

EPHESIANS

1. Author: Paul.

- a. Internal and external evidence says Paul is the author.
 - (1) Internal.
 - (a) **Eph 1:1** 1 Paul, an apostle of Messiah Jesus by the desire of God....
 - (b) We know Paul was imprisoned, and the author mentions he's in prison several times.
 - (2) External.
 - (a) Tychicus delivered *Ephesians* at the same time he delivered *Colossians* and *Philemon*.
 - (b) Pauline authorship was never questioned until the 19th century.
 - (3) Evaluation.
 - (a) Paul's vocabulary and style are different from his other epistles, but Paul is allowed to be flexible under various circumstances.
 - (b) The theology of *Ephesians* in some ways reflects a later development, but this is to be attributed to the Spirit's continuing revelation and Paul's advancing understanding.
 - 1) **Eph 3:3** 3 ...How the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.
 - (c) Modern scepticism about Pauline authorship will in future be considered "one of...the curiosities of a hypercritical age."¹
- b. From *Ephesians*, we learn about Paul:
 - (1) He is an apostle of Jesus by the Father's desire (1:1).
 - (2) He includes himself with his audience by continually using "we" and "us."
 - (a) "We" is found 19 times, "us" is found 18 times, and "our" is found 12 times!
 - (3) He is a prisoner for Jesus on behalf of the nations (3:1).
 - (4) He was given the stewardship of God's grace for the nations (3:2).
 - (5) The mystery of the Church was made known to him by revelation (3:3).
 - (6) He has insight into the mystery of Messiah (3:4).
 - (7) He was given the gift of the Father's grace by the working of the Father's power (3:7).
 - (8) He considers himself the very least of all the saints (3:8).
 - (9) He was given the grace to preach to the nations the unsearchable riches of Messiah and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery of the Church (3:8-9; 5:32).
 - (10) He is suffering for the Ephesians, for their glory (3:13).
 - (11) He is a prisoner for the Lord Jesus (4:1).
 - (12) He requests prayer (6:19).
 - (13) He desires to boldly proclaim the mystery of the gospel (6:19).
 - (14) He is an ambassador in chains for the gospel (6:20).
 - (15) He sent Tychicus to the Ephesians to tell them everything (6:21).

¹ G. G. Findlay, quoted in John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 21.

- (a) Paul doesn't share any details about his trial in the letter. He wants Tychicus to do that in person. This is because Jews from Ephesus are the complaining witnesses in Paul's trial (Ac 21:27-29). He has many enemies in Ephesus.
- (16) He wants the Ephesians to know how he and his companions are doing (6:22).
 - (a) Paul mentions no one by name in the Ephesian church. This is because he doesn't want to cause unnecessary trouble for anyone (i.e., not mentioning "China" in an email to a missionary).

2. Recipients: Ephesian Saints.

- a. Paul writes to saints who are believing/faithful (Eph 1:1). He considers them believers who have been justified and adopted into God's family.
 - (1) **Eph 1:1** 1 Paul, an apostle of Messiah Jesus by the desire of God, To the saints (τοῖς ἁγίοις) who are in Ephesus, and are believing/faithful (πιστοῖς) in Messiah Jesus.
 - (2) Many ancient manuscripts omit "in Ephesus" in Eph 1:1. This is likely because *Ephesians* was circular letter for all the churches in Asia.

3. Historical Context.

- a. The city of Ephesus.
 - (1) Greek period.
 - (a) Ephesus was built in the 10th century bc by Greek colonists.
 - (b) Ephesus was famous for the temple of Diana or Artemis, completed in 550 bc and one of the seven wonders of the ancient world (Ac 19:35).
 - 1) It likely was the largest building of the ancient world.
 - 2) The local economy depended on this temple (Ac 19:24-27).
 - (2) Roman period.
 - (a) Ephesus came under Roman control in 129 bc.
 - (b) When Augustus became emperor in 27 bc, he made Ephesus the capital of Asia. Ephesus prospered.
 - (c) According to the Greek geographer Strabo, Ephesus was second in importance and size only to Rome. Population estimates vary between 50,000 and 225,000 people.
 - (d) Heavy silting required a special canal so ships could reach the harbour.
 - (3) After Paul.
 - (a) Ephesus was destroyed by the Goths in ad 263 and declined as a commercial centre due to silting in its harbour.
 - (b) Ephesus was the site of several church councils, including the Council of Ephesus (ad 431). This council confirmed the original Nicene Creed, affirmed the full deity of Jesus, and condemned the teachings of Nestorius.
 - (c) Ephesus was partially destroyed by an earthquake in ad 614.
 - (4) Today.
 - (a) The ruins of Ephesus are a favourite international tourist attraction.
- b. Paul and the Ephesians.
 - (1) Paul's Second Missionary Journey (ad 49-51).
 - (a) At the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey, the Spirit forbid Paul, Silas, and Timothy from proclaiming the gospel in Asia (Ac 16:6).

