

Introduction to Ephesians

March 7, 2024

For help with this handout, view this lesson on the *WORD For Life Church Ministries* [YouTube Channel](#).

I. Introduction

A. Overview of the Book

1. A _____ epistle, intended for _____ churches or groups of believers.
2. This letter circulated from one town to another and read aloud, often in the context of _____ or, at the very least, among a gathering of people.
3. Chapter Overview
 - Chapter 1: What it means to receive _____ by Christ.
 - Chapter 2: What it means to be _____ in Christ.
 - Chapter 3: What it means to _____ to Christ.
 - Chapter 4: What it means to be _____ in Christ.
 - Chapters 5 & 6: What it means to _____ in Christ.

B. Historical and Cultural Context of the Letter

- Ephesians offers a comprehensive view of God's _____ and _____. This comes by the address of matters pertaining to life as a believer.
- Because of the matters raised in the text, the letter remains to _____ today.
- Ephesians instructs believers within _____ together, in the same _____, and as _____ concerning how to see themselves in the family of God and in the world.

II. Ephesus: Background and Context

A. Location and Importance of Ephesus in the Ancient World

- Name the modern-day country where Ephesus is located: _____.
- Which one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World was located there? _____.
- Who destroyed Ephesus around 262 AD and what historical occurrence could that be a precursor to? _____.

B. Historical and Cultural Context of Ephesus

- The dating of the writing of Ephesians was between 65-100 AD. A few clues suggest this late 1st Century dating:
 1. Eph 2:11-18 suggests that significant time may have passed between the Christ event and this writing.

2. The diminishment of women's status (5:22-24) is argued as a distancing from the historic Apostle Paul who elevated the status of women who served with him.
3. The household codes of chapters 5 and 6 both point to an effort to reinforce cultural hierarchies.

III. About the Author

A. Introduction to the Author

- How is the author identified in Ephesians 1:1? _____

- Based on the timing of the writing, as seen earlier, it is quite possible that the writer of this text is not the historical Apostle Paul. Instead, it may be that the letter is a recounting of what Paul shared by way of a disciple/follower/student of his.

B. Paul's connection to Ephesus

- In Acts 19 we read of Paul coming to Ephesus after _____ (in Acts 18) had recently been there to great effect. [See: Acts 19:1-5.]
- Paul's message to the believers in Ephesus was initially concerning their awareness and understanding of _____.
- In Acts 20, we get a feel for the relationship between Paul and the people in Ephesus through the lens of his relationship with the _____ from Ephesus.

C. Why Paul writes to Ephesus

- To convey God's plans and purposes; to identify what God is up to in the world through Jesus.
- To present the Gospel, through which and by which believers can be in league with God.
- To relate the doctrine and theology of the early-Church to help new believers know how to live as a believer.

IV. Major Theological Themes

- A. Salvation by _____ through faith
- B. Unity in _____
- C. The role of the _____ in God's plan
- D. Spiritual Warfare
- E. The mystery of Christ

V. Household Codes (Read: Eph 5:22-6:9)

- A. Explanation of household codes
- B. Understanding the cultural context of household codes in the ancient world
- C. Interpretation of the household codes in the modern context

VI. Conclusion

A. Importance of Ephesians for contemporary Christians

- God's power to enact God's plan (1:3-23) is the same power available to believers today (6:10-17).
- Marriage is intended to reflect the relationship between Christ and the church (5:21-33).
- Believers' power comes from God and not the "rulers and authorities" or principalities (6:12).