

EPHESIANS

Outlined Bible

Introduction: After the reading of the controversies in Corinth and Paul's fiery epistle to the Galatians, the letter to the Ephesians seems quite benign and calm. Unlike many of Paul's letters, this epistle isn't problem-oriented. Its purpose is not to rebuke but to illuminate. Paul unveils a great doctrinal statement about the relationship between Christ and His church.

Name — The epistle is named for the church that originally received it. (i.e. - Ephesus)

Author — Paul (Ephesians 1:1)

Purpose—Paul wrote the letter to instruct the Christians of Asia Minor concerning the privileges and responsibilities of those who were part of the church, the body of Christ.

I. Background of the book.

A. The city of Ephesus.

1. Ephesus was located in Asia Minor where the Cayster River emptied into the Aegean Sea.
2. It was a major center of commerce.
 - a. Ephesus served as one of the great seaports of the ancient world.
 - b. In addition, three great highways met at Ephesus.
3. The city also had great political importance.
 - a. It was a Roman "free city" which meant that no occupation troops were stationed there.
 - b. The city was virtually self-governing and was called the "Supreme Metropolis of Asia."
 - c. Ephesus was also an "assize town", meaning that important legal cases which had been referred to the governor would be tried there.
4. A center for religion, Ephesus is noted for having the ancient temple to Artemis (Diana) —one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

B. The church at Ephesus.

1. When Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla stopped on their way to Palestine from Corinth (ca. AD 53-54), and Paul debated the Jews in the synagogue (Acts 18:18-21), the church was begun in Ephesus.
2. Paul returned about five years later on his third missionary journey.
 - a. For three months he preached in the synagogue. (Acts 19:1-8)
 - b. When strong opposition arose, he taught for two years in the Hall of Tyrannus. (Acts 19:9-10)
 - c. Paul stayed at Ephesus a total of three years on this journey. (Acts 20:28-32)
3. The importance Paul attached to his work at Ephesus is indicated by his length of stay there and a statement he made when he wrote I Corinthians from Ephesus —"But I will stay at Ephesus because a great and effective door has been opened to me."
4. The effect of the gospel upon the Ephesians is evidenced by the fact that believers burned occult books worth 50,000 pieces of silver at one time. (cf. Acts 19:18-20)
5. After he was released from his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul took Timothy to Ephesus to oppose the false teaching done by Hymenaeus, Alexander, Philetus, and others. (I Timothy 1:3-7, 18-20)
6. Thirty years after Paul's epistle, another letter was addressed to the church at Ephesus as a part of the Revelation.

C. The Prison Epistles.

1. The "prison epistles" received this title because Paul wrote them during his house arrest in Rome. (cf. Acts 28:30-31)

2. Each of the letters mentioned his confinement. (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Philippians 1:7,13,14, 17; Colossians 1:14; 4:3; 10, 18; Philemon 1, 10, 13, 23)
3. Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were written at the same time and together were sent by Paul to their destinations.
 - a. These three letters were carried by Onesimus (the runaway slave of Philemon) and Tychicus. (cf. Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7-9; Philemon 10-12)
 - b. A date of A.D. 61 is assigned to these three letters.
4. Philippians was composed and sent the following year.

II. The Main Message of the book.

- A. This beautiful epistle presents an exalted view of the church and the blessed privilege of being **In Christ**.
- B. In the opening chapter, Paul discusses the role of each member of the Godhead in relation to the church.
 1. The Father purposed that salvation would be available to sinners in Christ. (1:3-6)
 2. The Son sacrificed his own blood that we might be redeemed. (1:7-12)
 3. The Holy Spirit seals believers by his indwelling presence.
- C. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." (1:3-4)

III. Outline of the book.

- A. The design of the church. (Ephesians 1:1 — 3:21)
 1. The church has a divine origin. (1:1-14)
 2. Paul prays for the readers to have an understanding of God's grace. (1:15-23)
 3. The church is made up of sinners saved by God's grace. (2:1-10)
 4. It is a single body made up of Jews and Gentiles. (2:11-22)
 5. God's plans are being fulfilled through the church. (3:1-13)
 6. Paul prays that the readers of the letter be empowered and made complete in Christ. (3:14-21)
- B. Life within the church.¹⁷ (Ephesians 4:1—6:24)
 1. Christians should live in:
 - a. Unity. (4:1-16)
 - b. Moral purity. (7:17—5:20)
 - c. Domestic tranquility. (5:21—6:9)
 2. Paul describes the armor God has given us for spiritual warfare. (6:10-20)
 3. He concludes the letter with:
 - a. A commendation of Tychicus. (6:21-22)
 - b. A benediction. (6:23-24)

IV. Key Themes of the Book.

- A. The beauty of Christ's church.
 1. Through the years image and perception of the Body of Christ, the church, has been tarnished.
 - a. Denominationalism, sectarianism, cults, and apostasies have given the world a distaste for the concept of "church."
 - b. Some who have sought to restore simple New Testament Christianity have often displayed division, a sectarian spirit, and frequently lacked the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (4:3)
 2. Surely none of us have anything near the divine appreciation our God has for His church.
 3. In Ephesians three great pictures are painted of the church:
 - a. The church is the Body of Christ. (1:23; 2:16; 4:16)
 - b. The church is the Temple of Christ. (2:20-22)
 - c. The church is the Bride of Christ. (5:21 -33)

