

**The Epistle to the Ephesians**  
**Introduction to the New Testament**  
**Class 10**

**I. Hello!**

**II. Paul and Ephesus**

- A. Remember Paul's ministry in Ephesus described in Acts 19.

**III. Remember the Parts of an Epistle**

- A. Greeting (Author, "grace" from Greeks, "peace" from Jews)  
B. Thanksgiving  
C. Prayer  
D. Body  
E. Personal Greetings  
F. Conclusion

**IV. Authorship: Paul**

- A. The letter explicitly states it was written by Paul, which is affirmed by the early church.
- B. F.F. Bruce says, "If the Epistle to the Ephesians was not written directly by Paul, but by one of his disciples in the apostle's name, then its author was the greatest Paulinist of all time—a disciple who assimilated his master's thought more thoroughly than anyone else ever did....The author, if he was not Paul himself, has carried the apostle's thinking to its logical conclusion, beyond the point where the apostle stopped, and has placed the coping-stone on the massive structure of Paul's teaching. Of such a second Paul early Christian history has no knowledge."<sup>21</sup>
- C. Given that Paul wrote this during his 2-year house arrest in Rome when Luke was with him (Col 4:14) and unique elements of vocabulary and style in Ephesians, there is a case to be made for Luke being the amanuensis for this epistle.<sup>22</sup>

**V. Audience: Ephesus**

- A. While Pauline authorship is thoroughly embraced, the audience is a bit of a question. While we call it *Ephesians*, it was more likely a circular letter

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<sup>21</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Fleming H. Revell, 1961), 11, 12.

<sup>22</sup> For Luke as the amanuensis of Ephesians see Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 9–11; Richard N. Longenecker, "Ancient Amanuenses and the Pauline Epistles," in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), 294.

intended for that region. Since the region contains Ephesus, we are not wrong to attach it more to that city than any other. If it was a direct letter to Ephesus, it becomes surprising that it lacks personal greetings, since he spent three years teaching night and day (Acts 20).<sup>23</sup>

- B. Carson & Moo note that “in Ephesus” in 1:1 is “absent...from some of the best manuscripts, in Basil and Origen, apparently also in Marcion, and in Tertullian.”<sup>24</sup> Yet, the title “To the Ephesians” is present in “almost all manuscripts and by all the ancient versions.”
- C. The early church, then, connected this epistle to Ephesus fairly emphatically. Still, the circular letter idea does seem to explain some of the details of the case. They feel “the best form” of the circular theory is that it was sent with Tychicus and the Colossians epistle, and Ephesians was “copied and circulated from Ephesus.”<sup>25</sup>

## VI. Date: Prison Epistle from AD 60–62

- A. It is one of the “prison epistles” which includes Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.
- B. These are later epistles, written during the early 60s while Paul was imprisoned in Rome in the Acts 28 house arrest.
- C. By this point he had written Galatians over ten years prior (48), 1-2 Thessalonians (49-51), 1-2 Corinthians (middle 50s), and Romans (57). Between the last epistles and the Roman imprisonment letters he had returned to Jerusalem and been arrested there. He had been imprisoned in Caesarea (Acts 24:27), and then traveled by ship to Rome as a prisoner.

## VII. A Mature Epistle

This means that we get the maturity of Paul’s thinking, combined with the ability to look back on a significant amount of ministry and life experience. Paul is no novice in these letters (though Galatians hardly feels immature in the least!). His gospel within Ephesians is as comprehensive as any of his letters, and perhaps more since it includes a cosmic dimension, and perhaps more on the devil’s handiwork than he typically includes.

## VIII. Outline

This is Paul’s famous organization of doctrine *and then* practice. Romans is similar: 1–11 is doctrine and then 12–15 is practice. Colossians 1–2 is more doctrinal and then 3–4 is more practical.

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<sup>23</sup> Best case for calling it “Ephesians” is by Hoehner, but I am more compelled by O’Brien who says it was a circular letter to Christians in that region.

<sup>24</sup> D.A Carson & Douglas Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 488.

<sup>25</sup> Carson & Moo, *An Introduction*, 488, 489.

Ephesians 1–3 is very doctrinal and then 4–6 is more practical. Our “calling” as Christians unites the two halves of Ephesians:

- A. (1:1-2) Greeting
- B. (1:3-3:22) Remember Your Calling
- C. (4:1-6:20) Walk Worthy of Your Calling
- D. (6:21-24) Closing

**IX. A Few Key Passages and Ideas in Ephesians**

- A. 1:3–14 – Election: You were chosen before the foundation of the world
- B. 2:1–10 – Spiritual Death to Spiritual Life...and Works
- C. 4:1 – “Therefore” – What’s that “Therefore” there for?
- D. 4:17–29 – Put Off and Put On – “Don’t think about a....”
- E. 5:18–21 – “Be Filled with the Spirit!”