- (b) At the close of his second missionary journey, on his way from Corinth to Syria, Paul came to Ephesus, went into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews (Ac 18:19). The Jews asked him to stay longer, but he declined (Ac 18:20). He told them he would return if God desired (Ac 18:21).
- (c) At this time Apollos began to teach in Ephesus, speaking boldly in the synagogue (Ac 18:24-26). He powerfully refuted the Jews in public, proving that the Messiah was Jesus (Ac 18:28). The brothers in Ephesus encouraged Apollos to cross over to Achaia (Ac 18:27).
- (2) Paul's Third Missionary Journey (ad 52-56).
 - (a) While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul came to Ephesus and found 12 disciples of John. He baptised and laid hands on them, and the Spirit came upon them (Ac 19:1-7).
 - (b) Paul spoke boldly in the synagogue for three months, but some Jews became stubborn and spoke evil of the Way. So Paul withdrew and reasoned daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years. As a result, "all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Ac 19:8-10). Paul persuaded and turned away a great many people from the Greco-Roman gods (Ac 19:26).
 - 1) Philemon probably came to faith during this time (Phm 19-20).
 - (c) From the first day Paul set foot in Asia, he served the Lord Jesus with humility, tears, and trials through the plots of the Jews. But he did not shrink from declaring to the Ephesians anything that was profitable. He taught them in public and from house to house. He testified to Jews and Greeks of a change of mind toward God and of faith in Jesus (Ac 20:18-21). He did not shrink from declaring to them the whole counsel of God (Ac 20:27). For three years he did not cease night or day to admonish them with tears. He coveted no one's silver, gold, or apparel. He ministered to his own necessities and to those who were with him. He worked hard to help the weak (Ac 20:31-35).
 - (d) As Paul taught, God did extraordinary miracles by his hands (Ac 19:11-12).
 - 1) Some itinerant Jewish exorcists, seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish high priest, tried to invoke the name of Jesus over those who had evil spirits. But they were overpowered by an evil spirit and completely embarrassed. This became known to all the residents of Ephesus, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled (Ac 19:13-17).
 - (e) Many new believers came and confessed their sinful practices. Those who had practiced magic arts together burned their very valuable books in the sight of all. The word of the Lord Jesus continued to increase and prevail mightily (Ac 19:18-20). During this time, Paul wrote *1 Corinthians* (ad 55).
 - (f) Then there arose a great disturbance. Demetrius, a silversmith, gathered the craftsmen and workmen to defend their trade and the temple of Artemis (Ac 19:23-27). The city was filled with confusion, and a crowd dragged two of Paul's companions into the theatre. Paul wished to go in among the crowd, but the disciples and high-ranking officers of Asia would not let him. Alexander, a Christian, wanted to make a defense to the crowd, but the crowd shouted for two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (Ac 19:28-34).

The town clerk was finally able to quiet the crowd, telling Demetrius and the craftsman to bring charges in court if they wanted to. After the uproar, Paul said goodbye to the Ephesian disciples and left for Macedonia (Ac 19:35-20:1).

