

Ephesians

Introduction

Let's open with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

We thank you for this time together. We pray for your Spirit to touch us and to minister to us, and to give us some understanding on some of the more difficult issues, some of the things that are confusing, some of the things that people debate and have been debating for years. Help us to see the simplicity that is in Christ as we start this book. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen!

First of all, we're going to take a short introduction as we normally do before we start a new book. Some of the material is the same. some of it is specific as it applies to Ephesus.

Again, we have our outline of the Old Testament. This is the same outline that we have had in the past. Remember that the contents of the Old Testament are history and prophecy. And the original language is Hebrew with about seven chapters in Aramaic.

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The reason why this is important to understand is that Hebrew is a very general language and it is recording history and prophecy, not doctrine.

That is important to understand and it is why the Hebrew people are so mixed up in their understanding of the text.

In our bible we have the law, Genesis through Deuteronomy, all the way through the writings and the prophets.

The Hebrew bible not only has it in different arrangement, but there are actually different books. You'll notice that the Torah, the law is the same. We have the prophets, the Neviim, and then we have the writings which correspond to Psalms and Song of Solomon in our book.

But the Ketuvim, the writings, notice that the book of Daniel is part of the writings. The Jews do not consider Daniel to be prophecy. They consider it to be a diary of Daniel's life, and they included it in with the writings.

And it's kind of interesting because the most important prophecy of the Old Testament is in Daniel Chapter 9 Verses 24 to 27 which is about the coming of Christ. But they don't have Daniel in their prophetic books.

All of the prophets are in one section as are in our book. We call the prophets the major and the minor prophets, not because of importance, but because of the size of the books.

So you will hear people make mention of the major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and even Daniel. Then there are the minor prophets listed in commentaries as being the minor prophets, from Hosea through Malachi, but only because of the size of the books, not because of minor importance. So keep that in mind when you are going through the prophets.

Old Testament (Covenant)			
Original Language: Hebrew/Aramaic			
Contents: History/Prophecy			
English Bible Arrangement (according to the Septuagint)			
Law Genesis-Deuteronomy	History Joshua-Esther	Writings Psalms-Song of Solomon	Prophets Isaiah-Malachi
Hebrew Bible Arrangement			
Law Genesis-Deuteronomy	Prophets Joshua-Malachi (minus Ruth, Lamentations & Daniel)	Writings Job-II Chronicles (including Ruth, Lamentations & Daniel)	
Torah	Nevi'im	Ketuvim	
תּוֹרָה	נְבִיאִים	כְּתוּבִים	

The original language in and of the New Testament is Greek. Its contents are history and doctrine or teaching.

All of our teaching is taken from the teaching section, which is actually the second section in the New Testament.

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People might ask that since we are putting the actual public ministry of the Lord in the historical section, Matthew through Acts, aren't we diminishing the importance of the Lord's ministry?

The answer to that is no. As a matter of fact, we get into problems in the body of Christ because we don't make the connections between the two sections, and that the teaching section actually explains the ministry of Christ.

They run parallel. There's never a contradiction between the two.

Many of the Lord's teachings are just presented to us in a historical background and we're not really told a lot of the times what He meant by what He said. Just the teaching is presented.

And we can go to the teaching part of the New Testament, and see what the apostle that were with Him during His public ministry, and for about 62 to 63 years of early church history, we can receive from them those things that understood from the Lord.

They didn't start their ministry when the Holy Spirit came. They were with the Lord for three years. And even the apostle Paul spent three years with the Lord, privately receiving revelation from Christ.

And as we have studied in Galatians, he was received by the church as being legitimate and having the authority of being an apostle, and that he has heard from Christ and received teaching from Christ.

So, a lot of our problems in the body of Christ come from teachings and statements that Jesus made that He didn't explain. And so people take some of those statements and they come up with various meanings of what Jesus said.

For instance, someone might say that they were told that faith is a fruit of God's Spirit, but that Jesus once told someone let it be unto you according to your faith.

But what does that mean? Was Jesus challenging him to come up with faith? Was He presenting the challenge before him to show him that he didn't have any faith?

Jesus made the statement. You can go in several different directions with it. We choose to go one direction because our frame of mind is set on human performance and production.

The problem is that it doesn't match with the New Testament because if we take our understanding in the gospels to be that man is being challenged to come up with the faith, we carry that frame of mind over into the New Testament, and we interpret that the same way rather than the other way around.

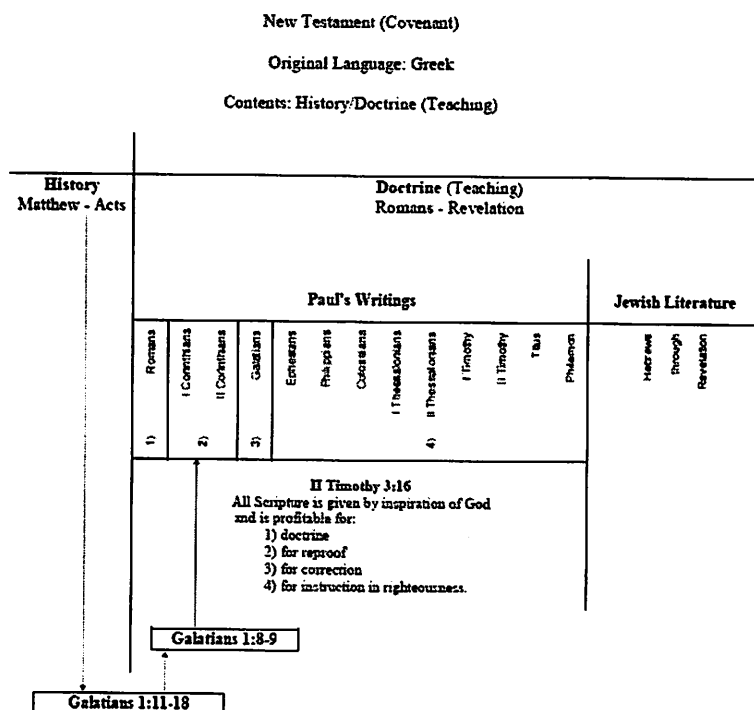
If Jesus said where is your faith, we should be going to the teaching part of the New Testament to see what the teaching part of the New Testament teach about faith.

