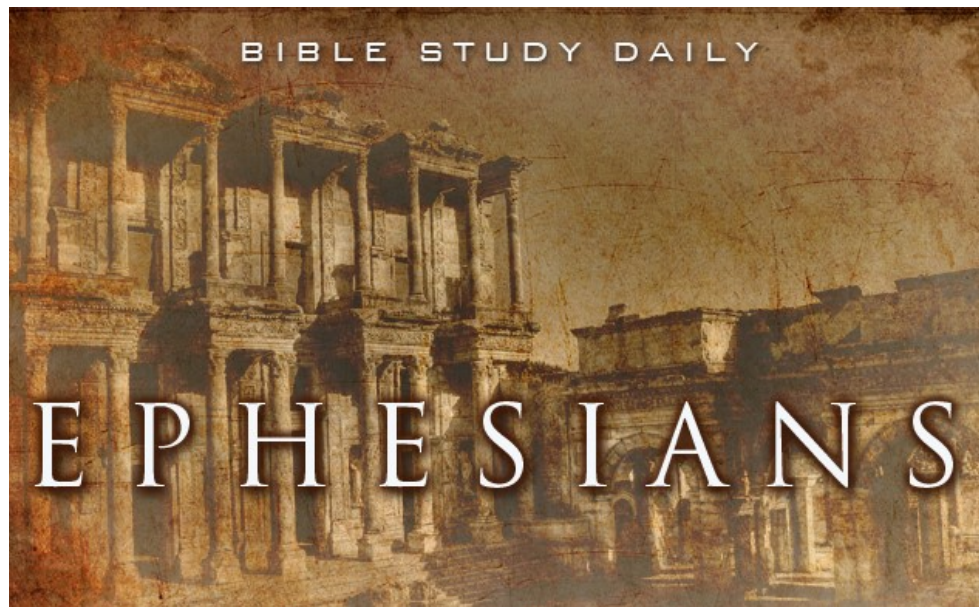




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Ephesians as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The title “Ephesians” comes from the intended audience designated in 1:1, “To the faithful saints in Christ Jesus at Ephesus.” The body of the epistle makes it clear that Paul’s intended audience in Ephesus both Jewish and Gentile Christians.

Author

Paul claims authorship of Ephesians 1:1, and 3:1.

Genre

Epistle

Literary Form

The epistle to the Ephesians is a personal letter that includes sections of poetry, worship in the form of prayer and thanksgiving, and exhortation.

Time Frame

Paul was in prison at the time of the writing of Ephesians (3:1, 4:1, 6:20). Scholars disagree whether Paul was in prison in Caesarea (Acts 24:22), or in Rome (Acts 28:30). Tradition holds that Paul wrote Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, and Ephesians from Rome about A.D. 60-61.

Emphasis

The emphasis of Ephesians is on Jewish and Gentile believers being one in Christ as demonstrated by their love for each other. There should be unity within the body of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, with Christ at the head.

Outline

- Introduction (1:1-14)
- Prayer of Thanksgiving (1:15-23)
- Salvation through faith alone by the grace of God (2:1-10)
- Unity of God’s people (2:11-22)
- The mystery of revealed (3:1-13)
- Prayer for strength and love (3:14-21)
- Unity within the body of Christ (4:1-16)
- Walking in Holiness (4:17-5:21)
- Relationship among God’s people (5:22-6:9)
- Putting on the armor of God (6:10-20)
- Conclusion (6:21-24)

What I Noticed Today

(Ephesians 1-3)

Paul often begins his letters with doctrine and follows with an application. The letter to the Galatians follows this pattern: the first three chapters cover doctrinal issues, and the second three chapters provide the application.

Ephesians 1

In verses 1-2 Paul has the usual opening to the letter: he identifies himself as the author, specifies the saints (believers) in Ephesus as the audience, and includes a greeting.

Paul makes a point of establishing his authority saying he was made an apostle by God's will.


Note: Paul specifies the "saints" as being "in Christ Jesus" (as opposed to having some other belief). He uses the phrase "in Christ Jesus," "in Christ", or "in Him" nine times in Ephesians 1:1-14.

Note: Paul extends "grace" and "peace" from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Both grace and peace are blessings from God. Paul uses "grace" 12 times, and "peace" eight times.

In verses 3-14 Paul discusses the reason God is to be praised is because of the spiritual blessings God has for those who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ.

