

Grace Bible Church
Adult Elective Winter 2017
Topic: Ephesians
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Textbook Recommended: Living Insights - Ephesians by Chuck Swindoll

Introduction To Ephesians and Ephesians Chapter 1:1-14

Introduction To Ephesians

- Timeline:
 - Paul's Conversion – AD 35 (Acts 9:1-19)
 - Paul's time in Arabia (Acts 9:23-25)
 - Paul's time in Tarsus – AD 40 (Acts 9:26-31)
 - Paul's time in Antioch – AD 45 [Home Church!!!] (Acts 11:22-26)
 - Paul's first missionary journey – AD 47
 - Paul's second missionary journey – AD 50
 - Paul's third missionary journey – AD 55
 - Paul's arrest in Caesarea – AD 60
 - Paul's first and second arrests in Rome – AD 63 and AD 66
 - Paul writes to the Ephesians from Rome while under house arrest while awaiting an appeal to Caesar (early 60's)
 - Paul's martyrdom – circa AD 66

- Circumstances of Letter:
 - Acts 19-20 give the history/background of Paul's ministry in Ephesus.
 - Ephesus was a part of the Roman Empire (and ruled by Nero - the leader who burned Rome down in order to rebuild it to his own liking). Nero would eventually kill both Peter and Paul.
 - Ephesus was likely the most influential/important city in Asia Minor at the time of Paul's writing. It was a major political, social, economic, and religious center. Its population was diverse, and the major temple (one of the wonders of the ancient world) was to Artemis (a.k.a. Diana) the fertility goddess.
 - Christians were being persecuted by Jews and Rome at the time of Paul's writing. Additionally, Christians in Ephesus were also being persecuted by pagans whose business suffered because of Christian conversions.
 - The tone and content show us that Paul is writing a formal document (less personal, and more instructive) intending to emphasize some key doctrinal issues to his various church-plants. The message is that salvation comes directly from God's grace, through His Son, and via the Holy Spirit to those chosen before time. This new life through Christ can be lived out fully through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

- AUTHOR: The apostle Paul
 - FROM WHERE: From Rome while Paul was under house arrest (Acts 28, 30, and 31)
 - TO WHOM: The church in Ephesus (in Asia Minor)
 - WHEN: Circa AD 61 AD while Paul was under house arrest in Rome.
 - WHY: To affirm key doctrines of Christianity and to give believers guidelines on how to live the Christian life (to teach orthodoxy and orthopraxy).
 - THEME: Christ gives believers new life and the Holy Spirit empowers them to live that life fully.
 - MEANS: Paul uses chapters 1-3 to expound key doctrinal positions and chapters 4-6 to elucidate the practical nature of living in Christ via the Holy Spirit.
- Letter Outline
 - Chapters 1-3: Believers have a right relationship with God the Father by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Chapters 4-6: God the Father accomplishes an amazing work through us via the Holy Spirit. This work, in part, manifests itself through "right living" with God and with those around us.

Ephesians Chapter 1:1-14

- Paul's letter to the Ephesians begins with an overview of God's salvific work in us, with an emphasis on God's sovereignty and grace toward a fallen people unable to save themselves.
- 1:1-2
 - Saul (who was renamed "Paul") was a Jew from Tarsus, an important city in southern Asia Minor (a metropolitan city). Saul was also a Roman citizen (so his parents were likely very wealthy and very influential as citizenship was not a right but a privilege). Saul was also trained by the best known Pharisee, a rabbi named Gamaliel (Acts 22).
 - Paul introduces himself as an apostle (Gk: "sent one"). This meant that he had encountered the risen Christ and had been entrusted with personally proclaiming His message.
 - These verses emphasize that God had (in His sovereignty) hand-picked Paul.
 - The recipients were "saints" who were "faithful".
 - Saints are all believers/Christians (chosen and set apart by God)
 - These believers/saints were joined to Christ and were joined to one another.

- 1:3-6
 - Gk *eulogia* means "praise" in English. This is used here as "praise" and "blessing".
 - All God does is for His own honor and glory, of which He is fully/wholly worthy.
 - The doxologies in v. 6, 12, and 14 pertain to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (respectively).
 - This is, at its core, a passage of praise to God for what He has done, is doing, and will do.
 - REASONS TO PRAISE GOD:
 - 1. Praise God for His Spiritual Blessings
 - believers have these blessings due to their relationship with God.
 - 2. Praise God because He chose us.
 - God chose us for spiritual blessings (including salvation).
 - We accepted God's spiritual blessings (His gracious gifts to us).
 - Election **and** Free Will
 - 3. Praise God because of His adoption of us.
 - being children of God gives us the benefits of being in God's family (the same rights as "natural children")!
- 1:7-12
 - 4. Praise God because He redeemed us.
 - God paid a price for us and purchased us from the bondages of sin with the price of His Son's body and blood.
 - 5. Praise God because He forgave us.
 - God does not hold any sin against us (past, present, or future... cf. Ps. 103).
 - 6. Praise God because He lavished us with grace
 - This gives us abundant life as it was meant to be!
 - 7. Praise God because His will, which was hidden in the Old Testament is now revealed in the New Testament.
 - 8. Praise God because we have an eternal inheritance with Him.
- 1:13-14
 - 9. Praise God because He has sealed us with His Spirit.
 - Gk. *sphragizo* means "to make secure" and implies ownership or closure.
 - 10. Praise God because His eternal inheritance is guaranteed!
 - Gk. *arrabon* means "pledge" or "down payment"
 - The Holy Spirit is our pledge binding us to God the Father until our ultimate inheritance of glorified resurrection bodies!

NOTE: Materials developed from Chuck Swindoll's Living Insights Series.