

The Epistle to the Ephesians

- A. Author: Paul
- B. Date: It was written around the year A.D. 62.
- C. This epistle was sent to the mother church in Ephesus, founded by Paul during his second missionary journey. That church was turned into a center of evangelism during Paul's third journey. It is likely that this epistle was circulated among the other churches that sprang from the mother church. (See Acts 18:19; Acts 19; Colossians 4:16.)
- D. It was written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.
- E. It was sent to the church through Tychicus, who also delivered the letter to the Colossians, written about the same time, along with the letter to Philemon that was actually delivered by Onesimus. (See Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7,9.)
- F. Theme: Between one Bible student and another, many times there are differences of opinion regarding what the central theme is of the different books of the Bible. Part of the reason for this that so many of the books of the Bible and the verses found in those books are able to minister to the reader in precisely the area in which he needs God's help. Therefore, the message that one reader receives from a book might be different from the message that another receives. However, undoubtedly, one of the possible themes in Ephesians is the spiritual inheritance that the Lord has for us, and the spiritual battles to take possession of that inheritance. Because of this, one can see a parallel between Ephesians in the New Testament and the Book of Joshua in the Old Testament. In light of this, an outline of Ephesians is included below, based on the spiritual battles seen in this epistle.
- G. Some interesting points of comparison between Ephesians and other letters of Paul:
 - 1. Ephesians has been called by theologians "The Queen of the New Testament," because it is possibly the most beautiful epistle found there.
 - 2. On the other hand, Romans is the most complex epistle in the New Testament, y possibly the most important book of the Bible for understanding the truths regarding salvation. Romans has been called "The Constitution of the Kingdom of God."
 - 3. Ephesians has 155 verses. Of those, 78 are found in Colossians in one form or another.
 - 4. However, the purposes of these two epistles are very different. Ephesians deals with spiritual warfare, while Colossians was written to correct doctrinal error.
- H. Outline: (Remember that a possible theme of Ephesians is the spiritual battles necessary to take possession of our spiritual inheritance.)
 - I. The purpose of the battle—to take possession of our spiritual inheritance.
 - A. Chapter 1 includes Paul prayer that we might *understand* what our inheritance is.
 - B. Chapter 3 includes his prayer that we might personally *experience* the reality of our inheritance.
 - II. The promise of victory in the battle.

- A. 1:18-23. Because Christ overcame and is seated above all principality and power.
- B. 2:1-9. We were raised up with Him and made to sit with Him in the same place of victory.

III. The people that are found in the battle.

- A. 2:10; 3:9,10. In general terms, it is the Church.
- B. 3:14-21. Specifically, the people who have entered into the experience of Christ being fully formed in them, or "Christ in us, the hope of glory."

IV. Preparation for the battle.

- A. *Unity*. No army can win a war if its troops are divided. The same is true in the spiritual.
 - 1. 2:11-18. The unity between God's law and the flesh.
 - a. Speaking collectively, unity between the Jews and the Gentiles.
 - b. Speaking individually, unity between the demands of the law and our works of the flesh. This unity comes through the death of the flesh, which brings unity of purpose to our hearts.
 - 2. 4:3-6. Unity among brethren.
 - 3. 4:13. The unity of the faith.
 - 4. 2:6; 4:24; etc. Unity with Christ revealed, not only in our position of power, but also with regard to our nature or character. This brings unity of purpose and action.
- B. 4:1-3. *Humility* and meekness.
- C. 4:11-16. The *truth*. To present the truth is one of the main purposes of a ministry ordained by God.
- D. 4:17 a 5:18. *Righteousness* (compare with Psalm 45:4). Humility, truth and righteousness are keys to prospering in the battle.
- E. Our spiritual walk:
 - 1. 2:10. Good works
 - 2. 4:1. Being worthy of our calling
 - 3. 4:17. Not living like other Gentiles
 - 4. 5:2. In love
 - 5. 5:8-14. In the light and not in the darkness
 - 6. 5:15,16. As wise and not as fools
- F. 5:22 a 6:9. The home in order. If there is no victory here, there will be no victory in the battle.

V. God's provision for the battle.

- A. 6:14-17. The armor (for our defense).

B. 6:17-18. The weapons (for the offensive).

The Book of Galatians reveals that Christ in us is the goal (and we in Christ).

The Book of Ephesians reveals what being "in Christ" means and how to get there.

WHAT WE FIND "IN CHRIST" ACCORDING TO EPHESIANS:

1. 1:1—we can be saints and faithful only if we are in Christ
2. 1:3—all spiritual blessings in heavenly places
3. 1:4—we are chosen in Him
4. 1:6—we are accepted only in Him
5. 1:7;4:32—redemption and forgiveness are in Him
6. 1:10—all things will be in Him in the end
7. 1:11—we have an inheritance in Him
8. 1:13—we are sealed with the Spirit in Him (Spanish)
9. 1:19-20—power that operated in Christ is available to us
10. 2:1,5—life from the dead is found in Christ
11. 2:6—we are seated in heavenly places in Christ
12. 2:7—the abundant riches of His grace revealed in Christ forever
13. 2:10—in Christ we are God's workmanship (HE is working)
14. 2:13—we are brought near to the things in v12 in Christ
15. 2:15—two men have been made one in Him through the cross
16. 2:18—we are given an entrance to the Father in Christ
17. 2:21—we grow in Him and ONLY as we are in Him
18. 2:22—we are built as a dwelling for God in Him
19. 3:6—Gentiles are coheirs, part of Body, partakers of promise in H.
20. 3:9—the fellowship of the mystery is hidden (and found) in Christ
21. 3:11—the eternal purpose of God was accomplished in Christ
22. 3:12—boldness and access to God are found in Him
23. 3:21—glory in the church is found in Christ
24. 4:1—we are prisoners in Him (good, because we can't go our way)
25. 4:16—all the Body receives growth in Him
26. 4:17—in Christ we enter into a different walk
27. 5:8—we are light in Him
28. 6:10—we strengthen ourselves in Him
29. 6:18—we become faithful ministers in Him