- God chose us before the foundation of the world (v. 4).
- God predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ to Himself (vv. 5-6).
- The purpose of God's plan of redemption is to praise His glorious grace (v. 6).
- Man was redeemed from slavery to sin, and our sins were forgiven because of God's grace (v. 7).
- God's grace provides wisdom and understanding of the mystery of His will to bring all things in heaven and earth under the headship of His Son (Jesus' Millennial reign) (vv. 8-10).
- We (Jewish) believers were also predestined to receive this inheritance (vv. 11-12).
- You also (Gentile) believers received the Gospel, and believed, and were sealed with the Holy Spirit (v. 13).
- The Holy Spirit is the down payment on our redemption (v. 14).

In verses 15-23 Paul says because of this (God's redemptive plan vv. 3-14) he is thankful for the faith of the Ephesians and their love for the saints.



Note: Paul is thankful because the Ephesians have both a strong vertical relationship to Christ, and a strong horizontal relationship in their love for their brothers in Christ.

In verses 16-17 Paul prays for the Ephesians:

- Paul prays the God of our Lord Jesus Christ would give them a spirit of wisdom and knowledge.
- That the perception of their mind (hearts) will be enlightened (they would know God).

In verses 18-23 Paul desires the Ephesians to know:

- The hope of His calling is an assurance of eternal life through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- The riches of His glorious inheritance among the saints.
- The immeasurable power of God's greatness. The proof of God's power includes 1) God raising Christ from the dead, 2) God placed all things under Christ's feet, and 3) God appointed Christ head over the body of believers, the church.

Ephesians 2

In chapter 2 Paul shifts focus to how sinners pass from death to life, from facing God's wrath to enjoying God's grace.

Note: In Greek verses 1-7 are one long sentence in which God is the subject. Paul compares the old life in verses 1-3, against the new life in verses 4-6.

In verses 1-3 Old Life—Dead to God:

- We were dead in our trespasses and our sins.
- We followed the ways of the world.
- We were ruled by Satan (ruler of the kingdom of air).
- We followed the ways of this world.

In verses 4-6 New Life—Alive in God:

- But, God is rich in mercy because of His great love for us.
- God has made us alive in Christ.
- God raised us up with Christ.
- God seated us with Christ in the heavens.

In verses 7-10 Paul describes the work of reconciliation:

- Kindness (v. 7). God gave us His Son.
- Grace (v. 8). We are saved by grace.

- Faith (vv. 8-9). We are saved through grace by faith, and not by works.
- Saved (v. 8).

The reason for God's work in redeeming mankind is 1) we are God's workmanship, 2) created in Christ Jesus, 3) to do good works, 4) which God prepared in advance for us to do.

In verses 11-22 Paul develops the theme of unity in the church between Jewish and Gentile believers.

In verses 11-13 Paul begins by exhorting (in the strongest way possible) for the Ephesians to remember:

- That at one time you were uncircumcised Gentiles.
- At that time they were excluded from knowledge of Messiah and citizenship in Israel, without the promised covenant they had no hope and were without God.
- But now, because of Christ, you who were once far away are now brought near by the blood of Christ.

In verses 14-18 Paul discusses the peace that exists between Jew and Gentile, and the peace that exists between God and man:


- Christ himself made the Jews and Gentiles one. He broke down the barriers and, established peace between them.
- The enmity (the Law) between them ceased to exist because of Christ's death on the cross. Jesus had rendered the Law inoperative.
- Because of this, a new man was created out of the two so that they might be reconciled as one body to God.
- Messiah also preached the good news of peace, because through Jesus we both (Jew and Gentile) have access through the Holy Spirit to the Father.

In verses 19-22 Paul describes the result of the union between God and man, Jew and Gentile.

- Gentiles are no longer strangers in a foreign land, but fellow citizens with God's people, and members of His household.
- Gentiles are fellow citizens with Jews because their faith is built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles.
- Christ Himself is the cornerstone of the church and in Christ the whole church is joined together, a holy temple (sanctuary) to the Lord.
- The purpose of this sanctuary is to become a dwelling in which the Spirit of God lives.

Ephesians 3

Paul concludes his discussion of doctrine in chapter 3. He began to offer a



prayer (v. 1) but interrupted himself to tell about the mystery of Christ (through v. 13). He then continued his prayer (vv. 14-21).

