The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation
Ephesians 1:15-23

On the canvas of history future, the apostle John takes his literary brush, and with a few simple strokes, paints a picture that seems to be fresh out of a sci-fi horror film. In Revelation 4:6-8, we read of “… four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. And the first creature [was] like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature [was] like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within.” Admittedly, the symbolism in this last book in the Bible often leaves me somewhere between confused and frightened. The most obvious answer to what this picture means is omniscience. God’s view of us renders every man inescapable.

Against the backdrop of this picture, I raise for you a small snapshot of the human heart [not that organ in your chest that pushes blood through the aorta but rather that which is sometimes referred to as the soul] delivered by the apostle Paul in the first chapter of Ephesians. I have worked with hearts all of my life. By the grace of God, I have been privileged to be present when hundreds if not thousands of human hearts have been surrendered to Christ, but I have never seen one. Paul’s snapshot is a bit inferior in quality [what would you expect from a first century camera?], but we can barely make out a pair of eyes.

This apostolic optometrist is not standing with an eye chart but rather kneeling in his prayer closet. His prayer is for the understanding of his patients in Ephesus. His petition is based on their election, mentioned in the first part of the chapter, in that they will be able to see the hope, glory, and power that God has in store for them in the future. Perhaps, the most important lesson we can receive from this petition is that the eyes of the heart are faulty in their natural state. Becoming a believer does not mean that your heart automatically gets 20/20 vision.

His prayer is for their focus and color. He prays that what they need to know will be seen by them or revealed to them. We are all born nearsighted. We focus on the passing issues of life as though they were forever. Paul prays that they will focus properly to see life from an eternal perspective. His prayer goes beyond focus; he prays for their wisdom to be enhanced. Life would be simple if everything were black and white, but such is not the case. Life is a kaleidoscope of decision and options, and the apostle desires that his patients be able to separate all of the colors of the rainbow and use them to bring glory to God.

The eyes of the heart can see deeper into the thoughts of man than any brain surgeon has ventured. This optical apparatus sees beyond the stars and into the very throne of God’s grace, but we are all born heart blind. Only by the wonder of His grace are we honored to shout with the blind man of John 9: “Once I was blind but now I see.”
Ephesians 1:15-23

1. What does it mean to be sealed with the Holy Spirit? Eph. 1:13

2. How does Paul’s evaluation of the Ephesians in 1:15-23 compare with his evaluation of the Thessalonians in chapter one of first Thessalonians?

3. In verse 17, does the “spirit of wisdom” refer to the third person of the Trinity or to a lesser spiritual gift?

4. The apostle prays for three things for the Ephesians found in verse 18 & 19. What are they?

5. To what does “for this reason” refer in verse 15?

6. How does Paul describe the greatness of God’s power in this chapter?

7. Paul’s prayer here is for their “hope.” How important is hope in the Christian life? [Compare I Corinthians 13 & Romans 5:1-5]