

ONE UNDER-IN-THROUGH-ON CHRIST

PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE: EPHESIANS

Eph 1:22-23; 2:13-22

I. BACKGROUND

A. EPHESUS HISTORY

1. LOCATION

- SW Turkey
- On River Selinus
- Near Mediterranean coast—important harbor
- Harbor silting—dredged before time of Christ

2. GREEK BACKGROUND

- Colonized by Greeks—between 1500 and 1000 BC
- Part of 12-city Ionian League—until defeated by Persia

3. CULTURAL CENTER

- Great center of philosophy, art and learning
- Heraclitus and many other important leaders born there

4. PAGAN RELIGION

- a. Pervasive pagan influence
- b. City dominated by many pagan temples—not just to Artemis
- c. Ephesus was the ‘guardian’ (warden) of the Temple of Artemis
 - Thousands of priests/priestesses ministered there!
- d. Ephesus was also temple warden to two emperor cults
- e. Chief fame-Temple of Artemis (Diana)
 - Built about 550 BC
 - One of 7 Wonders of Ancient World
 - Temple precincts had right of asylum
 - Destroyed on night of Alexander’s birth
 - Rebuilding took between 120-220 years!
 - Huge size—200 x 400 feet

5. POLITICAL CONNECTIONS

- 27 BC- 297 AD capital of the proconsular province of Asia
- A direct dependency of Roman Senate
- Retained political and mercantile supremacy during time of Christ

6. FACILITIES

a. Large theatre

- Capacity was 25,000
- Probably largest outdoor theatre in ancient world

b. Large stadium size

- Size—700 x 120 feet
- Athletic contests, gladiatorial fights, and chariot races were held in this Stadium.
- Large gladiatorial graveyard in Ephesus

c. Large bath-house could accommodate 1000 customers

7. DESTRUCTION AND DECLINE

- a. Earthquake destroyed city in 17 AD.
- b. During Tiberius' reign, reconstructed and enlarged.

B. EPHESUS AND THE GOSPEL

1. FIRST ARRIVAL OF GOSPEL

- Gospel first came to Ephesus through Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18: 24-26).

2. PAUL'S CONNECTION

a. His stay in Ephesus

- Arrived during third missionary journey
- Lived there two years and organized the new church ([Acts 19](#))
- Found about 12 disciples—followers of John the Baptist
- Re-baptized them in the name of Jesus
- Started ministry in Jewish synagogue—for three months
- Then withdrew and taught in 'schola' (lecture-hall) of rhetorician Tyrannus
- Performed many miracles
- Encountered Seven Sons of Sceva
- Many magicians were converted—and burned their books
- Paul probably worked and marketed goods at Agora
- Between 53 and 57 AD—wrote I Corinthians from Ephesus
- Departed after tumult by Demetrius and silversmiths of shrines for Artemis.

b. Later contact

- On way to Jerusalem, met Ephesian elders at Miletus—farewell address [Acts 20](#)
- Wrote Epistle to Ephesians about 62 AD from Rome

II. COMPOSITION

A. AUTHORSHIP

1. PAULINE AUTHORSHIP

a. Attributed in [1:1](#)

b. How Paul identifies himself—follows typical formula—*by the will of God*

1. Seven highlight this point—divine origin of apostleship in

- I/II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, I/II Timothy

2. Three identify him as—a ‘servant’ of Christ/God

- Romans and Titus—also mention apostle
- Philippians—says only servant of Christ

3. One letter identifies him as a ‘prisoner’ of Christ—Philemon

4. Two letters give no qualification

- Only mention others with him—Sylvanus and Timothy
- I and II Thessalonians

2. CHALLENGES TO PAULINE AUTHORSHIP

a. Modern scholars challenge some epistles

- Ephesians
- Colossians
- Pastoral Epistles—I/II Timothy and Titus

b. Reasons against Pauline authorship

1. **Vocabulary**—over 90 words not used elsewhere by Paul

2. **Literary** style—long sentences, rather than Paul’s usually shorter ones

3. **Theology**—lacks Pauline emphasis on justification and immanence of Parousia

4. **Historical** context

- Refers to apostles/prophets as church foundation—as if in past—[2:2;3:5](#)