In verses 2-13 Paul discusses the mystery of God's grace.

Note: Verses 2-13 are one long sentence in the Greek.

- The administration of God's grace was given to him by God. Paul's ministry was given to him by God.
- The mystery was made known to Paul through revelation (the Damascus Road experience).
- The Ephesian believers would understand the "mystery" by reading what Paul had already written. The mystery that is now revealed is that God had planned, through the work of Christ on the cross, to join Jews and Gentiles together as one church body under Christ.
- Paul was made a servant of this Gospel by the gift of God's grace.
- The grace was given to me (Paul), least of all the saints, to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles, and to make known the administration of the mystery.
- This is so God's wisdom will be known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens.
- This was God's eternal purpose, accomplished in the Messiah, Jesus our Lord.
- We have boldness and confident access to the Father through our faith in Jesus.

Paul concludes this section telling the Ephesians not to be discouraged over his afflictions on their behalf because they are for their glory.


In verses 14-21 Paul returns to the prayer he began in verse 1.

Note: Verses 14-19 in Greek are another of Paul's long sentences in the book of Ephesians.

For this reason (the unity of the Jewish and Gentile believers into one church) Paul prays that:

- Out of God's glorious riches, He would strengthen believers with His power, through the Holy Spirit, so that through faith Christ might dwell in their hearts.
- The Messiah would dwell in their hearts, rooted and established in love.
- So that believers would understand how wide, how long, how high, and how deep is the love of Christ.
- And know that Messiah's love surpasses knowledge so you will be filled with the fullness of God.

Note: The Trinity is in view in this prayer: the Holy Spirit (v. 16),



the Messiah, Jesus the Son of God (v. 17), and God the Father (vv. 18-19).

In verses 20-21 Paul closes the prayer with a doxology (a short hymn of praise to God) describing God's abilities, His power, and His glory in the church and in Christ Jesus.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *Salvation comes from God, as a result of His grace, for His glory, to reveal His greatness.*
- *Because of God's redemptive plan, sinners have moved from bondage to freedom, from separation from God to reconciliation with God.*
- *God's eternal plan was to unite Jews and Gentiles together into one body, based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

What I Noticed Today (Ephesians 4-6)

In chapters 4-6 Paul shifts his focus from doctrinal issues to practical application; how the believer must live (or “walk”).

Ephesians 4

In verses 1-6 Paul exhorts the believers to walk together in a manner worthy of their calling: with all humility, gentleness, patience, accepting one another in love, diligently keeping the unity of the Spirit.

- There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father who is above all.

Note: The first three: humility, gentleness, and patience are virtues that contribute to the believer’s walk. Humility was considered a vice in Greek culture, to be practiced only by slaves.

In verses 7-16 Paul discusses how the use of various gifts within the body can preserve unity:


- Paul quotes Psalm 68:18 noting that God gives grace to each believer in the form of a gift.
- The gifts to the church are people with talents to serve the church in a variety of ways: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.
- The purpose of these gifts is to build up the body until we: 1) reach unity in the faith and full knowledge of God, 2) grow spiritually mature, and 3) become more like Christ.
- Then we will be stable, not tossed about by other teachings, cleverness, and deceit.
- Speaking the truth in love will build the body up as we support each other, and each person uses their gifts in the body.

In verses 17-32 having dealt with the issue of unity, Paul now discusses the importance of being holy. He does this through two lists: how not to live, then how to live as a Christian.

How not to live—The Old Life:

- Do not walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their thinking. They are separated from life with God, because of their ignorance and hardness of their hearts.
- They (Gentiles) are callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity (sensuality), impurity, and greed.

How to Live—The New Life

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- Believers no longer live darkened lives apart from God.
 - The believer has put off the old self and put on the new self, the one created according to God's righteousness and truth.

In verses 25-32 Paul expands on appropriate conduct for believers in a series of five exhortations each of which includes a negative command, a positive command, and a spiritual principle for the command.

- Stop lying. Tell the truth. Because we are each members of Christ's body.
- Do not let the sun go down on your anger. Be angry, but do not sin. Because the devil will gain a foothold in your anger.
- Do not steal. But do honest work. So that you will be able to give to those in need.
- Do not speak with foul language. But speak in a way that builds up those in need. So that it gives grace to those who hear.
- Do not grieve the Holy Spirit. Do away with vices (bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and malice). Rather, be kind, compassionate, and forgiving just as God forgave you in Christ.

