

Cover to Cover: From Genesis to Maps
Sermon # 49 – “Ephesians”
March 1, 2009

Ephesians: Some Background Information

The Audience: This letter of Paul was written to the church at Ephesus, in Asia Minor, and possibly to other churches in the surrounding area. Some scholars say that its original destiny was only the church at Ephesus because of the statement “in Ephesus” (1:1). Others, however, claim that it was a circular letter for the churches of Asia Minor because (a) the phrase “in Ephesus” is not found in some early manuscripts and (b) there are no personal references to the church the church Paul served for three years.

The Date of the Letter: The text makes plain that Paul was in prison when he wrote Ephesians (3:1, 4:1, 6:20). Scholars differ on whether Paul wrote this letter while he was in Caesarea (Acts 24:27) in A.D. 57-59, on in Rome (28:30) in A.D. 60-62. All things considered, the Roman imprisonment seems more likely. Along with Ephesians, the books of Philippians, Colossians and Philemon are thought to have been written during this time period and hence are called the “Prison Epistles.” Most likely, Paul wrote Ephesians early in his first Roman imprisonment, or about A.D. 60. **NOTE:** Following his release, Paul traveled, wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, was arrested again, wrote 2 Timothy, and was martyred in Rome.

The Purpose of the Letter: (1) Paul wanted to inform believers of their exalted position in Christ. (2) He wanted to urge them to maintain unity in Christ. (3) He sought to encourage them in the love of Christ. (4) He desired to encourage them to stand for Christ. (5) He wanted them to understand the divine purpose and mystery of Christ.

The Theme and Focus of the Letter: The book’s overarching theme is exaltation in Christ. The focus of the book, more than any of Paul’s other letters, is on the church universal rather than the church local.

Ephesians: Some Memorable Outlines

The 3 “W’s”

1. The Christian’s Wealth (Ephesians 1-3)
2. The Christian’s Walk (Ephesians 4:1-6:9)
3. The Christian’s Warfare (Ephesians 6:10-24)

The Christian’s Posture

1. Sit (Ephesians 1-3)

“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” - Ephesians 2:6

2. Walk (Ephesians 4:1-6:9)

“...walk worthy of the calling you have received” - Ephesians 4:1 (HCSB)

3. Stand (Ephesians 6:10-24)

“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.” Ephesians 6:11

Doctrinal & Practical

1. Our Position in Christ: Knowing our Position (Ephesians 1-3)
2. Our Christian Practice: Playing our Position (Ephesians 4-6)

Ephesians: A Walk through the Book

1. The Calling of the Church. Ephesians 1-3

- Praise for God's spiritual blessings in Christ. 1:1-14
- Prayer for wisdom and revelation. 1:15-23
- Our new position individually: Made alive in Christ. 2:1-10
- Our new position corporately: Made one in Christ. 2:11-22
- The mystery of Christ. 3:1-13
- Prayer for strengthened love. 3:14-21

2. The Conduct of the Church. Ephesians 4-6

- Walking in unity. 4:1-16
- Walking in holiness. 4:17-32
- Walking in love. 5:1-6
- Walking in light. 5:7-14
- Walking in wisdom. 5:15-6:9
- Standing in warfare. 6:10-20
- Final greetings. 6:21-24