know. It’s an experiment. That’s the point of experiments, you don’t know what’s going to happen**”.

Can you see the obvious contradiction in the two responses – and the potential cause for worry when science and intelligence runs away..?

Mysteries Need Revelation

If it's **OBVIOUS**, it doesn't need revelation.

Mystery	Reference
The Incarnation	Romans 16:25
Our Transfiguration	1 Corinthians 15:51
Unity in the Church	Ephesians 1:9
Gentile inclusion in God's plan	Ephesians 3:6
Israel's fall and restoration	Romans 11:25

If something is OBVIOUS, it doesn't need revelation. The mysteries of God are not obvious - that is why they need revelation. List the mysteries of God:

Mysteries

See Romans 11:12 for Paul's reference to understanding Israel's fall and restoration as a spiritual mystery; 1 Corinthians 15:51 for the mystery of transfiguration; Ephesians 1:9 regarding the mystery of future unity in the Church; Romans 16:25 for the mystery of the incarnation; and Ephesians 3:6 for the mystery of how the gentiles got included in God's salvation plan!

Enlighten the Eyes of Your Heart

Discernment...

“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in **knowledge** and **depth of insight**, so that you may be able to **discern** what is best... to the glory and praise of God.”

~ Philippians 1:9-11 ~

Discernment (Dictionary Definition):

To perceive by sight or some other sense. The act of discrimination by acuteness of judgment and understanding.

We should aim to be like our Rabbi, Messiah Jesus:

“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the **Spirit of wisdom and of understanding**, the **Spirit of counsel and of power**, the **Spirit of knowledge** and of the fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will **not judge by what he sees with his eyes**, or decide by what he hears with his ears.”

~ Isaiah 11:1-3 ~

PERSONAL:

It's okay to follow your 'hunches', your 'gut feel'. Don't let your emotions rule your life, but at the same time, don't let your head alone rule your life.

God doesn't prescribe in His Word **for every situation** in life:

•Which job? What do I do with my mortgage? How do I deal with / cope with my kids? Which subjects shall I study? Should I go out with that boy / girl?

... but by **knowledge and insight, wisdom and revelation**, we can **discern and know** the way forward.

Our Glorious Inheritance

That ‘you may know his...’ (vv 18 and 19):

- ‘incomparably great power’
- ‘mighty strength’

Which is (v 21):

- ‘above all rule and authority’
- ‘above all power and dominion’
- **The same power that raised Messiah from the dead, lives in us!**

The Rabbinic principle of *kal v’homer* (light and heavy): If **A** is true of **YOU**, then **A is so much more true of ADONAI!** (see Matthew 7:9-11)

PERSONAL:

- I have seen the faith of those relying on intellect crumble and fall...
- At Bible College, those who wanted to understand God on the basis of intellect were those that ended up being dry and lifeless (some of them started that way).

It is why no-one can ever argue with your personal testimony and **EXPERIENCE** of the Living God.

I long for the day when we can be truly free from our western, arrogant intellectualism! One day... **maybe today?**

- When someone’s cancer is healed,
- When someone’s eyesight is restored,
- When someone’s debts are miraculously cleared...

– then we’ll be able to say “**Debate that! – Today, in your sight, you have witnessed the power of the Living God**”. **TODAY**, you have seen the sovereign rule and reign of the very **Creator of the Universe** come in power.

“Our Father in Heaven, prove your Name to be Holy. Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven!”
(Matthew 6:5-15)



Action Point:

Let the Spirit of God give you and guide your experiences and understanding – let that same Spirit lay bare His mysteries before you. Don't rely on your own understanding, don't trust in the understanding of other men.

Do it, do it, do it, do it, do it!!!!

Olam Ha-Zeh, Olam Ha-Ba



So, is 'our inheritance' something in the future we can only look **FORWARD** to?

NO! Because Paul explains that this inheritance is “not only in **the present age** but also in **the age to come**” (verse 21)

The Mishnah explains, “'this life' is but an antechamber where one prepares oneself to be admitted to the banquet hall that is 'the world to come'”.

~ **Matthew 12:31-32** ~

And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, **either in this age or in the age to come.**



The olam ha-zeh SUCKS! - The olam ha-ba is AWESOME!

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!””

~ Revelation 21: 1-5a ~

If this were my last...

Paul's a prisoner in a rented home in Rome. He doesn't know if he is ever going to be free again, or how long he's got left.

NOTICE: There's *no* 2 Ephesians, like there's a 2 Corinthians... Did he think his time was getting short? Nero ruled between 54 – 68 AD and was the murderer of Paul (beheaded) and Peter (crucified upside down). The threat of death was therefore ever-present. He is eventually beheaded in AD66-67, just 4 years after he probably wrote Ephesians.

Name	Written
First Thessalonians	52 AD
Second Thessalonians	52 AD
First Corinthians	55 AD
Second Corinthians	55 AD
Romans	56/57 AD
Galatians	57/58 AD
<i>Ephesians</i>	62 AD
Philippians	62 AD
Colossians	62 AD

At The End He Moves Into Pastoral Letters...

Philemon	62 AD
First Timothy	63-65 AD
Second Timothy	66/67 AD
Titus	63/65 AD



Something to live *with*.

Something to live *by*.

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