- (g) At the end of his third missionary journey (ad 56), on his way back to Jerusalem, Paul decided to sail past Ephesus (Ac 20:16). This was likely because he did not want to cause further trouble for the believers in Ephesus. He did, however, call the elders of the Ephesian church to Miletus (Ac 20:17). He told them they would not see his face again. He commanded them to pay careful attention to themselves and to the church. He warned them to be alert because fierce wolves would come, and men from among their own selves would arise speaking twisted things. He commended them to God and to the word. He urged them to work hard in order to help the weak (Ac 20:25-35). Finally, he knelt down and prayed with them. They wept together and embraced and kissed Paul. They accompanied Paul to his ship, extremely sad because he had said they would not see him again (Ac 20:36-38). Two Ephesian disciples, however, Tychicus and Trophimus, continued to travel with Paul to Jerusalem (Ac 20:4).
- (3) Paul's First Imprisonment.
- (a) In Jerusalem, it was Jews from Asia who stirred up the crowd against Paul. They claimed Paul was teaching everywhere against the Jewish people, the Torah, and the Jerusalem temple. They also alleged he had brought Greeks into the temple and defiled it. They said this because they had seen Trophimus the Ephesian with Paul and supposed Paul had brought him into the temple. All Jerusalem was stirred up, and the people seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple (Ac 21:27-30). Very likely, it was these Ephesian Jews were the official complaining witnesses in Paul's six-year trial (ad 56-62).
 - (b) As a prisoner in Rome (ad 60-62), Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with a soldier who guarded him (Ac 28:16). Though he was chained (Ac 28:20), he was able to meet with local Jews and others (Ac 28:17, 23). From morning till evening, he expounded to them about Jesus (Ac 28:23). He lived there two whole years at his own expense, welcoming all who came to him (Ac 28:30). He proclaimed and taught with all boldness and without hindrance (Ac 28:31).
 - 1) **Eph 6:19-20** 19 ...And [pray] also for me [Paul], that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.
 - (c) Very likely Luke, with Paul's help, wrote *Luke* and *Acts* during this time and submitted them to Theophilus, one of Nero's law clerks (Lk 1:1-4; Ac 1:1; 28:30-31). The goal was introduce the gospel to Nero and to get Paul freed.
 - (d) During his imprisonment in Rome (ad. 60-62), Paul sent Tychicus and Onesimus back home to Asia (Eph 6:21-22; Col 4:7-9) to deliver three letters, one to the Colossians, one, *Ephesians*, a general circular letter intended for all

the churches in Asia, and one to Philemon, concerning Onesimus. *Ephesians* is probably the letter to the Laodiceans Paul refers to in Col 4:16.

- 1) **Eph 6:21-22** 21 So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.
 - 2) **Col 4:7-9** 7 Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, 9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.
 - 3) **Col 4:16** 16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans. And see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.
- (4) Paul's Release (ad 62).
- (a) Some time after his release (ad 62), Paul ordered Timothy to remain at Ephesus to combat false doctrine. This shows Paul's ongoing concern for the church at Ephesus.
 - 1) **1 Ti 1:3** 3 As I [Paul] urged you [Timothy] when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine....
- (5) Paul's Second Imprisonment (ad 63-64).
- (a) Unfortunately, all Paul's disciples in Asia turned away from him, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.
 - 1) **2 Ti 1:15** 15 You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.
 - (b) Just before his death (ad 64), Paul sent Tychicus again to Ephesus.
 - 1) **2 Ti 4:12** 12 Tychicus I [Paul] have sent to Ephesus.
- c. Peter and the Ephesians.
- (1) Peter wrote to the Ephesians and others in ad 63-64.
 - (a) **1 Pe 1:1** 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Messiah, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia....
 - (2) Like Paul, Peter also was put to death in Rome at Nero's command (ad 65-68).
- d. John and the Ephesians.
- (1) The apostle John knew the Ephesians well, living and ministering there during the last decades of his life. John wrote *John* (ad 85), *1-3 John* (ad 85-95), and *Revelation* (ad 95) from or near Ephesus.
 - (2) Jesus directed John to deliver *Revelation* to the Ephesian church.
 - (a) **Re 1:10-11** 10 I [John] was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet 11 saying, Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.
 - (3) Re 2:1-7 is a report card from Jesus to the Ephesian church.
 - (a) The Ephesian church was characterised by works, toil, and patient endurance (v. 2). It did not tolerate those who were evil, and it tested and found false

those who were calling themselves apostles (v. 2). They endured patiently, beared up for Jesus, and did not grow weary (v. 3). They did, however, abandon the love for Jesus they had at first (v. 4). Jesus commanded them to remember from where they fell, change their hearts, and do the works they did at first (v. 5). If not, Jesus would come and remove their lampstand from its place (v. 5). They did hate the works of Nicolaitans, which Jesus also hated (v. 6).

