

**Epistle to the Ephesians: An Introduction**  
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**I. Introduction to Ephesians**

What is a Christian? Who is a Christian? What happens when a sinner becomes saved and part of the family of God? How does one live in this world as a believer in Christ? When we are born into a family we adopt and become an established identity. Not only that, but are blessed with the rights and privileges of the family including inheritances, wealth, and status. All that the family owns becomes ours by right and adoption. The same is true for when we become Christians. Not only do we get the blessings of the family but are called to act worthily of the family line; that is, we are to behave and think and respond in the way that honors the family. For us as Christians that also means being engaged in a spiritual battle against the world, the flesh (our sinful nature), and Satan himself. To live this life, God has blessed us with the knowledge to know His will and His ways and has called us to a higher living legacy. The book of Ephesians is filled with the instructions on how to live this life as a believer, who used to be a sinner (by nature). Ephesians has revealed that we have become a new family that has inherited all that God possesses as well as how we are to live in this evil world. Ephesians also contains doctrinal truth about one's salvation and election to faith being dependent solely on the Sovereignty of God; we come to faith by God's Sovereign choice which stems from the good pleasure of His will, which was done from before the creation of the world. This not only locks in a great truth about our salvation but also reveals that as God's elect we are blessed with every spiritual blessing from heaven and we are to walk worthily of these things because we are saints of God, having been redeemed by God to live holy and be filled with the Spirit of God. We are to demonstrate this newness of life by how we treat our spouses, our children, and those whom we work for and with. We are to participate in using the spiritual blessings and gifts that God has bestowed to us to equip and lift up the body of Christ and help edify and build up the church for the glory of God and for building each other up till we arrive at the unity of faith (to we reach full maturity of having spiritual unity in both understanding and practice in Christ). We are to be ready for the attacks of the enemy and we are to make a diligent effort in our daily strives in walking a Christian way. In this book, we have the essential truths for how to live as Christians as well as together how to build up our church, both locally and universally. In this study, we examine the doctrinal truths of salvation, Christian living, marriage, ministry, and spiritual warfare. We will examine theology behind sainthood as well as what it means to be a church and why that matters both in a practical living way and in marriage (specifically the Christian marriage). Will discuss the importance of church fellowship and serving as well as how to apply the truths of Ephesians to our lives daily as we engage in the spiritual battle which is a real battle of unseen foes as well as an inner battle between our sinful nature and our new nature. We will examine the Christian, the Church, and Her Christ as we began our study in the book of Ephesians.

**II. Unveiling the Message to the Ephesians**

**1. Author:**

~Paul the apostle

**A. Internal Evidence:**

~ 1:1, Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ

~Paul was an apostle by right because He had seen the risen Lord on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19); Jesus had personally commissioned him as well as appeared to Him directly (which apart from the twelve since His ascension He had not revealed Himself to anyone else, physically, until this point)

**B. External Evidence:**

~Paul was a minister/a preacher to the Gentiles and is reaffirmed in this epistle (3:1, 3:3-12); Acts 28:28 ;Gal 1:15-17; Col 1:24-27

~Paul's formal and consistent introduction

--Grace to you; Rom 1:7, 1 Cor 1:3, 2 Cor 2:2, Col 1:2

**2. Time Period**

- ~Between 60-62 A.D;
- ~Paul's imprisonment from Rome (Acts 28:16-31)
- ~Delivered by Tychicus (6:21)
- ~A close companion letter with the letter to the Colossians

### **3. Purpose**

- A. To remind us about how has blessed us with a new identity
- B. to remind us that we have been blessed with everything spiritual
- C. to remind us that we are saved by God's grace through faith
- D. to remind us that we are to walk obediently and worthily of God's work
- E. to command us to be filled with God's Spirit
- F. to command us to put on the spiritual armor for our defense, protection, and fighting off the attacks of the enemy; to remind, also, that we are against supernatural powers
- H. to remind us that we are to model Christ in all we do, especially in our relationships
- I. to reveal the mystery of Christ and the church through the ministry of marriage
- J. to help us understand that living the Christian life is a sanctifying journey composed of battles, hardships, and blessing, but in the end is worth it and rewarding

### **III. How to Read the Book of Ephesians**

~This book is part of what's called the Prison epistles (which means Paul wrote this during his first imprisonment in Rome);

~There are four prison epistles: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians)

