

One Bible One Year

Ephesians

Gn	Ex	Lv	Nu	Dt															
Js	Ju	Ru	Sa ^{1,2}	Ki ^{1,2}	Ch ^{1,2}	Ez	Ne	Es											
Jb	Ps	Pr	Ec	So															
Is	Je	La	Ek	Da	Ho	Jl	Am	Ob	Jo	Mi									
					Na	Hk	Zp	Ha	Zc	Ml									
Mt	Mk	Lk	Jn	Ac															
Ro	Co ^{1,2}	Ga	Ep																

Summary

Paul wrote the letter of Ephesians to the Church in Ephesus in AD 60. It is likely that Paul wrote this letter at the same time as Philippians, Colossians and Philemon from Prison in Rome.

At this time Ephesus was the major city of Asia Minor, because of its intersection of many trade routes running throughout the Roman Empire, in particular its access to the Aegean Sea. The City of Ephesus also boasted the great Temple of Artemis, one of the 7 Ancient Wonders of the World.

Luke writes in Acts 18 and 19 of Paul's first visits to Ephesus, during his second missionary journey, around the year 52 AD. Luke writes of the large amount of people saved through Paul's ministry and the uproar this created in the city as people were leaving Pagan worship, to follow Jesus. During Paul's third missionary journey he stayed in Ephesus for three years, probably between 54-57 AD.

John Stott shows that the book is split into 4 parts:

1. The new life which God has given us in Christ (1:3-2:10)
2. The new society which God has created through Christ (2:11-3:21)
3. The new standards which God expects of his new society (4:1 – 5:21)
4. The new relationships into which God has brought us. (5:21 – 6:24)

Outline

- I. Greetings (1:1-2)
- II. The Divine Purpose: The Glory and Headship of Christ (1:3-14)
- III. Prayer That Christians May Realize God's Purpose and Power (1:15-23)
- IV. Steps Toward the fulfilment of God's Purpose (chs. 2-3)
 - A. Salvation of Individuals by Grace (2:1-10)
 - B. Reconciliation of Jew and Gentile through the Cross (2:11-18)
 - C. Uniting of Jew and Gentile in One Household (2:19-22)
 - D. Revelation of God's Wisdom through the Church (3:1-13)
 - E. Prayer for Deeper Experience of God's Fullness (3:14-21)
- V. Practical Ways to fulfil God's Purpose in the Church (4:1;6:20)
 - A. Unity (4:1-6)
 - B. Maturity (4:7-16)
 - C. Renewal of Personal Life (4:17;5:20)
 - D. Deference in Personal Relationships (5:21;6:9)
 1. Principle (5:21)
 2. Husbands and wives (5:22-33)
 3. Children and parents (6:1-4)
 4. Slaves and masters (6:5-9)
 - E. Strength in the Spiritual Conflict (6:10-20)
- VI. Conclusion, Final Greetings and Benediction (6:21-24)

Themes

Paul writes in chapter two:

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:8-10)

The Central theme of Ephesians is an explanation of God's saving work through Christ and an exaltation for Christians to live in the light of this. As John Stott says:

"It tells us how Jesus Christ shed his blood in a sacrificial death for sin, was then raised from death by the power of God and has been exalted above all competitors to the supreme place

in both the universe and the church. More than that, we who are 'in Christ', organically united to him by faith, have ourselves shared in these great events... The whole letter is thus a magnificent combination of Christian doctrine and Christian duty, Christian faith and Christian life, what God has done through Christ and what we must be and do in consequence."

Paul asks us, in light of Christ's work, to live a 'life of love'. To truly live up to this calling may seem impossible, but Ephesians is a book of equipping, as D & P Alexander say:

"Paul doesn't pretend that it will be easy to maintain these standards – to keep our feet in the Christian life. The fight is on. And we are up against powerful external forces. It is a spiritual struggle for which we need spiritual weapons. But we are not left helpless. The whole armoury of God is at our disposal – and with this defence we can stand."

Further thinking

Ephesians 1&2

1. How do you know you are blessed?
 - how is blessing linked to what Christ has done?
 - how does the picture of adoption help us to see blessing?
2. List all the references to God's purposes. Now take all the references and summarise in a single purpose statement.
- 3 What is the difference between God's present and future redemption and what is the significance of both to you today?
4. How does chapter 2 describe what it means to us to take hold fully of what God has done, as described in chapter 1?

Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21

1. What is the focus of Paul's prayer and why?
2. How should this inner being prayer shape our prayers?

Ephesians 4:1-16

1. What is the bond of peace and how is it achieved?
2. How does peace with God change our attitudes to others?
3. What is the calling Christians have received? (1:9, 13-14; 4:14-18) and how do we live a life worthy of it (v1)?
5. How practically can you bear with others in love (v2)?
6. Why does 'trusting in love' build people up into Christ (v15)? What practical ways can you practice this?
7. v16 says that the church builds itself up in love by each person doing his or her work as they are equipped (v12). Do you know the ministry God is calling you to participate in?

Ephesians 6:10-20

1. What is your attitude to evil and the devil? What is Jesus'?
2. Review the armour described in the passage. Discuss what the armour looks like in practice and what difference wearing it will make to our lives.
3. Why is prayer so vital in resisting temptations of Satan?
4. What steps are you going to take to help you stand firm?