- (4) Ignatius and the Ephesians.
 - (a) Ignatius (d. ad 108-40), a disciple of John and the bishop of Antioch, wrote a letter to the Ephesian church, while he was on his way to martyrdom in Rome.
 - (b) See O'Connor, John Bonaventure. "St. Ignatius of Antioch." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 7. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910. 13 Jul. 2021 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07644a.htm>>.

4. Purpose.

- a. *Ephesians* is a circular letter intended for all churches in the region of Asia.
 - (1) It doesn't address particular local church problems, as does *Galatians* and *1 and 2 Corinthians*.
 - (2) Like *Romans*, it is a Christian treatise designed for general use. It directly applies to every local church in the Church age.
- b. Paul's goals are to:
 - (1) State God's plan to unite in Jesus all things in heaven and on earth.
 - (2) Inform believers of their spiritual wealth in Messiah.
 - (3) Explain the importance of the Church in God's plan for history.
 - (4) Promote unity between Jewish and Gentile believers in the Church.
 - (5) Motivate a spiritual walk that corresponds to believers' spiritual wealth.
 - (6) Ready believers for spiritual warfare.
- c. *Ephesians* is very relevant. It answers important questions we ask today.
 - (1) Does God have a plan?
 - (2) Do I matter?
 - (3) Do we matter?
 - (4) What is the goal?
 - (5) Where is Jesus now?
 - (6) How should we live?
 - (7) How do we stand strong?

5. Characteristics.

- a. The scope of *Ephesians* is very broad.
 - (1) **Eph 1:9-10** 9 ...Making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Messiah 10 as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
 - (2) In *Ephesians*, we view history from a mountain peak. We get perspective on all God is doing in the world.
- b. *Ephesians* is universal in character. It applies equally to every local church.

- c. *Ephesians* divides neatly into two major sections, doctrine (Eph 1-3) and practice (Eph 4-6). There are no imperatives in Eph 1-3 but 35 imperatives in Eph 4-6.
- d. *Ephesians* speaks to both the individual believer (Eph 2:1-10) and the community of believers (Eph 2:11-22).
- e. “Ephesians is affirmation.”² It is not controversial. It is neither apologetics nor polemics. It abounds in bold and jubilant affirmations about the Trinity and the church.

6. Leading Ideas.

a. God’s Plan.

- (1) **Eph 1:4-10** 4 ...Even as [the Father] chose us [believers] in [Jesus] **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he [corporately] **predetermined** us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Messiah, according to **the purpose of his desire**, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us **the mystery of his desire, according to his purpose** that he set forth in Messiah 10 as **a plan for the fulness of time**, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
- (2) **Eph 3:8-11** 8 To me [Paul], though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the nations the unsearchable riches of Messiah, 9 and to bring to light for everyone what is **the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God**, who created all things, 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was according to **the eternal purpose** that he has realized in Messiah Jesus our Lord....
- (3) God’s plan deals with “all things.” It is totally comprehensive
- (4) From eternity past, the Father has had a plan. Everything he does is purposeful. As believers, we have a huge part to play in his plan. His plan centres on Jesus and involves our intimate personal relationship with him. This is why nothing is so important as our relationship to the Father in Jesus. Many today believe there is no purpose, but this is completely false. There is a plan, and it is happening according to schedule. It won’t fail. There are no accidents. Our lives do matter. We each have an individual purpose, but there is also grand purpose for angelic and human history of which we are all a part. There is a grand metanarrative.

(a) Cf. Richard Dawkins.

b. World, Flesh, Devil

- (1) World.
 - (a) **Eph 2:1-2** 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world....
 - (b) **Eph 4:14** 14 ...So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

² John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 19.

