

1/26/22 Sojourn Baptist Exegetical Study – Ephesians Intro: Theme, Outline (1:1-2)

TRANSLATION: Eph 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle [ἀπόστολος] of Christ Jesus by the will [θελήματος] of God, to the saints [ἀγίοις], the ones being [in Ephesus] and believing [πιστοῖς] in Christ Jesus. Grace [χάρις] to you and peace [εἰρήνη] from God our Father and the Lord [κυρίου] Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION:

We embark this evening on an exegetical study of the book of Ephesians. It's been a while since I've led one of these. In recent years we've done several Christian book studies and video series on Wednesday nights, and we also have a steady diet of bible study in Sunday school and preaching every week. But it was actually my wife who asked if we could do an 'old school' exegetical bible study for the next 'series' on Wednesday night and I thought it to be a good idea. My plan is to take about 14 weeks to move our way through the book of Ephesians. Hopefully that pace will neither be too fast, nor too slow. The most important thing you can do every week is to read the book of Ephesians – I've encouraged you to read the book several times this past week to get an overall view of the content, theme and outline of the book (and we will attempt to construct our own collaborative outline together tonight). In the coming weeks we will then work our way section by section through the book.

My biggest goal is to encourage you in your own personal bible study. And while there may be some moments where I get a little preachy... my aim is to keep this a conversational study through Ephesians. This exercise would be valuable in any context, but I think we are realizing just how important it is in recent years in America. We have witnessed a real decline in theological learning in the past 70yr. With the advent of technologies, we actually have "more time" for spending time with the Lord and knowing His Word, but our sickened condition causes us to not even realize our present condition. We've become complacent and lazy... Part of the problem, I believe, is that the "standards" of Bible Study have so diminished over the years. Most people have great tolerance for poorly prepared sermons/teachings where "critical thinking skills" are completely unnecessary. God's people are starving for the meat of the Word, and they are merely being given marshmallow fluff. It's also important that we not only be able to identify GOOD preaching/teaching when we hear it, but that we know how to study the bible ourselves! So we will be talking about good bible study habits/practices as we travel through this book. Much of good bible study is asking the right questions, following a biblically informed hermeneutic, and then making proper application here and now of what was written then and there.

Let's be as the Bereans "examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so."

- John Calvin considered Ephesians his favorite letter and he preached a series of 48 sermons on the book from May 1558 to March 1559. Days before his death, John Knox's wife read to him daily Calvin's sermons on Ephesians.

- **F.F. Bruce** considered it the “quintessence of Paulinism” because it “in large measure sums up the leading themes of the Pauline epistles, and at the same time the central motive of Paul’s ministry as apostle to the Gentiles.”
- **Martyn Lloyd-Jones** commented that if “Romans is the purest expression of the gospel, than Ephesians is the sublimest and the most majestic expression of it. The Apostle marvels at the mystery and the glories and the riches of God’s way of redemption in Christ.”
- **Moo**,

Purpose of Ephesians:

It has been a great difficulty historically for bible students to give an overarching “purpose” to the book of Ephesians. Most letters are prompted by some need or some particular reason.

We as students of God’s word have the task of trying to grasp the overarching purpose of the biblical books while only being able to hear “one side of the conversation.” Ephesians is more difficult than many letters because (1) an overarching purpose for writing is not explicitly given and (2) no specific heresies or problems are addressed in the letter such that an overarching theme can be seen. We are left with examining the terms that Paul uses repeatedly and the themes that seem to be woven throughout the book.

What do you suggest for the PURPOSE of this letter?

What are some key terms? Key themes? Repeated Emphases?

Lloyd-Jones argues that God’s Sovereignty, Grace, and Church at the key themes...

Moo points out that, together with Romans, Ephesians is the letter of Paul that seems least tied to particular issues. It is for this reason that it has been called “the quintessence of Paulinism.”

- **Ephesians 1:9-10** gives us a good starting place in seeing a predominate theme in the letter... “He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰ with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the **summing up of all things in Christ**, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him...”
- **Ephesians 1:20-23 continues this theme**, “which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And **He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church**, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” - **2:11-22 and 3:6 continues theme of unity/reconciliation...**
- **Also see Ephesians 4:1-6** “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³ being diligent to

preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;* ⁵ *one Lord, one faith, one baptism,* ⁶ *one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”*

The theme of UNITY seems to persist throughout the book... And specifically GENUINE UNITY being found only in Jesus Christ (see above on the “in Christ/Him” phrase). The term “one” is used 14x. Also, the preposition “σύν” meaning “with/together with” is combined with 14 words. Paul gives the theological grounding for this unity in the first 3 chapters and then speaks of its practical outworking in the 2nd 3 chapters.

