

Introduction to Ephesians

Paul's letters fall into five general categories:

1. Paul's First Missionary Journey (exact dates debated):

Circa April of 48 A.D. to September 49 A.D.;

Recorded in Acts 13:2-14:28.

It is debated that it was in this time frame (A.D. 49) that Paul wrote the letter to Galatians, where he counters the false teaching of 'saved by grace, live by Law' to 'saved by grace, live by grace.'

2. Second Missionary Journey:

April A.D. 50-Sept. A.D. 52;

Recorded in Acts 15:36-18:22.

It is in this journey that Paul first visits Ephesus. Maybe he wrote Galatians during this journey; but he did write 1 Thessalonians from Corinth in 51 A.D. and 2 Thessalonians from Corinth in A.D. 51.

3. Third Missionary Journey

Spring 53-May 57;

Recorded in Acts 18:23-21:16.

In Acts 20:31 we learn that Paul spent three years teaching in Ephesus. He wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus in 56 A.D.; 2 Corinthians from Phillipi in 56 A.D.; Romans from Corinth in A.D. 56 or 57.

4. Just before Paul left for Jerusalem instead of Rome in the winter between 58 A.D. and 59.

Paul is silent...He is in prison for 2 years in a Roman jail in Caesarea.

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And then 2 years in jail in Rome (point 5 below), where Paul recovers the spirit-filled life by Faith—grace...

5. First Roman Imprisonment: Trials and imprisonments: May 57-Feb 60.

Recorded in Acts 21:26-28:29.

He wrote Ephesians From Rome in A.D. 60; and Colossians in A.D. 61; and Philemon in A.D. 61; and Philippians in early A.D. 62.

6. After first the Roman Imprisonment—fourth missionary journey and 2nd imprisonment (in point 7 below)

Paul wrote 1 Timothy from Macedonia in 62-63; and Titus from Corinth in 63 A.D.

7. Second Roman Imprisonment and death.

In this imprisonment everyone deserted Paul except Luke.

(2 Tim. 2:9, 11. In 67 or 68 A.D.), Paul was martyred by Rome.

Tradition has it that he was decapitated. Just before his death he uttered the great words:

2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

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The Book of Ephesus was written in 60 A.D. from Rome while in Paul's 1st Roman Imprisonment. It teaches us that no matter how difficult circumstances may be, you can use them for the glory of the Lord.

The city of Ephesus was a rich, populated busy metropolis at this time in history. It boasted a busy port from which goods were shipped to other Mediterranean ports. It also boasted of a huge theater, seating about 25,000 people. It was a powerful idolatrous city, with the shrine of the goddess known to the Greeks as Artemis and to the Romans as Diana. It was discovered by J.T. Wood in 1870. It was listed as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. People came from all over the world to Ephesus to worship at the temple of Diana, where multiple priestesses serviced worshippers. The Diana cult brought about prosperous trade. Ephesus became much like our Las Vegas where people wanted to take home souvenirs and memories. Therefore, Ephesus boasted a large guild of silversmiths who made their money off silver shrines and images of Diana. It was in this pagan environment that Paul stayed three years, teaching the people in this city.

I think about this every time I drive by a Muslim idolatrous mosque, or every time I drive by a Roman Catholic Church that worships Mary, or every time I drive by a church that claims to be Christian yet their gospel is anything other than faith alone in Christ alone. America is an idolatrous nation!

The local assembly of Ephesus is the first of the seven churches addressed in Revelation 2-3, which we will have to read through at some later time.

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A multitude of people claim to be Christian. Yet, the way they live is far from putting on Christ. The way many husbands treat their wives or fail to treat them, or the way many wives do not submit to the authority of their husbands. Yet, these claim to be wonderful Christians. Remember, that while the world may not see your true behavior, God does. The way many parents rear their children or do not rear them as unto the Lord. The way many who claim to be Christian, spend their money or their time, is anything but proper stewards of what God has graciously given to them. Or many claim to be wonderful lovers of Christ but the way they treat members of their family is anything but the love of Christ. And we do not even need to get into how so many who claim to follow Jesus, conduct themselves at their employment. And it goes on and on.

This is what the book of Ephesians is all about. The first four chapters describe who you are in Christ. And this first section is filled with exalting God the Father. Who He is and what He had done for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ. This book is a glorification and exultation of God the Father!

We are God's chosen ones (1:1-23) and we are God's building. (2:19-3:21).

Then, this Epistle is about our Position in Christ. 2:1-18.

This Epistle is about our total dependence upon the Holy Spirit by faith.

Now once we understand all God the Father has done for us and our position in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, Paul covers the Worthy Walk of a Spirit-Filled Christian 4:1-6:9. Then he closes this

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powerful book by reminding us we are in the Angelic Conflict, constantly in battle.

Power of words: The word ‘**in**’ occurs some 90 times. Our position ‘*in Christ*’ is the driving doctrine of this Epistle.

We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

We are chosen in Christ.

In Christ we have redemption.

We are sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit.

We have wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

We are alive and together in Christ.

We are created in Christ.

The eternal plan of God is carried out in Jesus Christ.

Truth is in Jesus.

God the Father has forgiven us in Christ.

We are to give thanks to God the Father in Jesus name.

We will learn a great deal about the predominance of God the Father. He is referred to over 25 times.

The Will of God.

Grace and Peace from God.

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Father of Glory.

God, rich in mercy.

Salvation is a gift from God.

God prepared our good works.

Without God.

We are one body before God.

