

Ephesians

Ephesians is addressed to a group of believers who are indescribably rich in Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, they are living a beggarly existence because they are ignorant of their wealth. Paul begins by describing the contents of the Christian's heavenly "bank account": adoption, acceptance, redemption, forgiveness, wisdom, inheritance, the seal of the Holy Spirit, life, grace, citizenship - in short, every spiritual blessing! With this great spiritual endowment, the follower of Jesus has all the resources he needs to live a life "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Ephesians 1:6). Paul ends by teaching how we are to walk rooted in our spiritual wealth.

INTRODUCTION

Ephesians is addressed to followers of Jesus who are living as beggars because they are ignorant of the wealth they possess in Jesus Christ. Paul encourages them in their responsibility to walk in accordance with the heavenly calling they have in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 4:1).

The letter was not written to correct specific errors in a local church, but to prevent problems in the church as a whole by encouraging the body of Christ to mature in Him. It was also written to make believers more aware of their position in Christ because this is the basis for their practice on every level of life.

AUTHOR

All internal (Ephesians 1:1) and external evidence strongly supports that Paul was the author of Ephesians. It has been suggested that one of Paul's pupils or admirers, such as Timothy, Luke, Tychicus, or Onesimus was the author. Since the epistle clearly names the author in the opening verse, this theory has no basis.

The traditional title for this epistle is called *Pros Ephesious*, "To the Ephesians."

DATE & SETTING

At the end of his second missionary journey, Paul visited Ephesus where he left Priscilla and Aquilla (Acts 18:1-21). This strategic city was the commercial center of Asia minor. Ephesus was a religious center as well, famous especially for its magnificent temple of Diana (Roman name) or Artemis (Greek name), a structure considered to be one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Paul remained in Ephesus for nearly three years on his third missionary journey (Acts 19; 20:30). During this time the Word of God was spread throughout the province of Asia.

Paul wrote the "Prison Epistles" (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon) during his first Roman imprisonment in A. D. 60-62. Evidence supports the traditional view that Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were written in Rome about the same time in A. D. 60-61. Philippians was written in A. D. 62, not long before Paul's release.