4. As much as any other piece of scripture, Ephesians gives us a renewed appreciation for the beauty and necessity of having a relationship with Christ through his church.
- B. Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3.
1. It begins with humility. (v. 14, 15)
 2. He prays for the strengthening of the Ephesians "through his Spirit in your inner being." (v. 16)
 - a. That Spirit allows "Christ to dwell in your hearts through faith." (v. 17)
 - b. The Holy Spirit also empowers us to grasp a fuller understanding of the love of Christ and fills us with the fullness of God." (v. 18, 19)
 3. Paul acknowledges that God is able to do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." (v. 20)
 4. The apostle closes the prayer by declaring glory to God "in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations." (v.21)
- C. Christian armor. (Ephesians 6:10-20)
1. The Christian is constantly involved in spiritual warfare.
 2. While Satan is relentless in his attack, God gives us the power and weapons to stand firm against the devil and his forces.
 3. As Paul writes Ephesians, he is under the constant guard of a Roman soldier whose armor reminds him of God's protection for the Christian.
 - a. The *belt* secures the entire outfit and is the piece on which the weapons hang. Paul likens it to the truth of God's Word.
 - b. The *breastplate* protects the heart. The righteousness of Jesus Christ does the same for the Christian.
 - c. The shoes or *sandals* allow the soldier to travel long distances. In like manner, the gospel takes the salvation of Christ around the world.
 - d. A soldier's *shield* protects him from arrows and swinging swords. Our faith serves the same function in spiritual warfare.
 - e. The *helmet* protects the brain and mind. Paul likens this piece of armor to the knowledge of one's salvation.
 - f. Finally, a warrior's *sword* is his offensive weapon to overcome an enemy. The Christian's offense against evil is the Word of God.

EPHESIANS

Summarized Bible

Paul

To the saints who are in Ephesus

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.” (Eph 1:1-4)

Those Put into The Body of Christ – His Church

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will,

according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” (Ephesians 1:7-9)

“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.” (Eph 1:11-12)

“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Eph 1:13-14)

One in Christ

“You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace (Christ, the gift of God) you have been saved— and raised us up (from our death to sin and burial into Christ’s blood) and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:1-10)

Comment: The good works which God prepared for us to do appear to be to tell others about salvation in Christ and helping those in need.

“Remember that at one time you Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus salvation is near by the blood of Christ and made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two (so neither Jew or Gentile were no longer bound by the Law given to Moses), thereby making peace and reconciling us both to God in one body through the cross. So, then you gentiles are no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure (body of Christians), being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” (Eph 2:11-22)

The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed

“For this reason, the mystery of Christ has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father that he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being

rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.” (Eph 3:1-21)

Comment: The mystery of Christ is that salvation is available to all people who put their trust in Christ and obey His message of redemption, the Gospel of Christ.

Body, Soul and Spirit

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it says, "When he ascended on high, he led a host of captives, (The righteous souls who died prior to Christ ascending back to God that were being held captive in the Paradise side of Hades. Hades being the abode of souls of men whether good or evil.) and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)” (Eph 4:1-10) This is discussed in thebiblewayonline.com/BodySoulSpirit.html

Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and teaching Pastors

“He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers (some translations have He gave some to be apostles, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers), to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Eph 4:1-16)

Comment: The word “some” (Greek *toúς*) precedes apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors but not before teachers indicating pastors and teachers were one group. Some translations have teaching pastors. The text then gives their function – equip the saints for their work. Preaching; e.g., pulpit preaching is not mentioned in Bible but the work of preaching the Gospel is included in the work of the evangelists. More on God’s teaching pastors can be found in:

What you were and what you should be

“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do (Gentiles here represent those outside Christ), in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ! — assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in

him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” (Eph 4:17-32)

Walk in Love

Be imitators of God, walk in love - avoid

- sexual immorality (sex with anyone, not a spouse, fornication).
- all impurity or covetousness (greed -worship of money or things).
- filthiness nor foolish talk or crude joking.
- do not be deceived by empty words.
- do not associate with them; for those who practice have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Instead, let there be thanksgiving

- walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true).
- try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.
- take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

Look carefully then how you live,

- do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery.
- be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting (yielding) to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Eph 5:1-21)

Relationships

“Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. Husbands are responsible for the family as Christ is of the church, his body. So as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Comment: “Submit” does not mean no voice or discussion but don’t disrespect or demand - speak from your heart then yield allowing your husband to decide based upon both facts and opinions doing what is best for the physical and especially spiritual family.

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to

himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh (glued together to make one)."

"Children, obey (listen to, yield to, be obedient) your parents in the Lord. "Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

"Slaves (servants and employees) obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free."

"Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him." (Eph 5:22-6:9)

Arm Yourself Against Evil Spiritual Forces

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to wrestle against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

"Stand firm having fastened on the belt of truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness. Depend on God by taking up the

- a) shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;
- b) helmet of salvation;
- c) sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, with all prayer and supplication."

Key Points from Ephesians

- The mystery of Christ is the Gospel - salvation to all mankind who believe in Him, put their trust in Him and obey Him.
- God puts all who obey Christ into the Kingdom, the Body of Christ, His Church.
- Those put into Christ's Church are to grow into the nature of God.
- Relationships depend on the attitude of each having God's love.
- Surround yourself with God's armor to defend against Spiritual evils.

Question - What are the benefits of being in Christ?