

RIGHTEOUSNESS

The book of Ephesians chapters 1&2

Introduction: Paul's letter to the Ephesians was one of five letters written whilst Paul was in prison in Rome from about 60-64AD. In the versions of the Bible that we are familiar with the letter was addressed to the congregation in Ephesus, but there is a textual problem in Ephesians 1:1 where the words "at Ephesus" were absent from early manuscripts. It has been claimed that the letter was not intended for the church in Ephesus alone but sent as a circulating letter to all the churches in the region of the Lycus valley in the province of Asia (West Turkey today). There are similarities between the letter to the Ephesians and the one sent to the Colossians as shown by at least 75 verses giving the same teaching.

The name Ephesus means "desirable, beloved, a giving away, to relax, permitted, loosening." Ephesus was a city on the western coast of Asia about one mile inland from the Aegean Sea. It was one of the largest cities in the world at that time having one of the so-called "Seven wonders of the world," the enormous temple of Diana (Artemis) that was greater in area than a football pitch! Worship to this goddess, Diana (Artemis), was widespread in that region and such worship was associated with the occult and magic practices of many kinds which even the Jewish community were involved in (Acts 19:13-20).

Paul had visited Ephesus briefly at the end of his second missionary journey

(Acts 18:19-21) before returning to Antioch in Syria. He had left at Ephesus Aquila and Priscilla who had worked with Paul previously in Corinth. Some time later Paul did return to Ephesus to stay three years on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:1-41).

As a result of Paul preaching and teaching in the region, it had such influence that the idol makers were in an uproar against Paul because their trade was threatened. Paul had to move on to Macedonia. Later he gave one final word to the elders of the church in Ephesus at a place called Miletus nearby (Acts 20:17-38). He had exhorted and warned them to remain faithful to the word of God. It seemed for a while the church in Ephesus had kept to the

truth in view of what was said to this church in the Book of Revelation 2:1-7.

The major theme in this letter is that of the church (Greek word: Ekklesia meaning “called out”) with Jesus Christ as its head (Ephesians 1:22-23) where there is one body of believers

EPHESIANS CHAPTER 1

BIBLE STUDY 1

AS distinct from letters like the letter to the Galatians and the first letter to the Corinthians, this is not written to deal with problems in the church, but is rather a letter of encouragement.

Read the whole of Ephesians chapter 1

Q1. Who chose whom and to what end (v4)?

Q2. What does “in love” mean at the end of v4?

Q3. In v5, Paul says we are “predestined to adoption as sons”. What does predestination mean?

Q4. What is the status of “adopted” in terms of being part of God’s family?

Q5. In v11, the word predestined is used again. What is promised this time?

The same word is used twice by Paul in his letter to the Romans

Read Romans 8.28-30

Q6. What is promised here?

Read Deut 30.15-20 and Joshua 24.1

Q7.. How does predestination balance against free choice?

BIBLE STUDY 2

Read the whole of Ephesians chapter 1

Q1. In v7, we are told that we have redemption through His blood. What does redemption mean? Who is the one who redeems and how? (See Lev 25.47-49)

Q2. What does the law say about redemption?

Read Ruth 3.1-13, 4.1-11

Q3. What did Ruth ask Boaz to do?

Q4. He was not the closest relative. Why did the one in question decline.

Q5. What did God think about Boaz's actions?

Read John 8.31-36

Q6. To what is the normal man a slave?

Read 2Cor 5.21

Q7. What was the result of the redemption shown in this verse?

Q8. In Ephesians 1,9,10 , what is the mystery referred to (v9)?

Q. What does it mean by all things?

Read Colossians 1.15-20

Q9. Is the curse of Genesis 3 included in the redemption?

Read Romans 8.19-23

Q. Is this part of redemption still future?

Read Revelation 21.27-22.3

Q10. Is this the final part of redemption?

BIBLE STUDY 3

Read the whole of Ephesians chapter 1

In Ephesians.1.13,14 We are told we were sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Q1. What does this mean? How long are we sealed for?

Read 1 Cor3.16,17

Q3. We all recognise ourselves as sinners –saved by grace, but what does v17 say about our state of holiness? Why are we holy?

