

Book Of Ephesians

Author

1. The author is the apostle Paul.
 - a. This is made clear by the book. (Eph. 1:1, 3:1).
 - b. The style of writing bears witness to the Pauline authorship.
 - c. Early church writers credit Paul with the writing of this epistle.
2. This is one of 13 epistles written by Paul.
 - a. Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians
 - b. 1 & 2 Timothy, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon
 - c. Some believe he wrote the book of Hebrews, but the author of Hebrews was not an apostle.

HEB 2:3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, **it was confirmed to us by those who heard,**

HEB 2:4 **God also bearing witness with them,** both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

- 1) The writer uses the words “it was confirmed to us by those who heard.” He adds “God also bearing witness with them.” He never refers to himself by name nor does he claim to be an apostle.
- 2) Paul always included his name in the epistles he wrote, but his name appears no where in the book of Hebrews.
- 3) No one knows who wrote the book of Hebrews, and there is really no way of knowing.

To Whom Written

1. It was written “to the saints who are *at Ephesus.*”
2. These words will be studied in detail when the salutation is examined.
3. Ephesus was a city of Ionia in Asia minor and was the famous home of the goddess Diana.
4. Her temple was located at Ephesus and was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world.
 - a. Diana was worshiped as the mother goddess of all living things.
 - b. She was worshiped in her temple at Ephesus and was also worshiped throughout the world.

- c. Demetrius and others made miniature shrines of Diana that were sold and carried throughout the world. (Acts 19:24).

ACT 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen;

- d. Diana was the Latinized form of the Greek word Artemis.

5. Establishment of this church.

- a. Paul had first preached at Ephesus on his 2nd missionary journey on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem about A.D. 52. (Acts 18:19-22).

- b. This was a brief visit and Aquilla and Priscilla were left there. (Acts 18:19).

- c. Paul returned in about 55 A.D. on his 3rd missionary journey. (Acts 19:1-7).

- 1) 1st journey - A.D. 45-49.

- 2) 2nd journey - A.D. 50-52.

- 3) 3rd journey - A.D. 53-57.

- d. He lived at Ephesus for 3 years during this 3rd journey. (Acts 19:1-20:1; 20:31).

6. The words “at Ephesus” are omitted by the Sinaiticus [Aleph] and Vaticanus [B] that are two of the oldest and most significant Greek manuscripts. These two manuscripts date back to the 4th century A.D.. The Alexandrinus, 5th century A.D., has it and papyri 46 [P₄₆] dating back to around A.D. 200 has it.

- It appears that the words “at Ephesus” were inserted by a later hand into the various manuscripts including later copies of the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.

- We cannot be certain they belong in the text, but neither can we be certain they do not belong.

- a. They are found in many other manuscripts and ancient versions.

- b. Many think it was sent to all the churches of in Asia, and it is really a general or circular epistle written to Christians at large. It is speculated that the epistle may have been sent first to the church at Ephesus and then was circulated to the other churches in Asia and then returned back to Ephesus. This may be true, but there is no evidence for this theory.

- c. Paul was intimately acquainted with the members of the church at Ephesus, but he makes no personal reference to any of them in this letter.

- d. He does not send greetings to any of them.

- e. This does not prove anything in the absolute, but it is strange if it was written to the church at Ephesus only.

- f. Paul had spent a lot of time there, and was very close to the brethren in Ephesus. (Acts 20:36-38).

ACT 20:36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

ACT 20:37 And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him,

ACT 20:38 grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they

were accompanying him to the ship.

Note:

1. The book of Revelation makes mention of seven churches in Asia. (Rev. 1:11).

REV 1:11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

2. All of these congregations likely came into existence through the efforts of Paul and his co-workers. (Acts 19:10).

ACT 19:10 And this took place for two years, **so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord**, both Jews and Greeks.

3. The book of Revelation gives the condition of the splendid church at Ephesus in later years (Rev. 2:1-7), but even this church had left its "first love." (Rev. 2:4).

REV 2:1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

REV 2:2 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

REV 2:3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.

REV 2:4 'But I have this against you, **that you have left your first love.**

REV 2:5 'Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent.

REV 2:6 'Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

REV 2:7 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.'

4. Some of the churches of Asia did not remain active and true to the faith. This is made clear by a study of all the seven churches to Asia. (Rev. 2:1-3:22).

