

# Letter (Epistle) to the Ephesians

## The Prelude

### Ephesus the City

Ephesus was considered the most important Greek city in western Asia Minor, and now lies in ruin in modern day western Turkey. Ephesus was apparently the most famous and populous city in western Asia. It was a major commercial center and a thriving place for international trade. It was situated on an inland harbor, connected to the Cayster River which in turn emptied into the Aegean Sea. It was located in an intersection of major trade routes so received much visitation by people throughout the region.

The city was impressive not only for its commerce, but also boasted some impressive civic monuments and structures, including:

- **Temple of Artemis** (Greek name; a.k.a. Diana – Roman name). This temple was considered one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. It was 425 feet long by 220 feet wide. It had 127 white marble columns 62 feet high. Inside the inner sanctuary there was a statue of a many breasted woman that was supposedly dropped from heaven (it could have been a meteorite).
- **Theatre.** Seating capacity was around 25,000 people, which is more than the Rose Garden (Moda Center) or Jen Weld Field!
- **Marketplace; Town Hall; Library; Lecture Hall of Tyrannys; stadium; many baths and gymnasiums.**

Ephesus was advanced in the Arts & Sciences, and was a haven for philosophers, poets, artists and orators. The worship of Artemis/Diana was the dominant religion. Other false religions (several centered around magical arts) also were followed.

Ephesus was an extremely vital and strategic city – and Paul recognized that fact. Paul considered the city so important that he spent more time there than any other city (according to Dr. Luke in Acts).

## **Paul's Ministry in Ephesus**

Paul had a ministry within Ephesus several years prior to writing his letter to the Ephesians in about 60-61 A.D. The book of Acts gives us some history about Paul's role in the development of the Ephesians church, and records some other significant events that had influence upon the church.

### **Acts 18:18-28**

As part of his second missionary journey, Paul makes his first recorded visit to Ephesus. This was a brief stay, but he did go to the synagogue to reason with the Jews. Priscilla & Aquilla were left to minister; they taught Apollos who also was in Ephesus for a time.

### **Acts 19:1 – 20:1**

As part of his third missionary journey, Paul makes his second recorded trip to Ephesus and stays there at least 2 years and 3 months (which in Jewish reckoning at the time is equivalent to three years). Some highlights of his stay:

- v. 8– 10        Paul spoke boldly and persuasively in the synagogue for three months; then he had daily discussions in a lecture hall for two years. Jews and Greeks throughout Asia heard about God.
- v. 11-12        God did extraordinary miracles through Paul!
- v. 13-20        God uses an evil spirit to spread His word, grow his church and glorify His name!
- v. 23-41        Paul rocks the boat – a great riot breaks out!
- v. 20:1         Paul leaves Ephesus

### **Acts 20:17-38**

Paul's farewell to the Ephesians elders, delivered from Miletus (30 miles south of Ephesus).

### **NOTES:**

# LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

**Author:**

Apostle Paul. He was about 65 years of age when he wrote the letter.

**Date:**

About 60-61 A.D., while Paul was in prison

**Recipients:**

Originally sent to the church at Ephesus, it also appears to have been intended to be circulated among other churches too. Of course God knew that we would be studying this in 2000 and wants to speak to us through this letter too!

**Theme and Purpose:**

The theme of Ephesians is the believer's responsibility to walk in accordance with his heavenly calling in Christ Jesus (4:1). Ephesians was not written to correct specific errors in a local church, but to prevent problems in the church as a whole by encouraging the body of Christ to mature in Him. It was also written to make believers more aware of their position in Christ because this is the basis for their practice on every level of life (Wilkinson, "Talk Through the New Testament").

This letter provides answers to the most basic and important questions of life: *Why am I here? What's the purpose of life? How can I be successful?*

**Two Main Parts:**

The letter can be broken down into two major parts: Part One (chapters 1-3) and Part Two (chapters 4-6). Here are some differences between the two:

	<u>Part One (Chs. 1-3)</u>	<u>Part Two (Chs. 4-6)</u>
Focus:	Position of the Christian	Practice of the Christian
Topics:	Belief Privileges of the Christian We in Christ Heavenly standing	Behavior Responsibilities of the Christian Christ in us Earthly walk
A Key Question Answered:	Who are we as Christians?	How should we live?

## Outline of Ephesians

### **Part One: The Position of the Christian (1:1 – 3:21)**

- I. Praise for Redemption 1:1-14**
  - A. Salutation from Paul 1:1-2
  - B. Chosen by the Father 1:3-6
  - C. Redeemed by the Son 1:7-12
  - D. Sealed by the Spirit 1:13-14
- II. Prayer for Revelation 1:15-23**
- III. Position of the Christian 2:1-3:13**
  - A. The Christian's Position Individually 2:1-10
    - 1. Old condition: Dead to God 2:1-3
    - 2. New condition: Alive to God 2:4-10
  - B. The Christian's Position Corporately 2:11-3:13
    - 1. Reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles 2:11-22
    - 2. Revelation of the Mystery of the Church 3:1-13
- IV. Prayer for Realization 3:14-21**

