

## EPHESIANS

### Introduction: Ephesians 1:1-2

- **Author:** Paul
  - Spent 3 years in Ephesus during his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey (53-56 AD)
- **Date:** 62 AD
- **Provenance:** Written while Paul is imprisoned in Rome (Acts 28)
- **Audience:** The entire region surrounding Ephesus
- **Purpose:** “So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.” Ephesians 6:21-22

### The City of Ephesus

- Important Port City on the West coast of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey)
  1. Wealthy trade center
    - The agora was the commercial hub of Ephesian trade.
      - The city’s chief industry was the supply of idols to pilgrim worshippers who travelled to Ephesus to pay homage to Artemis.
      - Miniature replicas of the gods were said to charm away evil spirits and provide protection to its owner.
  2. Center for idol worship
    - Temple of Artemis
      - “...the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky...” Acts 19:35
  3. Magic and mysticism
    - Thousands of artifacts called ‘Ephesian Letters’ contain magical remedies for illness, infertility, and ensured prosperity.
    - Acts 19: the public burning of the scrolls used in sorcery

### Paul’s Ministry in Ephesus (53-56 AD)

#### Preparing the Way

- Paul’s first stop (52 AD)
  - “And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. But on taking leave of them he said, ‘I will return to you if God wills,’ and he set sail from Ephesus.” Acts 18:19-21
- Apollos, Priscilla and Aquilla prepare the way for Paul
  - “Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.” Acts 18:24-26

### **Paul Arrives and Ministers in Ephesus (Acts 19)**

- Acts 19:1-7- Paul corrects 12 disciples of John the Baptist (potentially taught by Apollos)
  - “John answered them all, saying, ‘I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’” Luke 3:16
- Acts 19:8- Paul teaches in the Jewish synagogues for **3 months**
  - “And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.”
- Acts 19:9-10- Paul rejected by the Jews and teaches in the hall of Tyrannus for **2 years**
  - “But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.”
- Acts 19:11-16- Paul performs many miracles in Ephesus
  - Sons of Sceva: sons of the Jewish high priest; “Jewish exorcists”
    - “But the evil spirit answered them, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?’” Acts 19:15
    - “And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.” Acts 19:17-20

### **Resistance in Ephesus**

- The Riot
  - Acts 19:23-27- Demetrius the silversmith objects to Paul and the gospel
  - Acts 19:28-34- Riot in the theater
  - Acts 19:35-40- Town clerk ends the riot
- Paul departs for Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Troas) and Greece
- In Miletus (avoiding Ephesus so he could be in Jerusalem)
  - Calls for the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-38)
- Acts 21-28
  - Paul in Jerusalem (57 AD)
  - Imprisoned in Caesarea and appears before Governor Felix (57-59 AD)
  - Paul before Governor Festus and King Agrippa II (59 AD)
  - Appeal to Caesar, trip to Rome, shipwreck (59 AD)
  - Prison in Rome waiting to appeal to Caesar (60-62 AD)
    - “He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.” Acts 28:30-31
    - **EPHESIANS IS WRITTEN**

### **The Epistle to the Ephesians**

- Structure of the Letter
  1. Chapters 1-3
    - Doctrine: OUR RICHES IN CHRIST
      - 1: Our spiritual possessions in Christ
      - 2: Our spiritual position in Christ
      - 3: Our proclaiming the mystery of Christ
  2. Chapters 4-6
    - Duty: OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN CHRIST
      - 4: Walk in unity
      - 5: Walk in love
      - 6: Walk in victory
- Themes
  1. Christ has reconciled all creation to Himself
  2. Christ has united people from all nations to Himself and to one another in His church
  3. Salvation and all its benefits are “in Christ” alone
    - “in Christ”, “with Christ”, “into Christ”, “through Christ”
    - Used over 200 times in Paul’s writings
    - Used 27 times in Ephesians

#### **Ephesians 1:1-2**

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

- Apostle: A man appointed directly by the risen Christ to teach about Him with His authority
  - Apostles saw the risen Christ
  - Authors of divinely inspired Scripture
  - Power to work miracles
- By the will of God
  - “Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...” Ephesians 3:7-8
- Saint: holy, separated, set apart for the sole use of God
  - Faithful saints solely because of their position in Christ
- In Christ
  - What salvation truly is
  - The spiritual position of every believer
- Greeting
  - Grace: undeserved kindness and origin of all our blessings in Christ
  - Peace: summary of all the blessings resulting from being reconciled to God and others in Christ

**Discussion Questions**

1. How does our life in America parallel to life in ancient Ephesus?
2. What idols are worshipped in our culture?
3. What type of riots may the gospel message and lifestyle raise in our culture? Why?
4. What aspects of Paul's ministry in Ephesus are encouraging or challenging to you?
5. How can we be women who "proclaim the kingdom of God and teach about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:31)?

**HOMEWORK**

**Read Acts 20:17-38** (Paul's farewell words to the Ephesian elders before returning to Jerusalem)

1. How did Paul live among the people of Ephesus while he was there? (Acts 20:17-21; 31; 33-35)
2. According to verse 22, what is drawing Paul back to Jerusalem?
3. What does he know will await him in Jerusalem? (v. 23)
4. What is the ministry that Paul received? (v. 24) How did he fulfill that ministry in Ephesus? (v.25-27)
5. We have all been given "the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace" just like Paul. How are you fulfilling this task in your life?



**Acts 20:17-38**

<sup>17</sup> From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. <sup>18</sup> When they arrived, he said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. <sup>19</sup> I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. <sup>20</sup> You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. <sup>21</sup> I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

<sup>22</sup> “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. <sup>23</sup> I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. <sup>24</sup> However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.

<sup>25</sup> “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. <sup>26</sup> Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. <sup>27</sup> For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. <sup>28</sup> Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. <sup>30</sup> Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

<sup>32</sup> “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. <sup>33</sup> I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. <sup>34</sup> You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. <sup>35</sup> In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

<sup>36</sup> When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. <sup>37</sup> They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. <sup>38</sup> What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.