Purpose of Book

1. This book stresses the conduct of the new man and the "one body" over which Christ rules as head.
2. It emphasizes the essentiality and importance of the church. (Eph. 1:22,23; 5:23, 25).
3. This book reveals the blessedness of being "in Christ."
4. It exalts Jesus as God's Son. (Eph. 1:20-22).
5. It is interesting that the tone of this book is quite different from the Galatian letter or the first epistle to the Corinthians and many of the other epistles of Paul.
 - a. In this letter Paul is not defensive of his apostleship that evidently was not being challenged by his readers in other places.
 - b. He is not writing to solve problems that has arisen among the brethren like he did in the two epistles mentioned earlier.
 - c. It is largely a very positive epistle. There are warnings against sin and Satan and the forces of evil.

Place of Writing

1. This letter was written from Rome during Paul's Roman imprisonment.
2. The book of Acts closes with Paul in prison at Rome under house arrest. (Acts 28:16, 30).

ACT 28:16 And when we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

ACT 28:30 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters, and was welcoming all who came to him,

- a. This was his first Roman imprisonment. He had some freedom at that time as Acts 28:30-31 indicates.

ACT 28:30 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters, and was welcoming all who came to him,

ACT 28:31 preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

- b. The majority of conservative scholars believe Paul was released from his 1st Roman imprisonment in about A.D. 62.
- c. The New Testament reveals that Paul's ministry did not end with his first Roman imprisonment, but he did extensive work after that. **We learn this from reading the various epistles of Paul.**
- d. Tradition has him dying 6 or 7 years later - A.D. 68 or 69.

Date

1. This epistle is dated about A.D. 61-62.
2. This letter is thought to have been written during Paul's 1st Roman imprisonment. (Acts 28:30, 16).
3. He was in prison two years - A.D. 60 to 62. (Acts 28:30).
4. The book itself reveals that Paul was in prison. (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20).

EPH 3:1 For this reason I, Paul, **the prisoner of Christ** Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles--

EPH 4:1 I, therefore, **the prisoner of the Lord**, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

EPH 6:20 for which I **am an ambassador in chains**; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Prison Epistle

1. The book of Ephesians is known as a prison epistle.
2. Ephesians is one of four books that Paul wrote during his Roman imprisonment.
 - a. He wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Each of these books makes reference to his imprisonment.
 - b. These epistles are commonly known today among Bible students as the "Prison epistles."
 - c. We do not know the order of their composition.
3. It is clear, from his prison references in these books, Paul was in prison when he wrote all four of these epistles.

Salutation

1:1-2

EPH 1:1 Paul, an apostle [messenger] of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints [holy ones, Christians, God's people] who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

- RSV has “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus.”
- Literally the Greek text has, “Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus through [the] will of God to the saints the ones being [in Ephesus] **and** faithful in Christ Jesus.”
- The Greek “kai” rendered “and” means “and, even, also” and may have the idea expressed by the RSV “who are **also** faithful in Christ Jesus.”
- “faithful” is from the Greek “pistos” [pee **stahs**] meaning “faithful, believing.” It means “believing in John 20:27 and Acts 10:45. It is more frequently rendered “faithful” in the New Testament (Matt. 25:21, 23; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:2, 7; 1 Thess. 5:24; 1 Tim. 3:11; Tit. 1:9), but it can have either meaning.

1. “Paul” was his Latin name meaning “small” or “little.” Gr. name “Paulos” [**pow** los].
 - a. He was also known by his Hebrew name “Saul” meaning “to ask or make request.” (Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1, 4, 8, 11, 17, 22, 24; Acts 11:25, 30; 12:25; 13:1, 2, 7, 9, 21; 22:7, 13; 26:14).
 - 1) The name “Saul” does not appear after the book of Acts in the New Testament.
 - 2) Beginning with Acts 13:9 “Paul” is the name he uses with the exception of when he was talking about his past.

ACT 13:9 But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him,

- b. In his writings he calls himself “Paul.” (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1, 12, 13; 3:4, 5, 22; 16:21; 2 Cor. 1:1; 10:1; Gal. 1:1; 5:2; Eph. 1:1; 3:1; Phil 1:1; Col. 1:1, 23; 4:18; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:18; 2 Thess. 1:1; 3:17; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Tit. 1:1; Phile. 1:1, 9, 19).
- c. Peter called him Paul in his second letter. (2 Pet. 3:15). He affirms that some of Paul’s writing are hard to understand. (2 Pet. 3:16).

