

What Can You Expect?

IV. - To be Able to Lay Hold of All That God Has Intended For You

“That you may be completely able to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:18,19).

“Eye has not seen and ear has not heard and it has never arisen in the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed it to us through His Spirit; for His Spirit searches all the deep things of God” (I Corinthians 2:9,10).

The magnitude of these passages defies human articulation. We can only trust that the Holy Spirit, who reveals these things to us, will also enable us to present them with some degree of effectiveness. In the quest for the things which we can expect with assurance and certainty, we come across such magnificent passages as the above, which are evolved in the matrix of God's creative destiny for His people. These are not merely promises to a highly select group of spiritual elite. These are for “all the saints.” We echo David's cry in Psalm 139:6—*“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it”*—and yet it is just such height that is presented here in Ephesians 3. The clear teaching of Scripture is that those things thought unattainable in the Old Testament are now, through the presence of the Holy Spirit within, not only attainable, but the destiny of all the family of Christ.

In what respect attainable? The Greek word translated by apprehend—*katalambano*—means literally “to receive completely.” It is (to be somewhat technical) the word “to receive” with a prepositional prefix which means, literally, “to go clear down through.” It is used commonly in the word for rust—*katesthio*—which means, literally, “to eat down through.” That preposition, applied to the word—*lambano*—is what gives it the force of completeness. *Lambano* means “to receive.” *Katalambano* means “to receive completely” or “to take in” or “to apprehend.” Thus, we are not merely talking about “receiving,” but “appropriating to oneself,” or even “attaining.” The translation—“to comprehend”—is thus inadequate, because we are talking about more than understanding, but rather “appropriating.” The translation—“apprehend”—takes this into account. The presence of Christ within us gives us the capability of taking into ourselves or “apprehending” the things of God, which the human is unable to achieve, apart from His Spirit. But, it must also be understood, that because of the presence of Christ within, the achievement of these things is not based upon human performance, but upon divine power. That is not to say that human performance is unimportant, but rather that it can never be the basis of achieving the fulfillment of God's purpose.

The saints. And who are the saints to whom Paul is speaking? They are all the believers which, in this case, were gathered at Ephesus. The word is *hagioi*, which refers, not to a special group of the highly spiritual, but rather to all who are part of God's family. The word is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *qadash* which means “separated unto God,” as in the case of the vessels of the temple, which were anointed by the priest to set them apart for God's own purpose. Every believer, participating in the atonement of Christ, is thus anointed and separated unto God. Hence, the word Paul uses here—*hagioi*—is

applied to all believers. And thus, every promise made here is applicable to every member of the Body of Christ.

The length and breadth and height and depth. This is what we are to apprehend. But what do these terms mean? Surely they are more than the crass dimensions of the universe. A comparison of the usage of these words in other texts will give us some insights. In II Corinthians 6, Paul tells the Corinthians that his heart is “enlarged” toward them. The word “enlarged” is from the same root as the word “breadth.” Similarly, the word “length” is from the same root as the word for growth. Jesus uses this precise meaning in the parable in Mark 4—“*the seed germinates and grows [matures].*” In the case of height, the word is *hupsos* and means “exaltation.” The verb form is used, significantly, of Christ in Philippians 2:9—“*Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him.*” The word depth—*bathos* is used by Paul in the passage quoted above, to denote the “deep things of God.”

Included in this grand sweep of things that we may lay hold of in Christ, is the knowledge of His love which is “beyond knowledge.” (We will discuss this further in the next issue). The presentation of things that we can expect is concluded with the even more startling statement—“that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” No human author would have dared to make such a claim. But coming from the very Spirit of God, we cannot but accept it. If startling, the statement is also in keeping with numerous other declarations throughout the New Testament. For example, Peter tells us that we are “*partakers of the divine nature,*” and that as such we are enabled to be the recipients of “*exceeding great and precious promises*” (II Peter 1:3,4). Being partakers of the nature of God through His Holy Spirit, it is not that unreasonable to assume that we are filled with His fullness.

What can you expect? You can expect to be enabled, through His Holy Spirit, to lay hold of the very fullness of God, apprehending or receiving to ourselves enlargement, growth, exaltation and depth perception of God. Possessing Christ within, all of these qualities become part of the natural process of our spirits.

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