

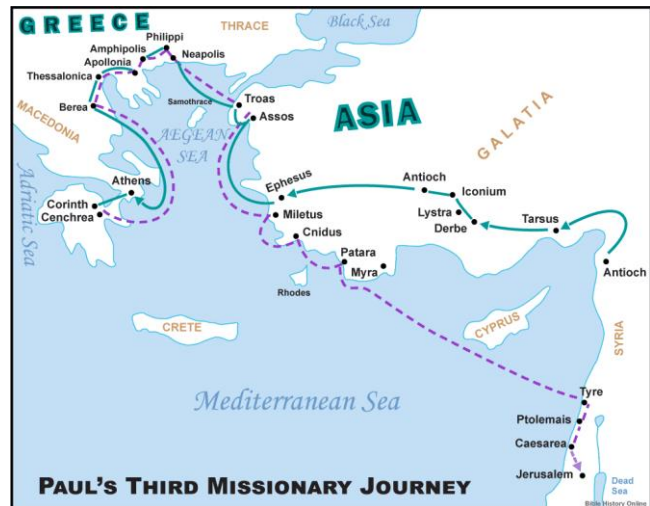
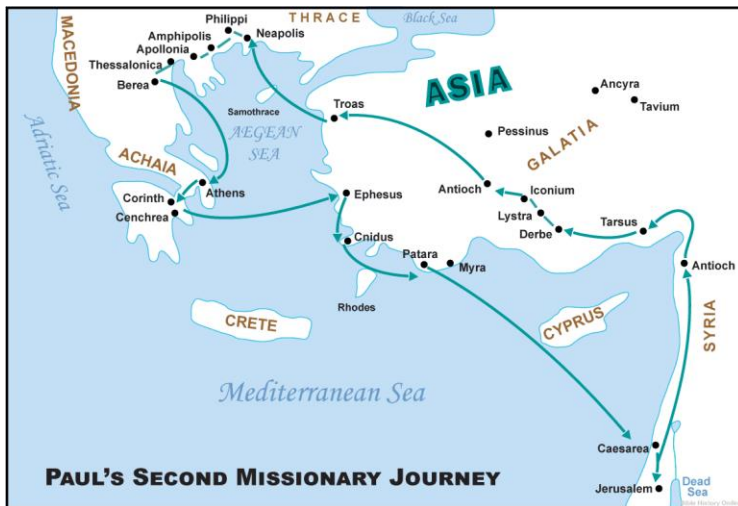
## Introduction to Ephesians

### WHAT: The letter to the Ephesians

#### Ephesians Timeline Events<sup>1</sup> –

- AD 47 – 49** – Paul’s First Missionary Journey, Acts 13:1–14:28
- AD 50** – The Council at Jerusalem, Acts 15:1–15:35
- AD 50 – 53** – Paul’s Second Missionary Journey, Acts 15:36–18:22
- AD 53** – Church at Ephesus is started, Acts 18:19–21
- AD 53 – 57** – Paul’s Third Missionary Journey, Acts 18:23–21:14
  - AD 54 – 56** Paul’s Extended Stay in Ephesus, Acts 19
- AD 58** – Paul arrested in Jerusalem, Acts 21:15–21:40
- AD 60 – 62** – Paul imprisoned in Rome, Acts 28:11–31
  - AD 60** – Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is written
- AD 67** – Paul is executed

#### Missionary Journey Maps<sup>2</sup>



#### Historical Background of Ephesus<sup>3</sup> –

- The city of Ephesus was situated on the west coast of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).
- Pre-Roman Times
  - Founded by Ionian colonists c. 1100 BC
  - c. 550 BC captured by Croesus, king of the province of Lydia
  - c. 334 BC Alexander took control of the city (and pretty much everything else in Asia Minor)
  - In 133 BC Attalus III, king of Pergamum, bequeathed the city to Rome
- The Roman City
  - Beginning with the reign of Caesar Augustus, the city of 250,000 began to prosper
  - Ephesus was the leading city of the richest region of the Roman Empire
  - A recent study of Roman milestone markers demonstrated that mileages from other cities in Asia Minor were measured from Ephesus
  - Ephesus would be the NYC (with Wall Street and all the major financial markets of the world) of ancient world.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from *The Nelson Study Bible*, New King James Version, Radmacher; editor, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Maps from [www.biblehistoryonline.com](http://www.biblehistoryonline.com)

<sup>3</sup> Excerpted from *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid; editors, InterVarsity Press, 1993.