- Gentile equality in church—not an issue—as was in the earliest days of church
- Use of ‘ecclesia’ as larger collective—universal church—[1:22](#); [3:10](#); [5:24-25](#)

c. Also—this theory posits:

- Written by Pauline disciple
- Cover letter for collection of Paul’s letters
- To be circulated in region around Ephesus

3. REASONS FOR PAULINE AUTHORSHIP

a. Subject and purpose are different

- So vocabulary must be different
- So theological focus must be different

b. Gentile equality had not yet been accepted as equal by rest of church

1. But it was less of a problem in Ephesus—that was not influenced by Judaizers
2. Statements about Gentile equality—may be appeals for unity—not statements of fact

c. Universal church is an Apostolic Church theme—this is not about universal *visible* church

d. Earliest lists of NT books attribute Paul as author

B. DATE—LOCATION

1. PAUL—CHRONOLOGY OF HIS CHRISTIAN LIFE—[Acts 9](#); [22:3](#); [Ph 3:5-14](#); [Gal 1:13-14](#)

- First Missionary Journey—47-49 AD
- Jerusalem Council—49 AD
- Second Missionary Journey—49-52 AD
- Third Missionary Journey—52-57 AD
- To Jerusalem—arrested 57 AD
- To Caesarea—house arrest—57-59 AD
- Journey to Rome—59 AD
- [First] Imprisonment in Rome—after 59 AD—[60-62?]
- Release
- [Second] Imprisonment in Rome—martyrdom—[62-64?]

1. PAUL’S SITUATION—STATED IN EPHESIANS

- Paul was in prison—see [3:1](#) and [4:1](#)

2. THEORIES CONNECTED WITH TRADITIONAL PAULINE AUTHORSHIP

- From Rome—about 62-64 AD

- Possibly earlier—from Caesarea—about 58

3. THEORY CONNECTED WITH NON-PAULINE AUTHORSHIP

- By Pauline disciple of second generation—about 90 AD

C. RECIPIENTS

1. NON-TRADITIONAL VIEW

a. Theory

- Circular letter for several churches in region around Ephesus

b. Rationale

- ‘In Ephesus’—absent from three best Greek mss
- Impersonal nature of letter is unusual for Paul—who spent 2 years in Ephesus

2. TRADITIONAL VIEW

- #### a. The phrase *in Ephesus*—is in all the rest of the early Greek mss

- #### b. Impersonal because—Ephesian church was a group of house churches—[Acts 20:20](#)

D. SUMMARY OF TWO THEORIES

1. TRADITIONAL VIEW

- Pauline disciple wrote it as a cover letter for collection of Pauline letters
- Letters were circulated to region around 90 AD

2. NON-TRADITIONAL VIEW

- Paul wrote it from Rome about 62 AD to the church in Ephesus

III. PURPOSE AND NATURE/TONE

A. PURPOSES

- **Proclaim** and secure **unity** of the **church**—Jew and Gentile
- **Teach** recent pagan converts **how to live** as Christians
- **Encourage** the church to understand its spiritual **legacy** and to **persevere** in battle

B. NATURE/TONE

- **Positive**—encouragement—[not rebuking like Galatians]
- **Theological**—themes of redemption and salvation
- **Didactic**—instructing about the Christian walk
- **Devotional**—calm and meditative—about walking with Christ

C. 'FAITH' IN EPHESIANS—COMPARED TO OTHER TYPES OF 'FAITH'

1. FAITH—THAT MAKES US RIGHTEOUS

- a. Trust—that justifies—reconciles us with God
- b. Two aspects in Galatians and Romans
 - **Galatians**—faith that **crucifies** and unifies a person with Christ
 - **Romans**—faith of **obedience**—willing to follow Christ—and obeys Christ

2. FAITH—AS DOCTRINE WE BELIEVE

- a. Theological beliefs—biblical theology—as explained systematically in **Romans**
- b. Dogmatic tenets—systematic theology—as in the *Baptist Faith and Message*

3. FAITH—AS A UNITED COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

- a. *Includes* the previous two types of faith
 - All are 'righteous'—one 'faith' justifies them all
 - All believe same basic tenets—one 'faith' expresses their beliefs
- b. But emphasizes **unity** of community
 - Under the same Lord
 - In worship and service
 - Following the same pathway
- c. Also answers the popular question—"What 'faith' are you?"
 1. In a broad sense—worldviews
 - The 'Christian faith'—not the 'Jewish' or 'Muslim' faith
 2. In a narrow sense—denominations
 - The 'Baptist faith'—not the 'Catholic' or 'Presbyterian' faith
- d. **Ephesians**—answers question in broad sense—key text:

4:5—*One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*

III. ORGANIZATION

SALUTATION—**1:1-2**

REDEMPTION—**1:3-2:10**

- Blessings and explanation—**1:3-12**

- Application—**1:13-14**
- Thanksgiving—**1:15-17**
- Exhortation—**1:18**
- Consummation—**1:19-22**
- Saved by Grace—**2:1-10**

UNITY IN CHRIST—**2:11-4:6**

- United in Christ—**2:11-22**
- Mystery of the Union—**3:1-13**
- Power of the Union—**3:14-21**
- Unity of the Faith—**4:1-6**

THE CHRISTIAN WALK—**4:7- 6:20**

- Equipping the Saints—**4:7-13**
- Maturity in Faith—**4:14-16**
- Instructions for Holy Living—**4:17-5:20**
- The Household of Faith—**5:21-6:8**
 - Husbands and Wives—**5:21-33**
 - Children and Parents—**6:1-4**
 - Slaves and Masters—**6:5-9**
- Spiritual Warfare—**6:10-17**
- Exhortation to Pray—**6:18-20**

CLOSING—**6:21-24**

- Commendation [of Tychicus]—**6:21-22**
- Final Greeting—**6:23-24**

IV. MAIN THEME

A. TWO-FOLD THEME

1. UNION OF ALL CREATION IN CHRIST
2. EXHIBITED ON EARTH BY HIS CHURCH
 - Christ is the Head
 - The Church is His body

B. KEY TEXT = 1:22-23

V. OTHER THEMES AND KEY TEXTS

A. REDEMPTION AND SALVATION

1. REDEMPTION IN CHRIST

1:7—In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

2. SALVATION BY GRACE

2:8-9—For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

B. GOD'S MYSTERY—UNITY OF HIS PEOPLE THE CHURCH

2:13—But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

3:4-6—By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel

4:4-6—There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

C. ENCOURAGEMENT BASED ON GOD'S POWER

3:20-21—Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen

D. ETHICAL LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

5:1-2—Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

E. MYSTICAL UNION—CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

5:25-26—Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word

F. SPIRITUAL WARFARE

6:10-12—Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

VI. BIBLICAL TEXT

1:22-23—22 *And He put all things in subjection **under** His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, **23** which is **His** body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

2:13-22—13 *But now **in** Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **14** For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, **15** by abolishing **in** His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that **in** Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, **16** and might reconcile them both **in** one body to God **through** the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. **17** And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; **18** for **through** Him we both have our access **in** one Spirit to the Father. **19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of **God's** household, **20** having been built **on** the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, **21** **in** whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a **holy** temple **in** the Lord, **22** **in** whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God **in** the Spirit.*

VII. EXPOSITION

A. THE CHURCH HAS THREE IDENTITIES

1. CHRIST'S BODY—1:23

- a. Christ's body—for whom Christ and Paul were afflicted—**Col 1:24**
- b. Christ's body—**I Cor 12:27**
 - **I Cor 12** and **14**—each believer an individual member of it
 - Body with many parts—each serving its purpose

2. GOD'S HOUSEHOLD—2:19

- a. Two main 'household' passages
 - Eph 5:21-6:9
 - Col 3:18-4:1
- b. Prescribe social behavior for three groups
 - Husbands-wives
 - Children-parents
 - Slaves-masters
- c. Variation of this pattern—in two other passages
 - Titus 2:1-10

▪ I Pe 2:13-3:9

3. THE LORD'S TEMPLE—**2:21**—[God's dwelling—in the Spirit]

a. **Individual** believers

1. We are a temple of God—and the Holy Spirit dwells in us—**I Cor 3:16**

2. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit—**I Cor 6:20-21**

- We are not our own
- We are bought with a price
- We are to glorify God in our body

3. We are the 'temple of the living God'—**II Cor 6:16**

b. **Corporate** body

1. Here—in Eph 2:21

2. A spiritual house—for a holy priesthood—**I Pe 2:5**

- To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God
- Related to Paul's exhortation—make your bodies living sacrifices—**Rom 12:1**