But we can also see the theme of LOVE persisting throughout the book [noun & verb 20x]... 8 times it is used of God’s or Christ’s love for humans, 11 times it speaks of believers’ love for one another, and one time it speaks of a person’s love for Christ. Love is the central ingredient for true unity. This also matches other Biblical references to Paul’s interactions with the Ephesians – **Acts 20:18-35** love in his preaching, teaching, and giving as well as his instructions to Timothy (pastoring in Ephesus) – **I Tim 1:5** goal of his instruction was “love from a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith.” This is also interesting in reference to the rebuke Ephesus receives from the Lord in Revelation 2... “left 1st Love” – to separate from false teachers does not alone guarantee that you are joined to Christ.

The Unity of the Church is not merely seen in its “organization” but in the metaphor of a “living organism” made up of many interrelated and mutually dependent parts. Christ is the head of the body and we all serve in submission to Him. Members of the Body of Christ are inextricably united in their Lord, and when one member malfunctions, the whole Body is weakened... The Church is central to this letter!

Structure/Themes of Ephesians:

There are 2 main sections with a clear division mark between chapters 3 and 4.

- **Eph 3:21** to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.
- **Eph 4:1** Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,
- **Michael Horton**, “Union with Christ (soteriology) and communion with his body (ecclesiology) form an integral pattern throughout the epistle.”

Section 1: The SOURCE & BASIS of UNITY
- Doctrinal, Belief, Theology, Orthodoxy

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|---------|--|
| 1:1-2 | Greetings |
| 1:3-14 | Praise to God for Spiritual Blessings |
| 1:15-23 | Commendation and Prayer |
| 2:1-10 | Conversion |
| 2:11-22 | Unity in the Church – Jew/Gentile |
| 3:1-13 | Paul’s ministry – dispensing the mystery |
| 3:14-21 | Prayer for strengthening in love and unity |

Section 2: The PRACTICE of UNITY
- Practical, Behavior, Ethics, Orthopraxy

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|----------|------------------|
| 4:1-16 | Walk in Unity |
| 4:17-32 | Walk in Holiness |
| 5:1-6 | Walk in Love |
| 5:7-14 | Walk in Light |
| 5:15-6:9 | Walk in Wisdom |
| 6:10-20 | Finally – Stand |
| 6:21-24 | Conclusion |

AUTHORSHIP:

A. “Authorship” Debate

1. From early days, the letter was in wide circulation, and its authenticity does not seem to have been doubted. The early church fathers accepted it – Ignatius, Polycarp, Clement of Rome...
2. It's not until the modern period (1792) that anyone doubted or questioned Pauline authorship
3. **Argument from language/grammar**
 - a. The letter resembles Colossians but meanwhile has significant differences – Ephesians is not so much a copy of Colossians as a development of it.
 - b. **Amount of “hapax legomena” [41]** very similar to other letters (nothing unusual)
 - c. Interesting long “sentences” ... **1:3-4, 15-23; 2:1-7; 3:2-13, 14-19, 11-16; 6:14-20** are one sentence each full of prepositional phrases, relative clauses, participles, and synonyms... But this can be explained by the substance of the letter at these points – lofty doxologies, prayers, and sweeping theological themes (ex) Rom 8:28-39, 11:33-36
 - d. Pauline features abound – structure is like the undisputed writings of Paul
 - e. **Also**, hard to determine authorship on basis of language and style – engineer uses different language and style in writing to his wife than a colleague working on a project...
 - f. Paul says he was a prisoner when writing this letter – **Eph 3:1,4:1** – fits well w/ Colossians
 - g. **Eph 1:1 & 3:1** – twice the letter claims to be written by Paul!

