



Overview for Ephesians

Purpose: This epistle was written to explain the nature and purpose of the Church. Paul used three analogies to portray the different attributes of the Church, namely: the body (of which Christ is the head); the building (of which He is the Chief Cornerstone); and the bride (of whom Christ is the Bridegroom). It displays God's eternal plan for all Jews and Gentiles alike.

Author: The Apostle Paul

To Whom Written: To the believers in Ephesus, and passed on to all Christians everywhere.

Date Written: Approximately A.D. 60, about the same time as Colossians.

Setting: This letter, along with three other letters, was written while Paul was in a Roman prison awaiting trial. Ephesus was a major city in Asia, situated on the Cayster River about three miles from the Aegean Sea. At the end of Paul's second missionary journey, he visited Ephesus briefly. He left Priscilla and Aquila there in his absence, promising to return (Acts 18: 19-21). On his third missionary trip, Paul spent about three years in Ephesus, preaching in the city and surrounding regions.

Key People: Paul, Tychicus, and believers in the Ephesian church.

Summary: Thought by some scholars to be a circular letter, this epistle to the Ephesians speaks in very personal and practical terms to Christians everywhere

and in all ages. Many scholars believe that Colossians and Ephesians were composed together. Upon completing the letter to the Colossians, Paul was inspired to send a letter to Ephesus for all the churches in western Asia.

After a warm greeting, Paul discoursed in the first two chapters about the nature of the Church, expounding upon the blessings and kindness of God to all believers. In chapter 3, he discussed the need for unity with God. Mankind's connection with God had been broken and justification by faith needed to have freedom to work in order to restore that unity.

Beginning in the fourth chapter, Paul directed his attention to the implications of being in the body of Christ, the Church. Believers should have the highest moral standards, which meant rejecting sinful and pagan practices. In the family, this meant mutual submission and love. In chapter 6, Paul went on to tell the believers of the constant battle with sinful forces of darkness and of their need to possess and use every spiritual weapon at their disposal. The strong warning is to put on all the armor that God has provided for the Christian. It is interesting to note that while Paul was writing this letter, he likely saw soldiers, dressed in full armor, and standing guard. This may have been the inspiration to use military armor as the example of what God has for every Christian to wear in order to fight the fight of faith.

Paul concluded his epistle by asking for their prayers, commissioning Tychicus, and offering a benediction.

Timeline

Many of these dates are approximate, as reference materials differ slightly.

Jesus crucified; Pentecost; Church begun A.D. 30	Stephen martyred; Paul's conversion 35			Peter's ministry in Asia Minor 47	Jerusalem council 50	PAUL IMPRISONED (CAESAREA) 57-59	PAUL'S HOUSE ARREST 60-62	James (Jesus' brother) martyred 62	Peter & Paul martyred 67/68?	Jude martyred 72
	PAUL IN CILICIA & SYRIA 35-46			PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS 46-48	50-52	53-57	Paul's trip to Rome 59			Rome destroys Jerusalem 70
			Holy Spirit falls on Gentiles 41	James (the apostle) martyred; Peter imprisoned 44						
				Galatians; James 49	1 & 2 Thessalonians 51/52	1 & 2 Corinthians 55	Romans 57 St. Mark 58/60	Ephesians; Colossians; Philemon 60	Philippians 61	St. Matthew; St. Luke 61/64
								1 Timothy; Titus; 1 Peter 64	Jude 65	Acts; 2 Peter; 2 Timothy 66/68
										Hebrews 68

Outline

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- I. Introduction (1:1-2)
 - A. The author and recipients (1:1)
 - B. The salutation (1:2)
- II. The calling of the church (1:3—3:21)
 - A. The foundation of the church (1:3-23)
 - B. The foundation of the church (2:1—3:21)
- III. The conduct of the church (4:1—6:20)
 - A. Conduct in unity (4:1-16)
 - B. Conduct in holiness (4:17—5:2)
 - C. Conduct in light (5:3-14)
 - D. Conduct in wisdom (5:15-21)
 - E. Conduct in the home (5:22—6:9)
 - F. Conduct in conflict (6:10-20)
- IV. Conclusion (6:21-24)
 - A. The sending of Tychicus (6:21-22)
 - B. The salutation (6:23)
 - C. The benediction (6:24)