In Ephesians 1.15,16, Paul talks about his prayers for the saints and asks God to give them “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him” (v17).

Q4. What does the spirit of wisdom and revelation mean?

Q5. What is the hope of His calling (v18)?

Read Colossians 1.27

Q6. What is the hope of glory? Is this the same as the hope of His calling?

Read Colossians 2.9,10

Q7. What does it mean to be “complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power”?

Read Ephesians 1.19-23

Q9. Where is Jesus now?

Q8. What is His power towards us who believe?

Read Matthew 28.18

Q9. What does it mean to be “head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”?

EPHESIANS CHAPTER 2

BIBLE STUDY 4

Read the whole of Ephesians chapter 2

Q1 What did our spiritual state used to be?

Q2. What was God’s motive in reaching out to us?

Q3. V5&6 tell us that ‘God made us alive in Christ and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus’. What does this mean and which member of the Godhead did it?

Read Colossians 1.27

Q4. This verse talks about the mystery of God extending His saving mercy to the gentiles. What does Paul mean by ‘The hope of glory’?

Read Colossians 2.9,10

Q5. What do these verses teach us about Jesus and our place in Him?

Q6. If we are seated with Christ in heavenly places, and we are complete in Him, why do we have so many problems in our Christian walk?

Read Colossians 2.8-23 Any comments?

BIBLE STUDY 5

Read the whole of Ephesians ch2

John Calvin said once saved always saved – can lead to immoral living

Jacobus Aminius said we are saved now but it can be lost in the future – Can lead to legalism

Read Ephesians 2.8 What does this verse tell us? Can we lose our salvation?

Q1. Verses 9&10 talk about the works we do. What is a proper spiritual balance?

Q2. How do we know what constitutes good works?

Q3. What does v12 teach us about the status of gentiles without Christ?

What does Ephesians 13-17 tell us about the relationship now between gentiles and Jews?

Q4. What do v18&19 tell us about our relationship with God the Father?

Q5. What do verses 20-22 tell us about Jesus and what is being built in Him?

Read 1 Peter 2.4-10. What do these verses tell us? Can we make a definite statement about our place in the body of Christ?

PART 2 – OUR STRUGGLE WITH THE FLESH

Introduction to Paul's letter to the Romans:

The letter of Paul to the Christians in Rome was written in Corinth in about 57AD. Paul had a great desire to go to Rome to preach the gospel there before continuing on a journey into Spain (Romans 15:23-24). He believed the work in Greece, Galatia and Asia Minor had now finished and Paul needed to move on elsewhere.

Paul had written to both Jewish and Gentile believers in the Lord Jesus Christ to resolve the possible contention between them. Paul had shown there was no difference between the Jew and Gentile. Salvation was by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Everyone, Jew or Gentile, needed a Saviour to be saved from sin. No one was righteous and therefore all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:10,23).

No one knows who brought the gospel to Rome. However, some Jews from Rome had been in Jerusalem on that day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10) when Peter preached the word of God (Acts 2:14-40). Some of them could have been converted and brought the gospel to the Jewish community in Rome as well as to the Gentiles. What had taken place was a church with Jewish and Gentile believers. It was in 49AD that the Roman Emperor Claudius expelled a large Jewish population of at least 20000 even up to 40000 who were resident almost entirely in the Trans-Tiber district of Rome. A Jewish believing couple, Aquila and Priscilla had come from Rome to settle in Corinth (Acts 18:2), where Paul met them during his second missionary journey (50-53AD). They were tentmakers having the same trade as Paul.

When Emperor Claudius died in 54AD (poisoned by his own niece and wife Agrippina in October 54AD) the Jews were able to return to Rome. Aquila and Priscilla had returned to Rome by the time Paul wrote this letter. They had a house church in their home

(Romans 16:3-5). It is believed that Phoebe, a faithful servant of the Lord (Romans 16:1-2), took the letter to Rome in 58AD.

