

The Letters to the Churches- The Call and Conduct of the Church...Ephesians

The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the church of Ephesus about 62 A.D. Paul had visited the city of Ephesus on his missionary journey. He stayed in Ephesus for two years on his third missionary journey. At the time of the writing of this letter he was a Roman prisoner. Ephesians is therefore known as one of the prison epistles.

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia and had a population of some 300,000 people. It was an important commercial city.

The epistle breaks down naturally into two parts. **The Call of the Church** is chapters one through three and **The Conduct of the Church** consists of chapters four, five and six. The key word in the book is "**Mystery.**"

Allow the following outline for our study of the book of Ephesians:

I- The Call of the Church: 1:1-3:21

(1) The Planning, Purchase and Protection of the Church- 1:1-14

(2) The Prayers of Paul for the Church of Ephesus- 1:15-23; 3:14-21
(3) The Building of the Temple- 2:1-22

(4) The Mystery of the Church- 3:1-13
II-The Conduct of the Church:4:1-6:24

(1) Unity of the One Body- 4:1-16
(2) Redeem the Time as a new man – 4:17- 5: 20

(3) Relationships of the Church Illustrated- 5:20-33

(4) Obedience to Authority- 6:1-9
(5) The Warfare of the Church- 6:10-20
(6)Benediction- 6:21-24

I- The Call of the Church: 1:1-3:21

The first part of the book of Ephesians is the doctrine section of the book.

(1) The Planning, Purchase and Protection of the Church- 1:1-14

The church is a very unique organization to this world. The Trinity was and is involved in the church. Now how this is in the following.

The origin of the church was in the mind of God the Father in eternity past. In eternity past God chose us in Christ, predestined us to be sons, and made us accepted in Christ. (1:4-6) God the Father can be said to have planned the church.

When the time for the church to be purchased was come God sent His Son to purchase it. This Son is Jesus Christ who is the second person of the Trinity. He redeemed us by His blood (1:7) and we obtain an inheritance in Him (1:11). We are in fact said to be, "**in Christ**" (1:3).

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is also involved in the church. He protects it. He quickens the hearer and seals the believers (1:13), and is the down payment of our inheritance (1:14).

(2) The Prayers of Paul for the Church of Ephesus- 1:15-23; 3:14-21

There are two prayers in the book that Paul prayed for the Ephesians. In the first prayer he prays for five specific things he wanted the Ephesians to realize.

a- That God would give them, "**the spirit of wisdom and revelation**

in the knowledge of him.” 1:17b. He prays that they would know God personally.

b- Next he prayed they would know, *“what is the hope of his calling” 1:18a.* Our hope is Christ.

c- That they might know, *“the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” 1:18b.* this is a verse that shows we are of value to God because God will bring honor and glory to Himself through us.

d- That they might know, *“the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe...” 1:19.* The power of God was demonstrated by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. (1:20).

e- That they might know who Christ is. (1:21-23).

The second prayer is in **3:14-21**. Here he prays for four things. That they would *“be strengthened” (3:16);* and *“that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (3:17),* that they *“might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (3:18-19)* and they would *“be filled with the fulness of God.”*

(3) The Building of the Temple- 2:1-22

In chapter two the church is pictured as being a temple. Paul reminds us of the former life from which we came. We were dead in our trespasses and sins (2:1), obedient to Satan (2:1), the children of wrath by nature and by choice (2:3), godless and unclean (2:3), separated from Christ (2:12) and we had no hope (2:12).

Gods response to our condition was He loved us and made us alive in Christ and he set us in heavenly places. (2:4-6). He did this to show us as trophies of His grace. The way He did it was by

grace through faith (2:8). Therefore we are a building fitly framed together, a temple (2:16).

(4) The Mystery of the Church- 3:1-13

The church was a mystery in the Old Testament. It was something that God did not reveal until Christ came. The great mystery was that Jews and Gentiles would be equal in the church.

This ends the section of doctrine.

II-The Conduct of the Church:4:1-6:24

The second division of the book of Ephesians is practical application of the doctrine of the first division. In **4:1** we are exhorted to walk, *“worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called of God.”* The last section deals with putting the doctrine to work in our lives.

(1) Unity of the One Body- 4:1-16

In **4:2-3** we have a list of attitudes that promote unity. We are taught that the spiritual gifts are for unifying. (4:7-16).

(2) Redeem the Time as a new man – 4:17- 5: 20

That we are to walk as a new man after salvation is apparent from these verses. **4:22-23** says the Spirit accomplishes this.

Our walk should be in loves (5:1-7), in light (5:8-14) and in wisdom (5:15-20).

(3) Relationships of the Church Illustrated- 5:20-33

Paul used the relationship of a husband and wife to illustrate the relationship of Christ and the church.

The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. We see that Christ justified (5:25), is sanctifying (5:26) and will glorify the church (5:27).

(4) Obedience to Authority- 6:1-9

Obedience to authority is set forth in this portion of scripture. Children are to obey their parents (6:1-3) as parents bring them up as God desires (6:4). Servants are to obey their masters (6:5-8) as the master is obedient to the Lord (6:9).

(5) The Warfare of the Church- 6:10-20

This section addresses the spiritual warfare of the church. Paul warns us to put on the whole armor for the fight, the spiritual armor. We see our enemy is not a mortal creature but a spiritual being known as Satan (6:12). The purpose of the armor is to stand against the enemy. We have the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, sandals of the gospel, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit for the battle.

(6) Benediction- 6:21-24

Paul closes with a commendation of Tychicus (6:21-22) who carried the letter from Rome to Ephesus. He had accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey.

The closing words are peace, love, faith and grace. These are the great words of the gospel message.

Application to Life's Steps

1- God's Word had application for us today. Doctrine should be applied to life.

2- The church was not an after thought of God and is His chosen way to spread the Gospel.

3- We are called to have unity in the body as we serve one another.

4- We need to be aware of the spiritual battle and prepare for it.

5- Peace, love, faith and grace are words we need to apply to our souls.

Retracing Our Steps:

1- Who wrote the book of Ephesians?

2- What parts did/do the Trinity play in the church? _____

3- Was the church revealed in the Old Testament? _____

4- What illustration did Paul use to show the relationship of Christ to the Church?

5- What are the parts of the armor of God? _____