B. Name: Paul

1. Paul commonly mentions associates in his greetings (esp. Timothy) but not here, Romans, or the Pastorals
2. Conversion – road to Damascus... Saul to Paul – **Acts 9... 13-28**

C. Title: Apostle

1. Authority
 - a. ἀπόστολος-messenger, one sent
 - b. This title speaks not only of great privilege, but also divine commandment placed upon him to fulfill the commission given him. – **1 Timothy 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, *who is* our hope,
 - c. Paul not only belongs to Christ, but is a messenger who is fully authorized and sent by Him
2. Ministry
 - a. 3 Missionary Journeys & a Journey to Rome recorded in Acts...
 - b. Specific Interaction with Ephesus
 - (1) Paul stopped in Ephesus for the 1st time at the close of his 2nd MJ... left Priscilla and Aquilla there in preparation for his return.
 - (2) Paul spent 2.5yr in Ephesus during his 3rd MJ (the main focus of that journey)
 - (3) Before his arrest in Jerusalem, Paul stops in Miletus to talk to the Ephesian elders
 - (4) Paul is imprisoned in Rome from where he writes the “prison epistles” – Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon... early 60s AD
 - (5) We learn from Paul's language in Philippians and Philemon that he expects his release soon and due to the great similarity in subject matter between Colossians and Ephesians many suppose those two letters to have been sent at similar times. Especially since both present “Tychicus” as the one delivering both letters – Paul probably sent them together.
 - **Eph 6:21-22** But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. ²² I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.
 - **Colossians 4:7-8** As to all my affairs, Tychicus, *our* beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information. ⁸ *For I*

have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;

- (6) Tychicus probably would have sailed to Ephesus and then struck east along the main Roman road in order to reach Colossae... The Ephesian letter may have traveled circularly through all of Asia (7 churches) or just along the road between Ephesus and Colossae – Mahnesia, Tralles, Hierapolis, and Laodicea...
3. By the will of God
- διὰ – denotes efficient cause or agency – not by personal drive or presumptuous human ambition that Paul became an apostle... BY God's Will
 - θελήματος-will, desire – also used in **v5, 9, 11**
 - This word is not mere permission, but God's positive purpose that makes Paul a man under authority and enables him to write with authority!
 - Paul is explaining, "I am apostle because God willed me to be"
 - About to explain in coming verses that our salvation is also by God's will!
 - With so many emphasizing "human free will" I find it so interesting that people take such great offense at God doing as He wills, as he pleases... God is the one who has a genuinely FREE will... He does whatever He desires!*

RECIPIENTS:

A. Saints

- ἁγίους-holy ones, set apart, consecrated
- Contrary to Roman Catholicism which teaches that "sainthood" is only entered by those who have lived "exceptional lives" where their merit is excessive and available for others to appeal for (supererogation) – this title is rightly applied to EVERY Christian!
- One is NOT made a "saint" by his/her attainment through "good works" but instead by FAITH in Jesus' perfect work... a righteousness imputed/given to us by God's grace alone!
- Christians are cleansed by the blood of Christ and renewed by the Holy Spirit and are thus separated from the world and consecrated to God

B. Believers

- πιστοῖς- faithful **and/or** believing
- Probably here should be translated as "believing" – but surely those believing by God's grace (**Eph 2:8-9**) will also manifest that belief in a preserving faithfulness by God's grace...
- This is a further description of the same group already referred to as "saints" – grammatically there is an article "the" before "saints" but omitted before "believing" – showing that both adjectives apply to the same persons... the "and" should be understood as "namely"
- Calvin**, "No one is a believer who is not holy; and no one is holy who is not a believer."
- Believers can approach God only because he has obtained a righteous standing/position on the basis of Christ's work by means of faith! – this is Paul's audience!**

C. In Christ Jesus

- This phrase should be understood as modifying both "saints" and "believing ones" saying that they are "in union" with Christ – UNITY theme... Implies that saints/believers are united with Christ – partakers together of his new life!**
- "in Christ" & "in Him" – see this concept repeatedly in Ephesians...
 - Ephesians 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus:
 - Eph 1:3** Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places in Christ*,
 - Eph 1:4** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

- d. **Eph 1:9** He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him
- e. **Eph 1:10-11** with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,
- f. **Eph 2:6** and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,
- g. **Eph 2:7** so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
- h. **Eph 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
- i. **Eph 2:13** But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
- j. **Eph 3:6** *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,
- k. **Eph 3:21** to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.
- l. **Eph 4:21** if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,
- m. **Eph 4:32** Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