2PE 3:16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

- d. The Bible reveals these facts about Paul.
 - 1) He was a “Hebrew of Hebrews.” (Phil. 3:5). It might mean both parents were Hebrews or perhaps his parents strictly obeyed the customs and laws of Judaism and he was brought up that way. It could even have a meaning of being strict in the “ancestral traditions.” (Gal. 1:14).
 - 2) He was of the tribe of Benjamin. (Phil. 3:5).
 - 3) He had been a Pharisee. (Phil. 3:5).

PHI 3:5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; Circumcision was commanded on the 8th day. (Gen. 17:11, 12).

4) He was a very learned man having been trained by Gamaliel. (Acts 5:34; 22:3).

ACT 5:34 But a certain Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time.

ACT 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today.

5) He was from Tarsus in Cilicia. Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia.

ACT 9:11 And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying,

ACT 21:39 But Paul said, "I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city; and I beg you, allow me to speak to the people."

ACT 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today.

6) "Zealous" for his "ancestral traditions." (Gal. 1:14).

GAL 1:14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

7) He was a Roman citizen.

ACT 22:27 And the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" And he said, "Yes."

ACT 22:28 And the commander answered, "I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money." And Paul said, "But I was actually born a citizen."

8) He had a serious health problem. (2 Cor. 12:7).

- We are not sure what the "thorn in the flesh" was, but nearly all believe it was some sort of health problem.
- Some believe he had some sort of vision problem or eye disease - ophthalmia (Gal. 4:14), but others believe it was some other health problem, such as, epilepsy, malaria, migraine headaches. Ophthalmia was inflammation of the eye that was quite painful and could make one's appearance repulsive.
- They view Galatians 4:14 as an expression of the great love and affection the Galatian Christians had for Paul.
- Paul had come to the Galatia "the first time" "because of a bodily illness" (Gal. 4:13), but they "did not despise or loath" him. (Gal. 4:14).

9) He most often supported himself as a tentmaker. (Acts 18:3).

10) He spoke both Aramaic and Greek. These languages were nearly universal in Palestine especially among the Jews.

11) He was able to perform miracles and was not inferior to the twelve apostles. (2 Cor. 12:12).

2. "apostle of Jesus Christ"

- “apostle” is from the Greek “apostolos” [ah **pahs** tah lahs] meaning “messenger, one sent.”
- It can be used of any messenger, but in regard to Paul it is used in an official sense. In 1 Corinthians 9 and Galatians 1 Paul gives a defense of his apostleship.
- Paul makes it very clear that he was an “apostle of Jesus Christ.”
- He had seen the Lord. (Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-11; 26:12-18; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8).
 - a. He was not one of the twelve. (Matt. 10:1-2; Acts 1:21-26).
 - 1) Later Matthias replaced Judas who had committed suicide. (Matt. 27:5; Acts 1:21-26).
 - 2) We read about the work of the twelve in the early part of Acts. (Acts 2:37; 5:12).
 - 3) The early chapters of Acts emphasize especially the apostleship of Peter, but do tell us of the conversion of Paul. (Acts 9:1-6).
 - 4) The second part of Acts primarily emphasizes the work of Paul and gives us information about his three missionary journeys beginning in about A.D. 45.
 - b. He had been a great enemy of Christianity, but the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9:1-6).
 - c. This resulted in his conversion to Christ.
 - 1) He was blinded and led to Damascus. (Acts 9:8, 9, 12, 18). His blindness was temporary. (Acts 9:12, 17-18).
 - 2) He came to repentance that is deducted by his actions and preaching. (Acts 9:11; 17:30, 31; 20:16)
 - 3) He was baptized to have his sins washed away. (Acts 22:16).
 - 4) Paul, like the twelve apostles, was a witness to the resurrection. (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:1-10).
 - 5) James, the Lord’s brother, was also appointed as an apostle and was a witness of Christ’s resurrection. (Gal. 1:19; 1 Cor. 15:7).
 - d. His conversion was about 36 A.D..
 - 1) The Jerusalem Conference was about 50 A.D., and it came about 14 years after his conversion.

GAL 2:1 Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. The 14 years dates back to his conversion. The Jerusalem Conference is usually dated about A.D. 50.

