



Building the Body of Christ

A Quick Look at The Epistle to the Christians in Ephesus

By: Josh Franklin

PAUL'S LETTERS:

Romans – Paid in Full
1 Cor. - Correcting the Church
2 Cor. – God's Man & Ministry
Gal. – Free to Live for Christ
Eph – Building the Body of Christ
Philippians –
Colossians –
1 Thessalonians –
2 Thessalonians –
1 Timothy –
2 Timothy –
Titus –
Philemon –

Fast Facts on Galatians

Written by? Apostle Paul
Written to whom? Christians in Ephesus
Written when? c. 60 – 63
Written where? Rome
(Paul's first Roman imprisonment)

	KNOW 1:18	REMEMBER 2:11	DO NOT LOSE HEART 3:13	WALK WORTHY 4:1	PUT ON 6:11				
1:1-2 Introduction	Christian Blessings	Christian Salvation	Christian Family	Christian Conduct		Christian Armor			
1:3-14 A Doxology	1:15-23 Prayer for Wisdom	2:1-10 Personal Salvation	2:11-22 Corporate Salvation	3:1-14 Mystery of the Church	3:14-21 Prayer for Knowledge	4:1-16 Mission of the Church			
Our Position in Christ				Therefore		Our Practice in Christ			
→									
"I pray that you may know your resources in Christ"				"I pray that you may live consistent with your faith in Christ"					
WE ARE IN CHRIST				CHRIST IS IN US					
THE WORK OF GOD				THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN					
Heavenly blessings				Earthly walk					
6:10-20 Spiritual Battle									
6:21-24 Conclusion									

SOURCE: DANIEL AKIN

Of all God's wonders in His natural creation, which He has given me to see, none seems more wonderful than the Grand Canyon... Ephesians is the Grand Canyon of Scripture. – Ruth Paxson

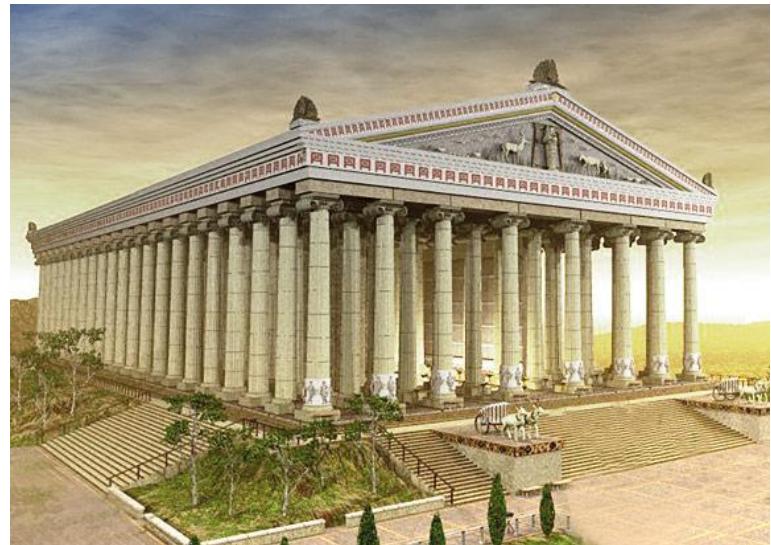
Ephesians – carefully, reverently, prayerfully considered – will change our lives. It is not so much a question of what we will do with the epistle, but what it will do with us. – R. Kent Hughes

Purpose

- a. In Ephesians, Paul reflects primarily on two major themes:
 1. Christ—Christ is the exalted Lord of the church and the whole creation. This is related to the work of the Spirit who continues the earthly ministry of Christ. The Spirit is mentioned 13 times in 6 chapters.
 2. Church—Ephesians addresses at length the privileges and responsibilities of believers in the Christian community.
- b. Unlike many of the other Pauline epistles, Ephesians does not address specific problems in a particular church. Indeed, this letter addresses a church experiencing remarkable peace and unity.
- c. “This document in large measure sums up the leading themes of the Pauline letters, and sets forth the cosmic implications of Paul’s ministry as apostle to the Gentiles” (F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*). Jew and Gentile are now one new people of God with all barriers being broken down. In the body of Christ there is no respect (prejudice) of persons. Ephesians, therefore, contains a timely message of our day as well when sexual, racial, social, and cultural biases are still present. In Christ there is an equity of position and privileges!

FASCINATING FACTS:

1. The church at Ephesus is the only church to receive a letter from more than one New Testament writer, as John also addressed them (see Revelation 2:1-7).
2. The church at Ephesus had many well-known preachers, including Paul, Apollos, Timothy and John.
3. In Ephesians, over one-half of all the verses are repeated in Colossians with some slight variations (the “Twin Epistles”).
4. Ephesians 1:3-14 constitutes the longest continuous sentence found anywhere in Scripture, as translated from the Greek.
5. In Ephesians, the personality of the Holy Spirit is emphasized throughout (1:13; 2:18; 3:5; 4:30; 5:18; 6:17).
6. In Ephesians, the terms “in Christ” and “in Him” are used fifteen times.



THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. Two “spiritual barbells” to build your “spiritual body”: 1) What I Believe, and 2) How I Live.
2. Spiritual growth is a lot like physical growth: 1) “Spiritual Food”: Word of God (not Christian music, Christian magazines, Church, Christian friends) – Nothing builds the body like the Bible. Everything else is supplementary. 2) “Exercise”: Resisting Temptation, Enduring Trials, Serving Others, Telling others about Christ. 3) “Rest”: Worship. Physically, we need sleep, rest, and times of vacation to recharge physically. Spiritually, we need worship to recharge spiritually. 4) “Time”: A lifetime, not just a change of behavior (like crash diets).
3. Jesus’ church is not a sanctuary or a building. Jesus’ church is you and me who have given our lives to Him. He is the head. We are the body. We are the church. We use the church building, but we are the church!

God's Armor For Us

Armor	Use	Application
Belt	Truth	Satan fights with lies, and sometimes his lies sound like truth; but only believers have God's truth, which can defeat Satan's lies.
Breastplate	Righteousness	Satan often attacks our hearts - the seat of our emotions, self-worth, and trust. God's righteousness is the breastplate that protects our hearts and ensures his approval. He approves of us because he loves us and sent his Son to die for us.
Footgear	Readiness to spread the Good News	Satan wants us to think that telling others the Good News is a worthless and hopeless task - the size of the task is too big and the negative responses are too much to handle. But the footgear God gives us is the motivation to continue to proclaim the true peace that is available in God - news everyone needs to hear.
Shield	Faith	What we see are Satan's attacks in the form of insults, setbacks, and temptations. The shield of faith protects us from Satan's flaming arrows. With God's perspective, we can see beyond our circumstances & know that ultimate victory is ours.
Helmet	Salvation	Satan wants to make us doubt God, Jesus, and our salvation. The helmet protects our minds from doubting God's saving work for us.
Sword	The Spirit, the Word of God	The sword is the only weapon of offense in this list of armor. There are times when we need to take the offensive against Satan. When we are tempted, we need to trust in the truth of God's Word.

TEACHING HELPS:

The church at Ephesus cross-sectioned the lives of many well-known New Testament figures.

- Paul went there with Priscilla and Aquila on his second missionary journey (see Acts 18).
- Apollos and Timothy were both involved there (see Acts 18; 1 Timothy 1).
- Tradition says that after Paul died, John made his headquarters there, and then eventually died there.
- Tradition also states that Mary, the mother of Jesus, died and was buried there.

Authorship [Danny Akin]

The Pauline authorship of Ephesians is clearly affirmed in the text (1:1; 3:1) and unanimously supported by the early church. Yet the book is rarely accepted in non-Evangelical circles today.

a. Arguments against Pauline authorship:

1. Vocabulary and Style—Almost 100 words and phrases in Ephesians are not found elsewhere in Paul. The style of Ephesians is said to be more complex and cumbersome than Paul's usual lively presentation.
2. Dependence—The alleged dependence of Ephesians on the other Pauline letters (Colossians in particular) is taken as an indication that the writer was not Paul himself, but one who freely appropriated Paul's material. The similarities between Colossians and Ephesians are greater than that of any other two Pauline writings. Approximately one-third of the words in Colossians are repeated in Ephesians. Parallels are numerous.
3. Doctrinal Discrepancies—It is argued that doctrinal differences between Ephesians and the accepted Pauline writings are so great as to render common authorship unlikely. The theology of this epistle is thought to be more advanced than the theology of the apostle as gleaned from his accepted works. For instance, in Ephesians the Church is universal and not local as it often is in Paul's other epistles.

Based on arguments such as these, many scholars reject the Pauline authorship of Ephesians. One theory suggests that the book was written as an introduction to Paul's writings by one of his disciples or admirers.

b. Response to the arguments against Pauline authorship:

1. Vocabulary and style—The fact that Paul resorts to a number of new words and expressions in this epistle is not without precedent or unusual. He is dealing with issues not previously covered, and new subject matter requires different vocabulary. Furthermore, the stylistic differences between Ephesians and other Pauline letters may be indicative of different circumstances. Paul was not facing the problems of a particular church; consequently, he could afford to be more reflective. That Ephesians was intended to be a circular letter to other cities in the region is very likely and must be taken into account.
2. Dependence—The evidence is insufficient to demonstrate that the same author cannot be responsible for both Ephesians and Colossians. This argument has little merit.
3. Doctrinal Discrepancies—While Ephesians may differ from other Pauline works in theological emphasis, its teachings do not contradict these books. Ephesians is simply complementary to other letters of Paul.

c. Arguments for Pauline authorship:

1. Internal Evidence—Ephesians clearly claims to be written by Paul (1:1; 3:1).
2. External Evidence—The Pauline authorship of Ephesians was universally accepted in the early Church.
3. Literary Nature—The structure of Ephesians is in concert with the rest of Paul's correspondence.
4. Theological Consistency—While Ephesians contains distinctive theological insights, it also contains common Pauline themes (e.g., God's gracious sovereignty, the centrality of Christ's work of reconciliation on the cross, the distinctive ministry of the Holy Spirit).

Conclusion: Overwhelming external evidence, the possibility of Ephesians being a circular letter, and the overall consistent internal data argues for Paul as the author of Ephesians, the date of writing being during his first Roman imprisonment around A.D. 60-63. His primary theme is the glory of Christ and His church. Our life in Christ brings position and privileges individually and corporately.