



# Ephesians

Teaching Preview

## Introduction

### Author

Twice in this epistle Paul referred to himself by name as the author of the book (1:1; 3:1). Yet the Pauline authorship of Ephesians has been greatly disputed in recent years. Some critics think that the book reflects aspects of vocabulary, style, and doctrine that differ from Paul's writings. Though the book has a close affinity with Colossians, critics claim that Ephesians is uncharacteristic of Paul. They suggest that the book was pseudonymous, that is, it was written by someone who did not use his own name but who instead claimed to be Paul. Ephesians was extensively and indisputably accepted in the early church as Paul's letter. There is no strong reason for rejecting the Pauline authorship of Ephesians.

### Audience

Some scholars view this epistle as encyclical, a circular letter to be distributed to several undesignated local churches in the province of Asia or some other area. It seems better to accept "in Ephesus" as genuine because of the wide geographical distribution of the Greek manuscripts that do include those words. Also no manuscripts of this epistle mention any other city, and none have only the word "in" followed by a space to insert a city's name. The prescript or title "To the Ephesians" appears in all manuscripts of this epistle. Furthermore, all the letters Paul wrote to churches mention their destinations.

Even so, the epistle may still be considered a circular letter, with Ephesus being the primary church addressed since Paul had stayed there so long and since it was the capital city of the province of Asia. This helps explain the absence of personal names of Ephesian believers.

## Date

Paul was a prisoner at the time he wrote this letter (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Scholars differ on whether Paul wrote this letter while he was imprisoned in Caesarea (Acts 24:27) in A.D. 57–59, or in Rome (28:30) in A.D. 60–62. All things considered, the Roman imprisonment seems more likely. Along with Ephesians, the Books of Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon are thought to have been written during the same time period and hence are called the “Prison Epistles” (cf. Phil. 1:7; Col. 4:10; Phile. 9). This would have been when Paul was kept under guard in rental quarters (Acts 28:30). Following his release he traveled, wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, was arrested again, wrote 2 Timothy, and was martyred in Rome.

## Purpose

The purpose of the Ephesians is twofold:

1. Establish the **orthodoxy** of the church. These are the doctrinal truths that inform the church about WHO she is and HOW she became who she is. These represent what the church is to believe.
2. Establish the **orthopraxy** of the church. These are the practical lifestyles, attitudes, and actions that display to the watching world what the church is. These represent how the church is to act.

These two primary purposes are reflected in the outline below.

## Outline

Date	Passage	Topic
<i>Orthodoxy: the essential doctrinal truths that inform and identify the church</i>		
07/05/2026	Ephesians 1:1-2	Introduction
07/12/2026	Ephesians 1:3-6	Positional Identity
07/19/2026	Ephesians 1:7-14	Positional Truths
07/26/2026	Ephesians 1:15-23	Prayer For Perspective
08/09/2026	Ephesians 2:1-10	Who We Were
08/16/2026	Various	A Complete Doctrine Of Salvation
08/23/2026	Ephesians 2:11-22	Jew And Gentile
08/30/2026	Ephesians 3:1-13	The Mystery Revealed

Date	Passage	Topic
09/06/2026	Ephesians 3:14-21	Prayer For Remembrance
<b><i>Orthopraxy: the essential lifestyles that display the church</i></b>		
09/13/2026	Ephesians 4:1-6	A Similar Church
09/20/2026	Ephesians 4:7-16	A Different Church
09/27/2026	Various	Our APEST Vision
10/04/2026	Ephesians 4:17-24	A Framework For Thinking And Living
10/11/2026	Ephesians 4:25-32	Thinking & Living (1)
10/18/2026	Ephesians 5:1-14	Thinking & Living (2)
10/25/2026	Ephesians 5:15-21	The Wisdom Of Submission
11/01/2026	Ephesians 5:22-24	Submission As Wives
11/08/2026	Ephesians 5:25-33	Submission As Husbands
11/15/2026	Ephesians 6:1-4	Submission As Families
11/22/2026	Ephesians 6:5-9	Submission At Work
11/29/2026	Ephesians 6:10-18a	Spiritual Warfare (1)
12/06/2026	Ephesians 6:10-18a	Spiritual Warfare (2)
12/13/2026	Ephesians 6:18b-24	Final Charge

## Doctrine

### Identification

One of the major doctrinal themes of Ephesians is the issue of the identity of the believer in two categories; personal and corporate. Ephesians outlines a series of truths, new spiritual realities concerning the individual standing/position of a believer to God and also to fellow believers. These truths form the foundational understanding of who the believer IS as a child of God, and how they are to think anew about themselves. They shape the new way that the child of God is to orient themselves to God and how they are to view their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

### Predestination/Adoption

Paul introduces the idea of predestination in 1:11-12. Although the concept of predestination carries with it the assumption of many that it is speaking to a person's personal salvation

experience, we find in this context that Paul is referring to something different. Rather than presenting an argument for how a person gets saved, Paul is talking about a specific kind of predestining or predetermination; a predetermining of inheritance to all believers, ending in the praise of his glory. In other words, Paul is stating that God predetermined a certain outcome of life for those who are His children - an eternal life position that would bring praise unto Him.

There are countless debates that have been had concerning election and predestination, however in Ephesians 1:11-12 is making the case for a predetermination of something for those *who are already saved*.

Ephesians 2:8-9 also touches on this doctrinal debate. It is the argument of those who hold to the view that God predetermines people's salvation, that the "gift of God" mentioned in verse 8 is faith/the ability to believe. Grammatically speaking, this is not true. The contextual topic of discussion is not faith itself, but rather salvation as a whole. In this proper interpretation, Paul is simply stating that *salvation* is a gift from God and not something that can be earned.

## **The Mystery Of The Church**

Ephesians provides for us the most complete treatise on the Church in terms of how we understand its origin and composition. Here Paul teaches us the nature of the Church being a mystery in the Old Testament; not clearly prophesied or spoken of so as to ready us for its arrival in Acts 2. In this letter, Paul explains that the Church was a new, indeed unknown thing. Not only was it unknown, but its makeup was completely new as it consisted of not only Jews but also Gentiles as well.

## **Submission**

Ephesians also addresses the issue of submission within the Body of Christ. Although it does speak to the particular issue of wives being submissive to their husbands, in truth it presents the topic more broadly. Paul presents the concept as a reality for all believers, in a varied number of relationships. From wives, husbands, children, and parents, to workers and their bosses; all of these relationships fall under the charge for submission. Paul will teach us about the standard of submission, and the unique ways that relationships must function with a submission culture if they are to honor God.

## **Spiritual Warfare**

Another important doctrinal concept that is explained most thoroughly in Ephesians is the topic of spiritual warfare. Paul presents a philosophy for how to engage in it and in so doing he explains some of the realities of what the warfare is like and what the categories of our enemy's strategy are. He will present it not as simply a mental battle with temptations to do bad things, but a

comprehensive attack strategy for our destruction. We will intentionally slow down this section to give us a bit more time to consider each one a bit more meaningfully.