- 2) We do not know how old Paul was when converted, but he was likely between 30 and 45. He appears to be a person of authority among the Jews that seems to strongly suggest he was not real young when converted.
 - 3) If tradition is correct and he died about A.D. 68, Paul died about 32 years after his conversion. He did not have a long ministry, but what an impact he had on the world.
 - 4) This means he was likely between 62 and 77 when he died.
- e. He was taught by man, but received his knowledge “by revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:12).

GAL 1:12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

3. He was an apostle “by the will of God. The words “by the will of God” echo what Paul has affirmed at other times. (1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Rom. 1:1).

a. He did not choose to be an apostle, but that was the last thing on his mind.

1) He did not realize to after his conversion that God had predetermined to use him. (Gal. 1:15).

GAL 1:15 But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased See John the Baptist (Lk. 1:15).

2) This did not guarantee salvation. (1 Cor. 9:27).

3) Paul could lose his soul as could the Corinthian saints if there was no repentance and obedience. (1 Cor. 10:12).

4) He, like all men, would stand before Christ in the judgment. (2 Cor. 5:10). See Rom. 14:12 & 2 Cor. 4:1-4.

b. He was a great enemy of Christianity. (Gal. 1:13). See Acts 8:1-4.

c. **God had different plans for him.** God saw in him what he did not see nor did others see. No one thought Paul would become one of the greatest ambassadors for Christ that the world has ever known.

4. It was written “to the saints at Ephesus.”

a. The word “saint” comes from the Greek “hagios” [**hah** gee ahs] meaning “holy one.” (Rom. 1:7; 2 Cor. 1:1; Col. 1:2; Phil. 1:1;4:21).

b. It is used frequently in the New Testament to refer to Christians who have been set apart to live holy lives and who have been cleansed of their sins by Jesus’ blood.

EPH 1:2 Grace [unmerited favor] to you and [spiritual] peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

• “charis” [**kah** rees] means “grace, favor, unmerited favor.”

1. Paul recognizes God as “our Father.”

a. God was his Father and the Father of his Christian readers.

b. God becomes one’s spiritual Father through faith and baptism into Christ. (Gal. 3:26, 27)

c. As Christians we have the great privilege of addressing God as “Father” in our prayers. (Matt. 6:9; Lk 11:2).

d. Jesus taught us to recognize God as our “Father.” (Matt. 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 14, 15,18, 26, 32; 7:11, 21).

1) God is our Father by creation. (Gen. 1:26, 27; 5:1).

2) We must become God’s spiritual children to be saved. (Jn. 3:1-5; Gal. 3:26, 27).

e. Jesus referred to God as His Father. (Matt. 10:32, 33; 11:25,26,27; 12:50).

2. He refers to God as “Father” several times in this epistle. (Eph. 1:2,3, 17; 2:18; 3:14; 4:6; 5:20; 6:20, 23).
3. He refers to Jesus as “the Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - The words “Lord Jesus Christ” are used some 7 times in this epistle. (Eph. 1:2, 3, 17, 3:11; 5:20; 6:23, 24).
 - He is called “Christ Jesus” a number of times in this epistle. (Eph. 1:1, 5: 2:6, 7, 10, 13, 20; 3:1, 6, 21).
 - a. “Lord” is from “kurios” [**koo** ree ahs] - Ruler, King
 - b. “Jesus” is from “Iesous” [ee ay **soos**] - Savior (Matt. 1:21).
 - c. “Christ” is from “christos” [kree **stahs**] - from Hebrew “Messiah” meaning “anointed one.”

JOH 1:41 He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). “Messiah” is from the Greek “Messias” [meh see ahs] meaning “anointed one.” “Messias” is the Greek spelling of the Hebrew word “Messiah.”

JOH 4:25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us."

4. Elsewhere he calls himself “a slave” [bond-servant] of Christ (Rom. 1:1), and a “slave” of God. (Tit. 1:1).
 - a. He had been redeemed by God and His Son through the shedding of Christ’s blood on the cross.
 - b. He was not forced to serve them, but He voluntarily served them out of love and gratitude.
 - c. He did not reject his call to apostleship, but came to the realization that his actions had been sinful and far from pleasing God.
 - d. Paul had become a changed man. He did not seek to please himself or men, but God.

GAL 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

5. Paul wants God’s favor and peace to be extended to these Christians. See Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:2.
 - a. “Grace” denotes “favor, spiritual blessings” and salvation. (Eph. 1:3; 2:8-10).
 - b. “Peace” primarily denotes inner peace. (Phil. 4:4-6). See John 14:27; 16:33.

JOH 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

JOH 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

