

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 4/1/09 Wednesday evening

New Testament Survey—Ephesians

I'm not sure I have a "favorite" book in the Bible, but if I were to choose one, Paul's letter to the Ephesians would be on my short list. It's only six chapters but it is packed with significance in terms of theology and application.

Discuss: What comes to your mind first when you think of the book of Ephesians?

To do:

**Circle and count all the prepositional phrases in the letter that begin with "in" that pertain to Christ ("in Christ," "in Him").

- **Who wrote the book?**

--Paul

- **When was the book written?**

--A.D. 60

The Background:

*Ephesus was a very important city in the Roman world, the most important city in western Asia Minor (now Turkey). Located at the intersection of major trade routes, Ephesus became a commercial center. It had a large pagan temple dedicated to the Roman goddess Diana.

*Paul made Ephesus a center for evangelism for three years, the longest Paul ministered in any place during his missionary journeys.

*Later, the church needed a warning which it received in Rev. 2:1-7.

Acts: Tells us how the church was established... (Gromacki, 242)

*Paul wanted to go to Asia during his second missionary journey, but the Spirit prohibited him (16:6). He founded churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth, and on his way back to Syrian Antioch, he stopped briefly at Ephesus. He stayed a week, preaching in the synagogue (18:18-19). The Jews wanted him to stay longer, but he had to leave, assuring them he would return if it was God's will (18:19-21).

*Aquila and Priscilla remained in Ephesus after Paul sailed. When Apollos, a brilliant orator and follower of John the Baptist, came to Ephesus, the couple taught him about Christ. He was converted, and then left for a ministry at Corinth (18:24-28).

*During his third missionary journey, Paul came to Ephesus. His first converts were 12 disciples of John the Baptist, probably influenced through the ministry of Apollos. Paul preached in the synagogue for three months. When opposition developed, he moved his teaching operation to the school of Tyrannus. How effective was this work?

See: 19:10 "All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus"

*Pagan silversmiths created opposition. When the uproar was over, Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia, ending three years there (20:31).

*He later met with the elders briefly (20:17-38).

• Why was the book written?

--The book deals with no specific local church problems.

--Paul wrote this letter to help Christians grow in their understanding of God's grand and gracious purpose for them.

• What is the outline of the book?

(Gromacki, 247)

| <u>1:1-3:21</u> | <u>4:1-6:9</u> | <u>6:10-24</u> |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Doctrine | Duty | Defense |
| Position | Practice | Power |
| The Believer's Calling | The Believer's Conduct | The Believer's Conflict |

Practical Suggestion: The book is great for disciple-making. The following questions are a sample of questions to use in a one-on-one discipleship Bible study.

Chapter One

1:3 How does the book begin? What's the focus?

1:3 What resources do we have as Christians?

1:3 What phrase does Paul use to depict the position of Christians here? See also 1:7, 9

1:6, 12, 14 Why did God save us? (look for a phrase repeated three times)

1:3-6 What part did God the Father have in our salvation?

1:7-12 What part did God the Son have in our salvation?

1:13-14 What part did God the Holy Spirit have in our salvation?

1:15 What are two key evidences of genuine Christians?

1:16-19 What do we learn about prayer from Paul's prayer?

Chapter Two

2:1-3 What was true of us B.C. (before Christ)?

2:8 How were we saved?

2:7, 10 Why have we been saved?

2:11 Why does Paul change his pronouns in chapter 2 from "we" to "you"?

2:20 We are not saved to live in isolation, but to what?

2:22 In a special sense, through God is omnipresent, where does He live today?

Chapter Three

3:1 What happened to Paul? How did he become a prisoner for the sake of Gentiles?

(see Acts 22:21)

3:6 What is the mystery to which Paul refers over and over?

3:7 How did Paul view himself?

3:12 What privilege is ours in Christ?

3:16 What is one request for which we should pray?

3:19 How much does God love us?

3:20-21 What do we learn about God here?

Chapter Four

4:1 What does it mean to "walk worthy" of our calling?

4:3 What effect must our relationship with God have on our relationship with people?

4:11 What are four gifts that Christ gave to His Church?

4:12 Who are the ministers in the Church?

4:14 What danger faces the Church?

4:17 As Christians, what are we no longer to do?

4:20-21 What is it that God uses to bring about spiritual growth?

4:22-23 If we are to grow, what must we do?

4:24 When it comes to spiritual growth, what's the goal in change?

Chapter Five

5:1 What is our standard in the Christian life?

5:10 What is the ultimate test in decision-making?

5:18 What word does Paul use to describe how we are to relate to the Holy Spirit?

5:21 What word sums up our responsibility to each other?

5:22, 25 What does God expect of wives? Of husbands?

Chapter Six

6:4 What are parents not to do? To do?

6:7 What is to be our motivation on the job?

6:11 Who is our enemy?

6:13 What has God provided for our protection?

6:14 What does the word "stand" indicate about our battle?

6:19 What's surprising about Paul's admission in this verse?

6:21 How do we know Paul was a team player?

- **What is the message of the book in one sentence?**

Ephesians is a letter that explains who we are as Christians and how we are to live.

- **What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?**

1. *Ephesians is very similar to Colossians in many ways.*

Name a few...

2. *Ephesians gives us helpful teaching about several key issues:*

--family living (chs. 5-6)

--the armor of God (ch 6)

3. *Ephesians develops the wonderful theme of grace.*

See: ch 2

Discuss: What do we learn about grace from Ephesians?