~not much of Paul's writings are symbolic making this book very easy to read and understand (interpretationally) for any Christian

~a deeper study of all of Scripture is a recommended method especially on more deep theological issues like marriage representing Christ and the church (understanding the mystery behind this) as well as the spiritual armor and understanding what each piece is and what it does in order to effectively apply it; even in the first chapter understanding that one's salvation is predestined by God's good pleasure requires a deeper acceptance and understanding of God's Word; this is to say that the bible's use and teaching of predestination cannot be ignored and must be wrestled with if one is to value their salvation with a biblical understanding, which is it from God, His gift, and not of works and is based on God's choice alone, despite the individual "choice" one must for his/herself in the matter of faith; God's election in this book is based on His sovereignty, which is, to do according to His good pleasure; in other words, He's God and He'll do what He pleases Him

~As always, read it literally, understanding in plain language unless otherwise specified in the text (especially in Eph 6; i.e. taking the sword of the spirit is the Word of God; the word of God isn't really a sword, but the power that the Word of God presents is as powerful as a real sword; i.e. husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her; husbands are to emulate the love of Christ that is parallel to His love for the church; this includes the willingness to not only die for her literally (as He did on the cross) but to put her needs first and to protect her, nourish her, and love her with His life.

### **IV. Reminder/Tips for Reading this book**

~Note all the commands of this book and apply them daily, especially the command in 5:18, being filled with the Spirit

~There are tons of "reminders" in this book to call our attention to self examination to how we walk and live accordingly; there are reasons for this especially when you read chapter 6 in regards to the armor

~Colossians is a great companion to this letter (as they were known to be written about the same time period and fairly close to one another) and together they compliment one another; use this as an advantage to gain full understanding of the great truths presented in both this book and in Colossians.

~This book explains what a saint is; we are called saints and not sinners, although we still sin; sometimes we call ourselves sinners saved by grace, which are saints; this is because we are called into Christ with new identities and new nature; don't be ashamed by this, but also keep in mind that we are seen by God in the light of Christ and His righteousness and not our own sin; this is why what we do is very important to the watching world!!

~If you want a real challenge, then read Eph 5 concerning husbands and wives and the children; for a man or woman to be really go the distance, examine your relationship by what is laid out there; for singles, are we living daily to model Christ in lives to that point where we would be willing to demonstrate love sacrificially to one another as well as to the future spouse (husband or wife); modeling Christ in marriage is the most powerful way to influence a world where biblical marriage is under extreme attack.

~Please note Eph 5:17, "So then do not be foolish but UNDERSTAND what the WILL of the LORD is." The bible makes it clear that we are to understand God's will; thus, it is possible to know what God desires for us, what His will is; that is, it is "revealed" in Scripture and we are to "know" what it is; if we are to know what it is and are commanded to know then it cannot be "hidden" from us; part of God's will is for us to be spirit-filled (in this context) but this isn't the only thing; search the bible and find God's will for your life by trusting what is clear, explicit, and commanded; the only other will we know, from Scripture, is what God chooses to NOT REVEAL and that remains Sovereign; the best example and explanation of this is found in Deut 29:29: "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."

## **V. Survey of Ephesians**

~**Ephesians 1: Introduction/The Blessedness of God/Prayers for Spiritual Enlightenment**

~**Ephesians 2: How We Were Made to Be Alive/Remember We Were Hopeless**

~**Ephesians 3: Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles: God's Plan Revealed**

~**Ephesians 4: Walking Worthily of the Grace of God**

~**Ephesians 5: Imitating God in our Church**

~**Ephesians 6: Imitating God in our Families & Work/Being Strong in the Lord's Power/Paul's Benediction**

## **VI: Final Thoughts:**

--The book of Ephesians partly deals with the doctrine of predestination; while P.D. (predestination) isn't very easy to understand, it is best to embrace the doctrine as revealed by Scripture. Just accepting it is humbling and pleasing to God, although having a knowledge to explain it is a blessing by God. What it does do, however, is eliminate the understanding that salvation is dependent on man's choice. If we fully embrace Eph 2:8-9, that salvation is based on God's grace alone, through faith, in Christ alone, we will avoid the mistake of making salvation a "personal choice" rather than a sovereign choice. We will discuss this more later on in this study.

--Ephesians can be read several times within an hour; to get the full weight of it, read it slowly and daily for a month.