We are God's building.

Access in one Spirit to the Father.

Hidden in God.

Wisdom of God.

Fullness of God.

One God who is over all and through all and in all.

Knowledge of the Son of God.

Excluded from the Life of God.

New Self which is in the Likeness of God.

The Holy Spirit of God.

God in Christ has forgiven you.

Be imitators of God.

A sacrifice to God.

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Kingdom of Christ and God.

The Wrath of God.

Give thanks to God.

Doing the Will of God.

Put on the whole armor of God.

The Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

Peace and love with faith from God the Father.

Oh, people, the moral or immoral problems in America today are not about Jesus Christ, they are about God.

We have failed to teach two generations about God, and we must reach our millennials today about God.

Let me show you what I am talking about, when I say the immorality of today is about God, not about Jesus but about God

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Romans 1:19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

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Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Romans 1:21 For even though they knew **God**, they did not honor Him as **God** or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Romans 1:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Romans 1:23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible **God** for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Romans 1:24 Therefore **God** gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

Romans 1:25 For they exchanged the truth of **God** for a lie, and worshiped and served the

creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Romans 1:26 For this reason **God** gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

Romans 1:27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Romans 1:28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge **God** any longer, **God** gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

Romans 1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,

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Romans 1:30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

Romans 1:31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

Romans 1:32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

People, we must teach our young people about God! And then, if they desire to have a relationship with God, we tell them about His Son, Jesus. But, we now have two generations who have been taught evolution; been taught there is no God. They have believed it and have grown up with that thinking. And so, look at the moral decadence we have in this great nation of America. Read and re-read Rom. 1:18-32. Count the number of times God is mentioned and what is said about Him each time He is mentioned.

To America, first it is about God, then about Jesus.

Remember, Jesus came to planet earth and died on the cross in the place of the human race to bring us to His Father, God, our Father.

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This is what we are going to do in our study of Ephesians. We are going to learn about God! God Almighty! The Incorruptible God; El Shaddai—God of our Salvation, Father of our Savior.

Know Him and you will thirst to know His Son.

You will hunger to have a relationship with Him.

And how do we have a relationship with God?

By Grace through faith.

The word Grace is used some 13 times, making sure that we understand the only way of relationship with God is by grace through faith, whether speaking of salvation or spirituality. It amazes me how many pastors can study the book of Ephesians and still demand works like confession or repentance while in the flesh, ignoring grace altogether. If you desire a relationship with God, a fellowship with God, it must be by grace, not by works. To contend works for salvation or spirituality reveals a lack of understanding and knowing God. To think that you are ever too bad to have intimacy with God again, is indication you do not know God, you do not understand the grace of God.

That the letter is written to believers is demonstrated by the fact that the word *walk* occurs seven times. The word ‘walk’ refers to living each day of our lives, in single life, married, young or old. God cares so much about how you and I live each day of our lives. How we walk in this world. Look at

**Ephesians 4:1 Therefore I, (Paul) the prisoner
of the Lord, (not of Rome but of the Lord)**

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implore you (desperately encourage) to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, (by God the Father).

We are to walk worthy of who we are in Christ.

We are to walk in Spiritual Love.

We are to walk as Children of the Light (Jesus Christ).

We are to be careful as to how we walk, as wise men!

We learned in Colossians 3: that we *should keep seeking the things above where Christ is*; and that we are to *set our mind on things above*. The importance of our living in light of heaven and not down here on earth is enforced in Ephesians. The epistle starts off with this orientation of every believer.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

You will note this verse emphasizes God the Father, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places and He blessed us *in Christ*. By the way, this verse starts the longest sentence in literature covering verses 3 - 12. In one sentence Paul under the direction of the Holy Spirit gives a complete summary of the works of all three persons in the Trinity.

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We are also reminded and should never forget that God raised Jesus up from the grave and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places. Therefore, we are to ‘walk,’ ‘live’ in the heavenly places where Jesus is. So, we live here on earth but we are to walk according to heaven.

And dear called ones, remember our battle is not with those we see, in our marriages, in our families, in the local churches but our struggle is against forces of wickedness in the heavenlies!!! Invisible but real! Our battle is invisible but real.

1. The letter of Ephesians was written to born again believers.
2. It is not about eternal life salvation but Spirituality.
3. The life we are to live for Christ, is not experiential.
4. The letter concentrates on the function of the Godhead in our lives.
5. The first three chapters emphasizes all that God has done for those who believe in Jesus as Savior, while chapters 4 through 6 emphasize the worthy walk of every believer. Note the beginning of chapter 4: “**therefore**” The result of all that God has done for the believer through Christ.
6. Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit ends this book with the challenge of living in the Angelic Conflict. Note Ephesians 6:10 “**finally.**”

One of the reasons false doctrines like ‘Replacement Theology’ find their way into Christian churches is because pastors do not study the Word of God, as they should. For example, here in the book of Ephesians the word ‘mystery’ occurs 6 times. Proper understanding of ‘mystery’ would

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prevent one from confusing the Church with Israel. The mystery spoken of here in Ephesians is the mystery hidden by God from the age of Gentiles and the age of Israel. The mystery is about the Church. We noted it four times in the book of Colossians. Here we will learn that God will reveal the mystery to us in Christ. In fact, the mystery is the mystery of Christ. The mystery is Christ and His Church, which by the way is the foundation of marriage between a man and a woman.

Next Sunday we will begin a study of the wonders of the Trinity in Ephesians one. Please read chapter one three times over the week.