

Subject: *Know Your Bible – Part 21*

Scripture: *Ephesians 1:1-14*

Time, Place, and Purpose of Ephesians

1. Paul wrote this epistle to the church in Ephesus, a region of Asia Minor (Turkey). Paul visited Ephesus on his second missionary journey, and the church was established with the help of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:18-28).
2. This epistle was written around 60-62 A.D.
3. This is one of Paul's four prison epistles (with Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon). All of these letters refer to his imprisonment (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Phil. 1:7, 13-14; Col. 4:3, 10, 18; Philemon 9-10, 13, 23).
4. Ephesus was the commercial and religious center of Asia Minor (Turkey). It was famous for its renowned temple of Diana (Artemis), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Paul ministered in Ephesus for three years, a period that saw the growth and influence of God's Word in spite of serious opposition (Acts 19:1-41).
5. This epistle is mainly impersonal and doctrinally profound. Paul begins in chapter 1 by reminding the church of their heavenly riches: adoption, acceptance, redemption, forgiveness, wisdom, inheritance, sealing of the Holy Spirit, life, grace, and heavenly citizenship. Paul describes the fullness of blessings to believers: the riches of God's grace (1:7), the unsearchable riches of Christ (3:8), the riches of His glory (3:16), and being filled with all the fullness of God (3:19). The phrase "in heavenly places" is found five times and nowhere else in Scripture (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12).
6. Paul's godly ministry and concern for this church are exemplary (Acts 20:17-38). After Paul left the church, Timothy served as pastor for possibly a year and a half during which time he countered false teaching that arose (1 Tim. 1:3). About 30 years later, Christ gave to the Apostle John a letter for this church that indicated the people had left their first love for Him (Rev. 2:1-7).
7. Paul's theme in Ephesians is for believers to walk worthy of their Christian blessings. The believer's position in Christ should be reflected by his daily life.
8. The important phrase "in Christ" appears about 35 times in the epistle, more than any other New Testament book. The believer is in Christ (1:1), in the heavenly places in Christ (1:3), chosen in Him (1:4), adopted through Christ (1:5), accepted in Christ (1:6), redeemed in Him (1:7), given an inheritance in Him (1:11), given hope in Him (1:12), sealed in Him (1:13), made alive together with Christ (2:5), raised and seated with Him (2:6), created in Christ (2:10), brought near by His blood (2:13), growing in Christ (2:21), a partaker of the promise in Christ (3:6), and given access by faith in Him (3:12).
9. One of Paul's themes in this epistle is the mystery of the church, which refers to the previously unrevealed truth that the Gentiles are fellow heirs with Jewish believers and partakers of the same promises in the Gospel of Christ. All believers in Christ are equal before the Lord as His children and citizens of His kingdom. Paul also describes the mystery of the church as the bride of Christ (5:32). Paul used three figures of speech to picture our union with Christ (building, Eph. 2:21-22; body, 1:22-23; 4:15-16; and bride, 5:25-32).

10. Half of the epistle is doctrinal (Eph. 1—3) and the last half is practical (Eph. 4—6). Paul's motivation for faithful Christian living is based upon the foundation of our spiritual blessings in Christ.

Outline of Ephesians

Introduction (1:1-2)

I. The Wealth of the Church (1:3—3:21)

A. Praise for Redemption (1:3-14)

- 1) Chosen by the Father (1:3-6)
- 2) Redeemed by the Son (1:7-12)
- 3) Sealed by the Spirit (1:13-14)

B. Prayer for Revelation (1:15-23)

C. Position of the Christian (2:1—3:13)

- 1) The Believer's Position Individually (2:1-10)
- 2) The Believer's Position Corporately (2:11-13)

D. Prayer for Realization (3:14-21)

II. The Walk of the Church (4:1—6:9)

A. In humility and unity (4:1-6)

B. In diversity (4:7-16)

C. In holiness (4:17—5:17)

D. In the Holy Spirit's control (5:18-21)

E. In personal relationships (5:22—6:9)

- 1) Wives (5:22-24)
- 2) Husbands (5:25-33)
- 3) Children (6:1-3)
- 4) Parents (6:4)
- 5) Servants (6:5-8)
- 6) Masters (6:9)

III. The Warfare of the Church (6:10-20)

A. The need for God's armor (6:10-13)

B. The nature of God's armor (6:14-17)

C. The purpose of prayer (6:18-20)

Conclusion (6:21-24)

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Book of Ephesians

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