### **Part Two: The Practice of the Christian (4:1-6:24)**

- I. Unity in the Church 4:1-6**
  - A. Exhortation to unity 4:1-3
  - B. Explanation of Unity 4:4-6
  - C. Means for Unity: The Gifts 4:7-11
  - D. Purpose of the Gifts 4:12-16
- II. Holiness in Life 4:17-5:21**
  - A. Put Off the Old Man 4:17-22
  - B. Put on the New Man 4:23-29
  - C. Grieve not the Holy Spirit 4:30-5:2
  - D. Walk as Children of Light 5:13-17
  - E. Be Filled with the Spirit 5:18-21
- III. Responsibilities in Home and at Work 5:22-6:9**
  - A. Wives: Submit to Your Husbands 5:22-24
  - B. Husbands: Love Your Wives 5:25-33
  - C. Children: Obey Your Parents 6:1-4
  - D. Service on the Job 6:5-9
- IV. Conduct in the Conflict 6:10-24**
  - A. Put on the Armor of God 6:10-17
  - B. Pray for Boldness 6:18-20
  - C. Conclusion 6:21-24

# CHAPTER ONE NOTES

## Brief Outline:

- |            |                              |                |
|------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>I.</b>  | <b>Praise for Redemption</b> | <b>1:1-14</b>  |
|            | A. Salutation from Paul      | 1:1-2          |
|            | B. Chosen by the Father      | 1:3-6          |
|            | C. Redeemed by the Son       | 1:7-12         |
|            | D. Sealed by the Spirit      | 1:13-14        |
| <b>II.</b> | <b>Prayer for Revelation</b> | <b>1:15-23</b> |

## Notes:

What is grace?

What is peace?

What spiritual blessings have been given to us as Christians?

How do we gain salvation?

How is our salvation secured?

How can we pray for each other?

What hope do we have as Christians?

How has God the Father displayed His power?

What can we learn about God the Son – Jesus Christ?

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<b>II.</b>	<b>Prayer for Revelation</b>	<b>1:15-23</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Position of the Christian</b>	<b>2:1-3:13</b>
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	B. The Christian's Position Corporately	2:11-3:13
	1. Reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles	2:11-22

## CHAPTER TWO NOTES

Prior to our salvation, what was our spiritual condition? Where were we headed?

What was God's driving motivation for saving us?

What is the basis for our salvation? How are we saved?

Are we saved by our own good works? If not, what role do good works play?

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	2. <b>Revelation of the Mystery of the Church</b>	<b>3:1-13</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Prayer for Realization</b>	<b>3:14-21</b>

## CHAPTER THREE NOTES

**Verses 1 – 6:** Why did God call a strict Jew such as Paul to be His minister to the Gentiles?

What is the “mystery” that Paul refers to?

**Verses 7 – 13:** What can we learn about humility from Paul's testimony and example?

(Verse 10) What is one of the important roles of the church?

**Verses 14-21:** What can we learn about prayer from this example?

- Approaching God (v. 14-15)
- Important petitions (requests) (v. 16 – 19)
- Doxology (praise/worship) (v. 20-21)

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A Key Question		
Answered:	Who are we as Christians?	How should we live?

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## CHAPTER 4 NOTES



## **CHAPTER 5 & 6 NOTES**

### **“LIVING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT”**

#### **Key Practices & Attitudes from Ephesians 5:3-20**

To “live a life worthy of our calling”, there are some practices and attitudes we must avoid, others that we need to pursue. Following is a list from Ephesians 5:3-20:

#### **“NOT TO DO LIST”**

Avoid ...

- Sexual immorality (v. 3)
- Impurity (v. 3)
- Greed (v. 3)
- Obscenity (v. 4)
- Foolish talk (v. 4)
- Coarse joking (v. 4)
- Being deceived (v. 6)
- Being partners with the disobedient (v. 7)
- Evil (Fruitless deeds of darkness) (v. 8)
- Foolishness (v. 17)
- Getting drunk (v. 18)

#### **“TO DO LIST”**

- Thanksgiving (v. 4 & 20)
- Goodness (v. 9)
- Righteousness (v. 9)
- Truth (v. 9)
- Find out what pleases the Lord (v. 10)
- Expose evil (v. 11)
- Live wisely (v. 15)
- Make most of every opportunity (v. 16)
- Understand God’s will (v. 17)
- Be filled with the Spirit (v. 18)
- Speak psalms, hymns, spiritual songs (v. 19)

# ***KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL EARTHLY RELATIONSHIPS!***

(From Ephesians 5:21 – 6:9)

**General Principle (Eph 5:21): “Submit to one another out of reverence to Christ”**

Question: What does it mean to submit?

[Note: In the Greek grammar, v. 21 “submit” related back to v. 18 “be filled with the Holy Spirit”. When we are filled with the Spirit (v. 18), then we should speak (v. 19), sing (v. 19), make music (v. 19), give thanks (v. 20), and submit to one another (v. 21)].

*Specific teachings in everyday relationships:*

**Wives: Submit to Your Husbands** (5:22-24)

**Husbands: Love Your Wives** (Eph 5:25-33)

**Children: Obey Your Parents** (Eph 6:1-3)

**Fathers: Train Your Children** (Eph 6:4)

**Slaves (Employees): Obey Your Bosses** (Eph 6:5-8)

**Masters (Bosses): Respect Your Employees** (Eph 6:9)

*Application Question for Me: What specific things can I do to better apply these teachings?*

## ***LIVING IN SPIRITUAL VICTORY!***

**(Eph 6:10-20)**

Key teachings that will help us live in consistent spiritual victory:

- ✓ Be strong in the Lord! (6:10)
  
- ✓ Put on the Armor of God, and stand your ground (6:11-17)
  - Belt of Truth (v. 14)
  
  - Breastplate of Righteousness (v. 14)
  
  - Shoes of Peace (v. 15)
  
  - Shield of Faith (v. 16)
  
  - Helmet of Salvation (v. 17)
  
  - Sword of Spirit (v. 17)
  
  - Keep praying! (v. 18 – 20)

PERSONAL APPLICATIONS?