

EPHESIANS

This is one of Paul's prison epistles, written from Rome about the same time as Colossians and Philemon 60-61 A.D. Many regard it as the most profound book in the N.T.

At the end of his second missionary journey, Paul visited Ephesus where he left Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:18-21) who may have helped found the local church. Ephesus was the commercial center of Asia Minor and a religious center as well, famous especially for its magnificent Temple of Diana. On his third missionary journey Paul returned to Ephesus and remained for nearly three years.

The letter to the Ephesians involves no controversy and deals with no specific problems. Paul aims not at suppression of error but at the establishment of truth. It is addressed to a group of believers who are indescribably rich in Jesus Christ, many of whom are living a beggarly existence because they are ignorant of their wealth. Paul begins by describing in chapters 1-3 what they have in Christ: adoption, acceptance, redemption, forgiveness, wisdom, inheritance, the

seal of the Holy Spirit, life, grace, citizenship, "every spiritual blessing." They had all the resources to live a life "to the praise of the glory of His grace." (1:6). In chapters 4-6 at least 35 directives are given on the believer's responsibility to conduct himself in a way that honors Christ. The first half of Ephesians is filled with worship and theology while the last half is practical.

Even though the Christian is blessed "with every spiritual blessing" (1:3), spiritual warfare is still the daily experience of the Christian in the world as pointed out in chapter 6 where Paul gives clear advice on how to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." (6:10).

Paul's important phrase "in Christ" (or its equivalent) appears about 35 times in this brief letter, more than any other N.T. 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), in the Beloved (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), partaker of the promise in Christ (3:6), and given access through faith in Him (3:12).

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

I. Position of the Christian (1:1-3:21).

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

B. Paul's Prayer for the Christian's Enlightenment (1:15-1:23).

C. Position of the Christian and the Mystery of the Church (2:1-3:13).

D. Prayer for the Believer's Comprehension of the Love of Christ (3:14-3:21).

II. Practice of the Christian (4:1-6:24).

A. Unity in the Church (4:1-4:16).

B. Holiness in Life (4:17-5:21).

C. Responsibilities at Home and Work (5:22-6:9).

D. God's Provision for His Children's Spiritual Battles (6:10-6:24).

All the blessings we have in Christ (chapters 1-3) should result in the walk described in chapters 4-6.

HELPS: Before turning to these, read prayerfully

the Word of God, praying that the Holy Spirit will guide you and instruct you.

If you don't own a Bible dictionary, encyclopedia, atlas, or reference search, don't worry. They are all available on the link below.

http://www.preceptaustin.org/2_corinthians_commentaries_3.htm

This excellent website is full of helps including commentaries. You will find John MacArthur, Ray Stedman and John Piper along with Charles Spurgeon and the Intervarsity Press Commentary (Navigators) as well as Matthew Henry's Commentary.