D. The ones being “In Ephesus” Debate

1. **TEXTUAL CRITICISM: v1** is the only substantial discussion in the whole letter!
 - a. **“in Ephesus”** – rating of C in UBS4 Gr Testament
 - b. **External Evidence:** these words are absent in P46, κ , B, 424, 1739, Origen, Marcion “to the Laodiceans” (some early Alexandrian texts... given high weight)... still the vast majority of texts (including some early Alexandrian texts) include the phrase... and the early Alexandrian texts w/ the omission are still entitled “To the Ephesians”
 - c. **Internal Evidence:** The normal rule is the “shorter” and “more difficult” reading is picked over the “longer” and “easier” reading... but here we have an exception because the alternative leaves us with a Gr. syntax that doesn’t make grammatical sense.
 - d. **Explanations - Bruce** argues for a “blank” (called a *lucuna*) to be left here to be filled in by whichever church was reading it... might be a familiar device today, but difficult to attest for in the 1st C AD... others argue that it was written to Laodicea alone (Marcion - **Col 4:16** – *lost letter to Lao...*) or to Laodicea and Hierapolis (no textual reasons for this)
 - e. **Colossians 4:16** When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea.
2. **Tone:** Seems “impersonal” – surely Paul would have “warmth” for a church he had spent so much time in... why does Paul not mention names?? Where is his affection?
 - a. **II Cor, Gal** (a circular letter), **1&2 Thess** do not have personal greetings either!
 - b. Meanwhile Romans has so many greetings to individuals when he hadn’t been there! Reasons for greetings – strengthen his credibility, unnecessary to churches that knew him!
 - c. **Also**, Paul does show some familiarity w/ them by praying for them (**1:16**) and asking for their prayers for him (**6:19-20**).
 - d. **Also**, thematic emphasis on UNITY – Paul doesn’t want to single people out...
3. **Why** does Paul explain “ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus” in **1:15**? **This could be answered** – Paul has heard since having left them (5yr)
4. Even if to Ephesus, the letter could still be seen as a circular letter... whether stated or not!

- a. **If Ephesians** was a circular letter its not quite so surprising that he uses ἐκκλησία “church” in a general sense... also if Paul’s theme is to speak in “grand terms” of the unity of Christ’s body he used the term in its most general sense (but that’s not to say that this is the only place where the “universal” body of Christ is discussed as a topic – see **I Cor**)... Also, remember vocabulary is influenced by needs of the writer contextually...
- b. **Remember our look at the 7 letters to the 7 churches in Rev 1-3...**
- 5. **Reminder of Major Details of Ephesus...**
 - a. Silting of Harbor by River Cayster
 - b. Theatre (475ft wide, 98ft high) – 24,000 people capacity – Demetrius Acts 19:23-41
 - c. Temple of Artemis (180ft by 361ft, 60ft high)
 - d. Emperor Worship present... Worship of Diana/Artemis Dominant
 - e. Strategic City – bridge between East and West – 250,000 population...
 - f. Representative Gov’t, but elected for life... “town clerk” – **Acts 19:35**
 - g. No Shortage of Good Teachers here! ☺
 - h. **Rev 2:1-7** 1st of the seven churches written to in Rev2-3 – “Left First Love”

GREETINGS:

A. Grace to You

- 1. **Here we see Paul’s Christianized Greetings!** ☺
- 2. χάρις-grace, kindness, mercy, goodwill, undeserved favor, blessing
- 3. The common Gr. greeting was “χαίρειν”
 - a. **Acts 15:23** and they sent this letter by them, "The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings."
 - b. **Acts 23:26** "Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings."
 - c. **James 1:1** James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

B. Peace

- 1. εἰρήνη -peace, harmony, well-being
- 2. **This is the Gr. translation of the Hebrew greeting “shalom” – OT priestly blessing**
- 3. **“Grace” and “Peace” represent major themes of Ephesians!**
- 4. Paul desires for these “twin blessings” to be understood and experienced in greater measure!

C. From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

- 1. God, our Father and The Lord Jesus Christ – κυρίου- Lord, Master, Owner
- 2. Close association of these 2 persons – under same preposition (equality of the persons of the Godhead and meanwhile distinct “roles”)
 - a. **Romans 10:9** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.
 - b. **1 Corinthians 12:3** “... no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.”
 - c. *To say Jesus is Lord is to ascribe to Jesus full deity. The Gr. “kurios” was the translation used for the Hebrew “tetragrammatron” – YHWH – God’s distinctive covenant name (a name Jews would not even pronounce)... This is not merely to “speak the phrase” but to believe it and therefore confess it! → Jesus is Lord in the way that only God can be Lord!*
 - d. ***Flesh and blood cannot reveal this truth to one’s understanding, convince one’s convictions, or influence one’s will to obedience... only a work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit can!***
 - e. **Matthew 16:16-17** Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
¹⁷ And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.