They can't contradict each other. Jesus made a statement, but the early church for 63 years taught about it.

We can see that the teaching on faith as an example, we can go back and see what Jesus meant by His presentation when we understand that the meaning of faith is given in the rest of the New Testament.

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2 Corinthians 10:4-6 is some of my favorite verses in the bible.

II Corinthians 10:4-6

- 4) For the tools of our warfare *are* not fleshly, but powerful *with* God for the pulling down of strongholds;
- 5) pulling down reasonings and every high thing exalting itself against the knowledge of God and taking captive every thought into the obedience of Christ;
- 6) and having in readiness that we should avenge all disobedience, whenever your obedience should be fulfilled.

So we can see that Paul is fighting for their minds. And that's where Satan derails if you will, to a certain degree, psychologically getting a believer off the path.

So Paul is very specific about doctrine.

You also see this here where Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

It is interesting because his letters are grouped not by chronological order, but rather by the four sections which he has presented.

We studied Romans for doctrine and conviction, 1 and 2 Corinthians for correction, and Galatians from going the wrong way.

And now we are starting Ephesians which is the beginning of the fourth section for the instruction in righteousness.

So it is very important to see that the chart above lists the books of the New Testament in biblical order. And it is there for a reason.

Okay, let's study about the introduction to the book of Ephesians itself.

I. About the Author

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The author is Paul. His inscription is on all thirteen of his letters.

II. To Whom It Was Written

It was written to the church in Ephesus.

Ephesians is believed to be a circulation letter distributed throughout Asia. The reason: Because many older manuscripts do not contain the words "in Ephesus" as in Verse 1.

And so in Verse 1, Paul writes and says to the believers who are in Ephesus. And the older manuscripts don't have the words "in Ephesus."

And that causes us to believe that once the church in Ephesus received this letter, they wrote their name in the copy of it, and then sent it to the other churches where other churches could copy it and put their name in it.

It's not addressed to specific individuals, nor is it to correct a specific problem in a certain church.

The whole presentation of the letter was as if it was distributed to the whole body of Christ, which indeed it is.

III. The History of Ephesus

Ephesus was the Roman capital of Asia.

Paul, during his third missionary journey came all the way over to Ephesus and he ministered there for about three years. He went up the coast over into Philippi, and down the coast through Macedonia and Achaia, and then came back over to Miletus, and then went back to Jerusalem.

He actually started his missionary journey out of Antioch of Assyria, where all of the believers had gone after the persecutions began in Jerusalem.

Ephesus is the hub of Asia as far as the missionary work goes.

The apostle John himself pastored here right before he died. He came back either before or after his time on the island of Patmos.

So John pastored there. And like I said, Paul was there for about three years. Timothy took over after him for a year and a half, and the letters and the missionary efforts coming out from here went all the way through and the seven churches in Revelation had actually started from out of Ephesus, one of the capitals and the main encampment of Christianity.

Right outside of Ephesus is where the tomb of Mary is supposed to be, as history tells us that Mary actually wound up in Ephesus and spent her last days there.

Ephesus was the Roman capital of Asia.

Ephesus was known for having one of the seven wonders of the world – the temple of Artemis (or Diana).

Ephesus is believed to be evangelized by Priscilla and Aquila. (Acts 18:18-19)

The church in Ephesus was later established by Paul during his third missionary journey. (Acts 19)

Paul ministered there for three years.

After Paul left, Timothy pastored the church for about 1 1/2 years.

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Paul wrote to Timothy in Ephesus to counter false teaching by two leaders in the church in Ephesus - Hymenaeus and Alexander. (I Timothy 1:3 and I Timothy 1:20)

Thirty years later, Christ gave the message to Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7. So thirty years later the Lord said that you have left your first love. And that was Christ's message to them!

IV. The Theme of Ephesians

It presents the believer's position in Christ.

The term "in Christ" is the key phrase in the letter to the Ephesians.

V. Date / Background

It was written around 63 A.D. while Paul was in prison in Rome. (Acts 28:16-31) Paul was in house arrest for two years. This was his first imprisonment. His second imprisonment is when he was in the Mamertine prison. But this first time, he was under house arrest for about two years.

Ephesians is one of the prison letters. That is, one of the four written by Paul while he was imprisoned at this time. The others were Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.

So Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon are known as the prison epistles or prison letters because they were written by Paul while he was under house arrest in Rome.

VI. Delivered by:

It was delivered by Tychicus. Ephesians 6:21-22 and Colossians 4:7-8 tell us that Tychicus brought both letters. So it is believed that Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, because Philemon is a man that lived in

Colosse, so his letter accompanied the letter to Colosse, and Tychicus took all three and delivered them.

VII. Section Outline of the Book of Ephesians

Chapters 1-3 comprise The Doctrine of the New Life in Christ.

Chapters 4-6 are The Details of the New Life in Christ.

In other words, he takes the doctrine of the first three chapters, and he goes into detail and in depth of those doctrines, the function and performance of the church.

He's going to present to us the armor of God all in those last three chapters.

Let's close with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

Again we take this time to thank you for your word. We look forward to beginning this great book and we pray that you will continue to draw us to your word and that you will teach us the important truths so that we might grow in Christ. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen!