

ESPHESIANS OUTRODUCTION

Paul the Apostle to the saints at Ephesus – He wrote this letter because something is lacking in the doctrinal understanding of the church at Ephesus. That deficiency had an impact on their function. In 1:17-19, Paul has a desire for them:

1. That they are given a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him
2. That the eyes of their heart be enlightened, so that they will know:
 - a. The hope of His calling
 - b. What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints
 - c. What is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe

The hope of His calling is the assurance of the future based on His promise and the faithfulness of God in Jesus Christ.

The riches of the glory of His inheritance means that we are the recipients of His grace, we are saved, we are seated with Jesus (present and future reality), we are part of His new administration (the church), and we are the holders and proclaimers of the truth and wisdom of God.

His surpassing power is in the administration of the church. We have everything we need for life and godliness, and we can be successful in this life through the understanding of and reliance on His word.

The main issue in this body of believers is that the Jewish believers were functioning as a superior portion of the body of Christ. But the plan of God was that the Gentile believers were not to be isolated from Jewish believers. Even though Gentiles had been far from Christ, they have now been brought near (2:11-15). This new administration is not a new thing or a “plan B.” The church is not an afterthought; this economy of grace and administration of the church was planned from the foundation of creation.

After making these doctrines understood, Paul then implores the Ephesian believers to walk in a manner worthy of the calling, reiterating that there is only one body. The contrast to this would be that there are multiple bodies (Jew and Gentile). All who believe in Jesus are in the body of Christ; nationality is no longer a consideration in the administration of God.

The main purpose of the book is found in 4:11-16, growth to maturity in love and unity.

How a mature believer is to live is given in 4:17-6:20. Believers are to behave with respect to their calling and identity in Christ and in their function as the church.

Outline

- I. Believer's Identity (1:3–2:10)
 - a. Predetermined Benefits for the Believer in Christ (1:3–14)
 - i. Holy and Blameless (1:4)
 - ii. Adoption (1:5)
 - iii. Redemption (1:6-8)
 - iv. Administration (1:9-10)
 - v. Inheritance in Christ (1:11–14)
 - b. Goals of this letter (1:15–23)
 - c. Saved by Grace (2:1–10)
- II. Believer's Unity in the Church – Corporate Identity (2:11-3:21)
 - a. Unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ (2:11–2:22)
 - b. Mystery and Purpose of the Church (3:1-13)
 - c. God's Fullness for the Church (3:14–21)
- III. Walk in Respect of Unity (4:1–6)
- IV. Grow to Maturity (4:7–16)
- V. Walk in Maturity (4:17–32)
- VI. Walk in Love and Wisdom as Children of God (5:1–21)
 - a. Walking in Love (5:1–5)
 - b. Walking in Light (5:6–14)
 - c. Walking in Wisdom and Self Control (5:15–18a)
 - d. Fill your spirit with the Truth of God (5:18b-21)
- VII. God's Will for Service to One Another (5:22–6:9)
 - a. Husbands and Wives (5:22–33)
 - b. Parents and Children (6:1–4)
 - c. Employers and Employees (6:5–9)
- VIII. God's Provision for Spiritual Warfare (6:10–20)
 - a. The Believer's Fight (6:10–13)
 - b. The Believer's Tools (6:14–17)
 - c. Spiritual Priority of Prayer (6:18–20)

Study

This is a foundational book with an emphasis on doctrinal truth, the identity of the believer, and the practical function of the believer.

This does have its challenges, but if we remember to read the book in its normal literal function, understand the terms in this letter, and keep it in its historical context, the believer can understand this book to its full nature.