- Paganism
  - The most prominent 'cult' in Ephesus during the Roman Empire was the worship of the Greek goddess Artemis Ephesia (= the Roman goddess Diana Ephesia).
  - Her temple was originally constructed of pure marble in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. It was destroyed in 350 BC and reconstructed during the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The temple was 220 x 425 feet with 127 columns some 60 ft high. This still remains one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
  - Not much is known of the details of Diana worship, though the cult had become the center for the practice of magic. (cf. Acts 19:18–19)
- Judaism in Ephesus
  - Luke records that there was a Jewish synagogue in Ephesus (Acts 19:8).
  - According to Josephus, there was a Jewish community in Ephesus since the time of the Greek Empire.
  - A few Jewish inscriptions have been found during archeological excavations; one which mentions the officials of the local synagogue.

### WHO: Authorship of Ephesians –

- Paul introduces himself as the author in verse 1 and closes it with a personal update on his imprisonment.
- Like almost all of Paul's letters, no objection to authorship has been presented until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
  - Why do liberals reject Pauline authorship?
    - Ephesians style is different from Paul's other letters (which most liberal scholars reject any way!)
    - His theology is *supposedly* different from his other letters
    - A few (3) early manuscripts do not have ἐν Ἐφέσῳ (in Ephesus) in 1:1. Some scholars believe whoever assembled the collection of Paul's letters wrote Ephesians as an introduction to the set, not as a personal letter to the church at Ephesus. Part of their conjecture is that Ephesians is so similar in theology to Colossians that whoever wrote it used Colossians as a source.
  - On the other hand, ...
    - Early church writers are overwhelmingly unanimous in their belief that Paul authored Ephesians.
    - Some scholars focus almost exclusively on style as the determining factor for authorship and underestimate Paul's resourcefulness in expressing himself.
    - It is counterproductive to argue against Pauline authorship because of theological differences and then affirm similarity with Colossians as proof.

### WHERE/WHEN:

- Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians from prison in Rome, cc. 60–62 AD.

### WHY:

- Ephesians, like so many of Paul's letters underscores the truth that salvation is by faith alone and not through works or human striving. The first half of the letter outlines deep spiritual truths concerning the foundations of the Christian faith (redemption, election, the unity of the church, etc.) and the second half describes how those spiritual truths should ultimately determine how we are to live our lives.
- A further examination of the second half of the epistle will divide it into two parts; the first on the conduct of the individual believer followed by the spiritual conflict with the forces of darkness (culminating in the armor of God section in chapter 6).
- The overall theme of Ephesians is that all believers are united in Christ because the church is the one body of Christ. Paul explains that this one body is composed of both Jews and Gentiles with Christ as the head. At one time Jews and Gentiles were divided; but they are now united through faith in the Lord Jesus and are both members of his body the church.
- These thematic ideas are perfectly summarized in the verse that captures the main purpose: Eph. 4:1

“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ...”

## Themes in Ephesians:

- The greatness of God
- The exalted Christ
- Salvation in its present dimensions
- The status of believers
- Unity of Jew and Gentile
- The struggle with the powers
- The ethical obligation of believers
- Paul's apostolic credentials
- The church

## Outline of Ephesians

- 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 (chapters 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)
    1. Principle (5:21)
    2. Husbands and wives (5:22–33)
    3. Children and parents (6:1–4)
    4. Slaves and masters (6:5–9)
  - Strength in the Spiritual Conflict (6:10–20)
- Conclusion, Final Greetings and Benediction (6:21–24)

## Ephesus Ruins



Temple of Artemis