It was clear that the Lord wanted Paul to bear witness for him in Rome (Acts 23:11). Paul's intention to go to Rome was a divine call which happened in God's time after some delay of about three years, which was not in the way Paul had expected. The Lord had allowed Paul to be arrested and kept in custody for two years during Felix's time as Roman governor (58-60AD). The following governor, Festus, allowed Paul to be sent to Rome after Paul had used his legal right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:11-12; 26:32). The Lord had brought about this journey in about 61AD under the protection of Julius a Roman centurion, probably because if Paul had not gone that way the Jewish Zealots (militant ultra-orthodox Jews known as the Sicarii or dagger-men) could well have found Paul and put him to death.

BIBLE STUDY 6

Read the whole of Romans chapter 6

Q1. Does grace undermine ethical responsibility and promote reckless sinning?

See 6:1-3,15-16.

Q2. Show the steps in which a believer is united with Christ in 6:1-14.

Q3. What does this chapter reveal of death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in 6:3-10?

Q4. How do believers identify with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? See 6:3-4 and also 1Corinthians 10:2; 12:13; Galatians 2:20; 3:27; Colossians 2:12; 3:1-4.

BIBLE STUDY 7

Read the whole of Romans chapter 6

Sanctification means making Holy and justification means being pure before God, “Just as if we had never sinned.”

Q1. What does this chapter teach us about our sanctification?

Q2. What does this chapter teach us about our justification? (See also 2Corinthians 5.17)

Q3.) Does being dead to sin mean you no longer have any problem with sin? (1John 1:8-10).

Q4. What is the fruit of being a servant/slave of righteousness in 6:18-23?

Q5. Read carefully through 6:1-23. How are we encouraged to live a holy life?

BIBLE STUDY 8

Read the whole of Romans chapter 7

Q1. How did Paul show that we can be delivered from the law? See 7:1-6.

q. How can we apply Paul’s example of marriage in 7:2-4?

Q2. What evidence do we have that there is nothing wrong with the law? See 7:7-14.

Q3. What was the purpose of the law in 7:7-14? (see also Galatians 3.24)

Q4. How did Paul show the problem of sin in 7:7-25?

Q5. What is the inner conflict the believer experiences in seeking to serve the Lord?

See 7:14-25.

Q6. What are the weaknesses of the law? See 7:14-25; 8:3.

LIVING IN THE SPIRIT

Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ can live in the Spirit. They know that they have the Holy Spirit in them and they are the sons of God. Suffering in this mortal body is only temporary for the believer, who will never be separated from the love of God in Jesus Christ.

BIBLE STUDY 9

Read the whole of Romans chapter 8

Q1 What are believers set free from in knowing the Lord Jesus Christ?)

Q2 What are the blessings of being “*IN CHRIST*”? See 8:1-4.

Q3 Contrast life according to the flesh and life according to the Spirit in 8:5-14.

See also Galatians 5:16-26.

Q4 Why is it essential for the Spirit to dwell in us? See 8:9-11; John 1:12-13; 3:3-8.

Q5 Show from the evidence in 8:14-19 that we are the sons of God. See also John 1:12-13; 1John 3:1-3.

Q6 What do we learn of suffering and glory in 8:17-18? See also Luke 24:26; Acts 14:22;

Q7 What should be our attitude to affliction 2Corinthians 4:17-18; Philippians 3:10-14; 2Timothy 2:12; 1Peter 1:11; 5:1.

BIBLE STUDY 10

Read the whole of Romans chapter 8

How will creation be affected when the sons of God will be revealed? See 8:19-23.

Q1. What are the three groans shown in 8:22-27 and what is the significance of these groans? See also John 11:33-35.

Q2. What convictions about God’s providence can be seen in 8:28?

Q3. Show the purpose of God in a believer’s salvation in 8:29-30 and explain the meaning of each of the five affirmations.

Q4. Show what we can experience of the fruit of righteousness as a result of living life in the Spirit. Read carefully 8:13-39.

Q5. What do we know of the greatness of God's love for us in 8:28-39?

Q6. Read 8:26-39 and consider carefully the security of the believer.

Q7. In 8:31 Paul wrote "*What shall we then say to these things?*" to conclude this chapter. What are the five questions Paul used to answer his question? Is it true to say there is no answer to all these questions?

Q8. Whilst knowing the assurance of victory in Jesus Christ show the afflictions that we could experience as Christians.

See 8:35-39; 2Corinthians 6:4-5; 11:23-33; Hebrews 11:35-40.