

## EPHESIANS

### Outline

#### Christian Greetings (1:1–2)

- I. Powerful Principles—The Believer's Spiritual Salvation in Christ (1:3–3:21)
  - A. The Source of Spiritual Blessings in the Father's Plan of Salvation (1:3–23)
    1. Chosen and Destined in Jesus Christ (1:3–6)
    2. Saved and Enlightened Through Jesus Christ (1:7–12)
    3. Unified in Christ and Sealed With the Holy Spirit (1:13–14)Prayer: For God's People to Realize His Purpose and Power for the Church (1:15–23)
  - B. The Results of Spiritual Salvation Through Christ (2:1–3:21)
    1. Releases Us From Sin and Death to New Life in Christ (2:1–10)
    2. Reconciles Us to Others Who Are Being Saved in Christ (2:11–22)
    3. Reveals God's Wisdom Through the Church of Christ (3:1–13)Prayer: For God's People to Gain the Spirit's Power and Comprehend Christ's Love (3:14–21)
- II. Practical Instruction—The Believer's Spiritual Life and God's Purpose for the Church (4:1–6:20)
  - A. The Christian's Responsibility in the Church (4:1–16)
    1. Unity Through Diversity (4:1–6)
    2. Unity Through Ministry and Maturity (4:7–16)
  - B. The Christian's New Way of Life (4:17–5:21)
    1. Growing in Personal Purity (4:17–5:7)
    2. Walking in Spiritual Light (5:8–14)
    3. Being Careful and Spirit-filled (5:15–21)
  - C. The Christian's Personal Relationships (5:22–6:9)
    1. Wives and Husbands (5:22–33)
    2. Children and Parents (6:1–4)
    3. Slaves and Masters (6:5–9)
  - D. The Christian's Spiritual Warfare (6:10–20)
    1. Our Ally—God (6:10–11a)
    2. Our Enemy—Satan and His Forces (6:11b–12)
    3. Our Equipment—Full Armor of God (6:13–20)

#### Conclusion (6:21–24)

**Author:** Paul

**Theme:** God's Purpose for Christ's Followers and the Church

**Date of Writing:** about A.D. 62

## Background

Ephesians is one of the high points of God's revelation and teaching in the Bible, and it has a unique place among Paul's letters. It is not focused on spiritual problems, leadership issues or controversy within the church, as many of Paul's other letters are. Instead, Ephesians reflects a depth of spiritual maturity, gratitude and insight growing out of Paul's personal prayer life. Paul wrote this letter while in prison for spreading the message of Christ (3:1; 4:1; 6:20), most likely in Rome. Ephesians has many similarities to the book of Colossians and probably was written shortly after Colossians. Both letters may have been carried together to their respective destinations by one of Paul's co-workers named Tychicus (6:21; cf. Col 4:7).

Ephesus was the most important city in Western Asia Minor (now Turkey). It was located on the most direct land and sea route to the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire and was, therefore, a large trade and commercial center. One of its most well-known attractions during NT times was a pagan temple dedicated to the Roman goddess, Diana (Gk Artemis; cf. Ac 19:23–31). For three years Paul made Ephesus a center for evangelism (Ac 19) and the church was alive and effective for quite some time, but later was rebuked by the Holy Spirit for its shortcomings (see Rev 2:1–7). For an overview of this region, see map of Paul's Third Missionary Journey.

It is commonly believed that Paul wrote Ephesians with a wider audience in mind than just the church in Ephesus. He may have wanted the message to be circulated among churches throughout the province of Asia. Originally, each church in Asia Minor (the peninsula in the extreme west of Asia, roughly corresponding with modern-day Turkey) may have inserted its own name in 1:1, confirming the relevance of this message for all true churches of Jesus Christ. Many think that Ephesians is the so-called letter to the Laodiceans, mentioned by Paul in Col 4:16.

## Purpose

Paul's immediate purpose for writing Ephesians is suggested in 1:15–18. He deeply desires for all the believers to grow in faith, love and wisdom in what God the Father has already done for them and revealed to them through his Son, Jesus Christ. His aim is that they might better know God, understand his purpose for them and live in a way that is worthy of identifying with Jesus Christ as Leader of their lives (e.g., 4:1–3; 5:1–2). For this reason, Paul tries to strengthen their faith and spiritual foundation by revealing a more complete picture of God's eternal purpose of spiritual salvation and restoration "in Christ" (1:3–14; 3:10–12). He applies this to the church (1:22–23; 2:11–22; 3:21; 4:11–16; 5:25–27) and to individuals (1:15–21; 2:1–10; 3:16–20; 4:1–3, 17–32; 5:1–6:20).