B. THE CHURCH IS MADE OF ALL RECONCILED PEOPLE—Eph 2:11-19

1. [Covenant] people formerly **near**—and [aliens] **far** away—**vv 11-12**

- Near—Jews—circumcised—of the commonwealth
- Far away—Gentile—all nations—uncircumcised

2. People **united** by and in Christ—**v 13**

- Brought near by the blood of Christ
- Reconciled through the cross

3. **Reconciled** to one another—**vv 14-19**

- Broke down the wall/barrier
- Put enmity to death
- Brought peace to one those far and near

Isaiah 57:19—*Creating the praise of the lips. Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near, says the Lord, and I will heal him.*

- Reconciled us *together*—to God—[through the cross]
- Gave us equal access to the Father

- Now—we are all fellow citizens—saints [together]

C. THE CHURCH IS GOD'S SPECIAL CREATION—**UNDER-IN-THROUGH-ON** CHRIST

1. WE ARE UNDER CHRIST

- a. God is **over** all—**4:6**
- b. God has placed Christ is above all—**1:20-22**
 1. Eternally exalted—**1:20**
 - He raised Christ—and seated Him at His right hand
 - **Far above** everything
 - Far above = **υπερανω**—above the above—above the highest
 - Above all rule/authority/power/dominion
 - Now and forever
- c. Lordship over everything—**1:22**
 - He put all things in subjection **under** His feet
- d. Our privilege—[implied]—**1:22**
 - Christ—was given to the church—His body
 - This means—the Lord of all creation—is uniquely our leader
 - Our privilege—being His own personal body
 - Our privilege—submitting to Him and serving Him

2. WE ARE IN CHRIST

- a. Chosen in Christ—1:4
 - Our **election**—is in Christ—[who is God's Elect One—**Is 42:1**]
- b. In Him—we have obtained an **inheritance**—**1:10-11**
- c. In Him—we have the **gospel** of our salvation—**1:13**
- d. In Him—we were **sealed** with the Holy Spirit of promise—**1:13**
- e. In Christ Jesus—we were created for **good works**—**2:10**
- f. In Christ . . . by His blood aliens were **brought near**—**2:13**
- g. In Him—those far and near were **united**—made into one **new person**—**2:15**
- h. In Christ the corner stone—the whole building is being fitted together—**2:20-21**
- i. In Jesus our Lord—we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him—**3:11-12**

- j. In Christ—is to be ‘with’ Christ
 - Made alive with Christ—**2:5**
 - Raised up with Him—**2:6**
 - Seated with Him in heavenly places—**2:6**

3. WE COME **THROUGH** CHRIST

- a. Adoption—through Jesus Christ—**1:5**
 - How God completes our ‘election’ in Christ—**1:4**
- b. Access to the Father—through Him—**2:18**
- c. Through His cross—we are reconciled to God—in one body together—**2:16**

4. WE ARE BUILT **ON** CHRIST

- a. The Church—built on the most solid—perfect—permanent foundation

- b. Apostles and Prophets

1. **Apostles**

- Who taught what they heard personally from Christ
- Who wrote Scripture as inspired by the Holy Spirit
- Church continued in their teachings—**διδαχη**—**Acts 2:42**

2. **Prophets**

- Forth-telling—called for proper application of Torah
- Fore-telling—predicted Christ’s coming and formation of the church

- c. **Cornerstone**

- The stone the builders rejected
- Prophesied—**Ps 118:22**
- Jesus applied to Himself—**Mk 12:10-11**

- d. Earthly fore-shadowing of perfectly dimensioned and divinely built home

- The **Father’s house**—**John 14**
- **Heavenly city**—described in **Rev 21**
- City **with foundations**—whose architect and builder is God—**Heb 11:10**

- e. **Fitted** together

- **συναρμολεγω** = Closely joined together—in a designed plan
- **Like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle**

- **Each person** has a **specific purpose**—and place
- Only you can fulfill—God’s purpose designed only for you

D. THE ETERNALLY PLANNED PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

❖ TO REVEAL GOD’S WISDOM AND MYSTERIOUS PLAN

Eph 3:8-13—*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God **might now be made known through the church** to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. Therefore, I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.*