Ephesians 5

Paul's applications in chapter 4 covered the believers walking in unity, and in holiness. In chapter 5 Paul considers a third application: believers should walk in love.

In verses 1-5 believers should be imitators of God because you are children of God:

- Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up to the cross for us.
- Avoid sexual immorality, impurity, and greed.
- Avoid coarse and foolish talk and crude jokes. These are not suitable in the believer's life, but thanksgiving is helpful.

Note: Paul is not suggesting that humor in and of itself is a sin, but that such coarse language used to tear down or destroy others in to be avoided.

In verses 6-14 Paul exhorts believers not to be deceived by those with empty arguments because God's wrath is coming against them.

- Do not become partners with these deceivers.
- You are no longer walking in darkness but in the light of the Lord.
- The fruit of the light is goodness, righteousness, and truth. These things please the Lord.
- Do not even participate in the fruitless work of those who walk in darkness. Instead, expose them.

Paul closes this section telling believers who have partnered with deceivers to wake up and rise from the dead, and walk in the light.

Note: Verses 6-14 involve church discipline. Believers should expose other believers who walk in unfruitful ways so they might be brought back into the light.

In verses 15-21 Paul begins his fifth section on how to “walk” as believers. This fifth section is focused on walking with the Holy Spirit.

- Don’t walk as the unwise, but as the wise, making the most of the time.
- Don’t be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.
- Don’t get drunk with wine which leads to recklessness, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Rather,

- Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.
- Sing and make music to the Lord.
- Give thanks for everything always to God the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Submit to one another (willingly serve one another) in fear of Christ.
- In verses 22-32 Paul gives specific commands to wives and husbands regarding how to walk as believers:
- Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church.

Husbands, love you wives just as Christ loved the church and died for her.

Note: The word used for “love” is *agapao*. It is the strongest, most selfless kind of love. It is the same word used of Christ’s love for the church.

- Husbands, love your wives as you do your own bodies. Provide and care for her just as you do for your own body, and just as Christ did for the church.
- Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 to describe the union of two into one flesh in the marriage. The bond between husband and wife is greater than the bond between parent and child.

Note: Paul’s reference to “one flesh” in verse 31 also applies to the unity between Christ and the church.

Ephesians 6

Paul continues with instructions for believers living a Holy Spirit filled life.

In verses 1-4 Paul discusses the relationship between parents and children.

- Children are to obey their parents in the Lord (meaning as you would

obey the Lord). This commandment comes with a promise that it will go well with you and you will have a long life.

- Fathers, do not stir up anger in your children but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Note: Children are to “obey in the Lord” and parents are to “instruct in the Lord.”

In verses 5-9 Paul discusses the relationship between Christian slaves and their masters.

- Slaves, obey your human masters as you would the Lord (with fear, respect, and in sincerity).
- Work hard all the time, not just when you are being watched.
- Serve with a good attitude, as you would serve the Lord.
- The Lord will reward you for this kind of service to your masters.
- Masters, treat you slaves in the same way (to please the Lord), remembering that your master is Christ in heaven.

In verses 10-20 Paul concludes with a discussion of how the believer can use God’s power to stand against evil.

- Paul exhorts believers to be strong in the Lord, and rely on Him.
- Put on the whole armor of God so you can stand against the devil.
 - Truth, like a belt around your waist.
 - Righteousness, like armor on your chest.
 - Sandals on your feet, like the Gospel of Peace.
 - Shield of faith to protect yourself from the devil.
 - Take the helmet of salvation.
 - Take the sword of the spirit. Which is God’s word.

Note: Verses 14-20 are another long sentence in the Greek. It is the eighth in the book of Ephesians.

Pray in the Spirit at all times and be alert to persevere and intercede for the saints. Pray also for me (Paul) that I may be able to boldly spread the Gospel.

In verses 21-24 Paul closes the letter saying that Tychicus as the bearer of the letter will tell you Ephesians all the news about me, to encourage them. Paul wishes them peace and faith with love from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *I can’t help but wonder what would be different in today’s society if we applied the practical application of the doctrine that Paul espouses for*



the believer.

- *Could we put off the old self and put on the new in a way that would be a testimony to Christ's light shining in us?*
- *Could we walk in unity, in love, and live a spirit filled life?*
- *Could we put on the whole armor of God and stand strong against Satan and his minions?*