

An Overview of The Book of Ephesians

A PAULINE EPISTLE

Ephesians

- A Pauline Epistle.
- Written by Apostle Paul to the Church (devoted/faithful believers) in Ephesus (this letter was known to have circulated within the other churches in that area).
- Apostle Paul was in the Roman Prison (First Roman Imprisonment) while he wrote to the church.
- The book of Ephesians is considered a Prison Epistle (1 of 4 prison Epistles).
- It is the 10th book of the New Testament and contains 6 Chapters.

The City of Ephesus

- Ephesus was the most important city in western Asia Minor (now Turkey). It had a harbor that at that time opened into the Cayster River which in turn emptied into the Aegean Sea.
- Because it was also at an intersection of major trade routes, Ephesus became a commercial center.
- It boasted a pagan temple dedicated to the Roman goddess Diana (Greek *Artemis*). [Acts 19:23–31](#).
- Paul made Ephesus a center for evangelism for about 2 years and more ([Acts 19:10](#)), and the church there apparently flourished for some time, but later needed the warning of [Revelation 2:1–7](#).

Purpose

- Unlike several of the other letters Paul wrote, Ephesians does not address any particular error or heresy.
- Paul wrote to expand the horizons of his readers, so that they might
 - understand better the dimensions of God's eternal purpose
 - and grace
 - and come to appreciate the high goals God has for the church.

Emphasis

- Paul emphasizes that we have been saved, not *only for our personal benefit*, but *also to bring praise and glory to God*.
- The climax of God's purpose, “when the times will have reached their **fulfillment**,” is to bring all things in the universe together under Christ's authority (Ephesians [1:9-10](#)).
- 9** God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan.
- 10** And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. (NLT)
- It is crucially important that Christians realize this, so in Ephesians [1:15–23](#) Paul prays for their understanding (a second prayer occurs in [3:14–21](#)).

God's steps towards fulfillment of His plan

- **First**, *God has reconciled individuals to himself as an act of grace* ([2:1-10](#)).
- **Second**, *God has reconciled these saved individuals to each other, Christ having broken down the barriers through his own death* ([2:11-22](#)).
- **But God has done something even beyond this:** *He has united these reconciled individuals in one body, the church.*

This is a “mystery” not fully known until it was revealed to Paul ([3:1-6](#)).

God's Intent for the Church

- To display His “manifold wisdom” to the “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms...

Now Paul is able to state even more clearly what God has intended for the church, namely, that it be the means by which he *displays his “manifold wisdom”* to the “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” ([3:7-13](#)).

It is clear through the repetition of “heavenly realms” ([1:3,20](#); [2:6](#); [3:10](#); [6:12](#)) *that Christian existence is not merely on an earthly plane. It receives its meaning and significance from heaven, where Christ is exalted at the right hand of God* ([1:20](#)).

The Expectation for the believer

- That life is lived out on earth, where the practical daily life of the believer continues to work out the purposes of God.
- The ascended Lord gave “gifts” to the members of his church to enable them to minister to one another and so promote unity and maturity ([4:1–16](#)).
- The unity of the church under the headship of Christ foreshadows the uniting of “all things in heaven and on earth” under Christ ([1:10](#)).
- The new life of purity and mutual deference stands in contrast to the old way of life without Christ ([4:17–6:9](#)). Those who are “strong in the Lord” have victory over the evil one in the great spiritual conflict, especially through the power of prayer ([6:10–20](#)).

Outline

- Greetings ([1:1-2](#))
- The Divine Purpose: The Glory and Headship of Christ ([1:3-14](#))
- Prayer That Christians May Realize God's Purpose and Power ([1:15-23](#))
- Steps Toward the Fulfillment of God's Purpose ([cphs. 2-3](#))
 - Salvation of Individuals by Grace ([2:1-10](#))
 - Reconciliation of Jew and Gentile through the Cross ([2:11-18](#))
 - Uniting of Jew and Gentile in One Household ([2:19-22](#))
 - Revelation of God's Wisdom through the Church ([3:1-13](#))
 - Prayer for Deeper Experience of God's Fullness ([3:14-21](#))
- Practical Ways to Fulfill God's Purpose in the Church ([4:1-6:20](#))
 - Unity ([4:1-6](#))
 - Maturity ([4:7-16](#))
 - Renewal of Personal Life ([4:17-5:20](#))
 - Deference in Personal Relationships ([5:21-6:9](#))
 - Principle ([5:21](#))
 - Husbands and wives ([5:22-33](#))
 - Children and parents ([6:1-4](#))
 - Slaves and masters ([6:5-9](#))
 - Strength in the Spiritual Conflict ([6:10-20](#))
- Conclusion, Final Greetings and Benediction ([6:21-24](#))

Reasons to (give all) Praise God

- I have been *blessed* with all spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm. **vs 3**
- I am *united* with Christ. **vs 3**
- Even before he made the world, God *loved us* and *chose us* in Christ to be *holy* and *without fault* in his eyes. **vs 4**
- God decided in advance to *adopt us* into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. **vs 5**

Reasons to Praise God

- So we **praise** God for *the glorious grace* he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. **vs 6**
- He is so rich in kindness and grace that he *purchased our freedom* with the blood of his Son and *forgave our sins*. **vs 7**
- He has showered *his kindness on us*, along with *all wisdom and understanding*. **vs 8**
- God has now *revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ*—which is to fulfill his own good plan. **vs 9**

¹⁰ And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.

Reasons to Praise God

- Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we *have received an inheritance from God*, for he *chose us in advance*, and he makes everything work out according to his plan. **vs 11**
- ¹² God's purpose was that we **Jews** who were the first to trust in Christ would **bring praise and glory to God**.
- And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. *And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago.*
vs 13
- ¹⁴ The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so **we would praise and glorify him**.

Breakdown

- Chapter 1 to Chapter 3 = Our Position in Christ
- Chapter 4 to Chapter 6:9 = Walk of the believer.
Conduct and character.
How to live in the kingdom.
- Chapter 6:10 = Teaches how to stand in our position in Christ, against the wiles of the enemy.

References

- [Intro to Ephesians | Biblica - The International Bible Society](#)