- (c) **Eph 5:15-16** 15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.
- (d) **Eph 6:13** 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.
- (2) Flesh.
 - (a) **Eph 2:3** 3 ...Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
 - (b) **Eph 4:17-19** 17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.
 - (c) **Eph 4:22** 22 ...To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires....
 - (d) **Eph 5:3** 3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.
 - (e) **Eph 5:11** 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.
- (3) Devil.
 - (a) **Eph 1:21** 21 ...Far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.
 - (b) **Eph 2:1-2** 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience....
 - (c) **Eph 3:10** 10 ...So that through the Church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.
 - (d) **Eph 6:11-12** 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
 - (e) **Eph 6:16** 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.
- c. Grace.
- d. Union with Jesus.
 - (a) Paul uses the phrase “in Messiah” or its equivalent about 35 times.
 - (2) The Ephesian saints are faithful ***in Messiah Jesus*** (Eph 1:1).
 - (3) The Father has blessed us ***in Messiah*** with every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3).
 - (4) The Father chose us ***in Messiah*** before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4).
 - (5) The Father has blessed us ***in the Beloved*** (Eph 1:6).
 - (6) We have redemption ***in Messiah*** (Eph 1:7).
 - (7) God set forth his purpose ***in Messiah*** as a plan for the fulness of time (Eph 1:9-10).

- (8) God is uniting all things in heaven and on earth ***in Messiah*** (Eph 1:10).
- (9) ***In Messiah*** we have obtained an inheritance (Eph 1:11).
- (10) ***In Messiah*** we were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13).
- (11) The Father has seated us in the heavenly places ***in Messiah Jesus*** (Eph 2:6).
- (12) We are created ***in Messiah Jesus*** for good works (Eph 2:10).
- (13) ***In Messiah Jesus*** we Gentiles believers have been brought near by the blood of Messiah (Eph 2:13).
- (14) ***In Jesus***, the church grows into a holy temple (Eph 2:21).
- (15) ***In Jesus***, Gentile believers are co-heirs, members of the church, and partakers of the New Covenant promise (Eph 3:6).
- (16) ***In Jesus***, we have boldness and access with confidence to the Father (Eph 3:12).
- (17) ***Messiah*** is dwelling in our hearts through faith (Eph 3:17).
- (18) The Father is glorified ***in Messiah Jesus*** (Eph 3:21).
- (19) We are the body of ***Messiah*** (Eph 3:12).
- (20) We are to grow up ***into Messiah*** (Eph 4:15).
- (21) Paul testifies ***in the Lord Jesus*** (Eph 4:17).
- (22) Truth is ***in Jesus*** (Eph 4:21).
- (23) God ***in Messiah*** forgave us (Eph 4:32).
- (24) We are light ***in the Lord*** (Eph 5:8).
- (25) ***Messiah*** nourishes and cherishes the Church (Eph 5:32).
- (26) Children are to obey their parents ***in the Lord*** (Eph 6:1).
- (27) We are to be strong ***in the Lord*** (Eph 6:10).
- (28) Tychicus is a faithful minister ***in the Lord*** (Eph 6:21).
- (29) **Jn 15:4-5** 1 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot produce fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine. You are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that produces much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing
- (30) Principles.
 - (a) To be “in Jesus” means to be intimately, personally, and vitally united to Jesus and his people, as branches of a vine and members of a body.³
 - (b) Jesus dominates Paul’s mind and fills his vision. It is through and in Jesus that God’s new society comes into being⁴ and exists into eternity future.
 - (c) Out of Jesus, we have nothing. In Jesus, we have everything. This is why evangelism is so important. It is only in Jesus that any person can be saved and fulfil God’s plan for his or her life. There is no real life outside of Jesus.
- e. Riches in Jesus.
 - (1) **Eph 1:3** 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Messiah, who has blessed us in Messiah with ***every spiritual blessing*** in the heavenly places
 - (2) **Eph 1:6-8** 6 ...To the praise of [the Father’s] glorious grace, with which he has ***blessed us in the Beloved***. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to ***the riches of his grace***, 8 which he ***lavished*** upon us....
 - (3) **Eph 1:11** 11 In [Messiah] ***we have obtained an inheritance***....

³ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 22.

⁴ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 28.

- (4) **Eph 1:14** 14 ...[The Spirit] is the guarantee of **our inheritance** until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
- (5) **Eph 1:18** 18 ...Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are **the riches of his glorious inheritance** in the saints,
- (6) **Eph 1:23** 23 [The Church] is [Messiah's] body, **the fulness of him** who fills all in all.
- (7) **Eph 2:6-7** 6 ...And raised us up with [Messiah] and **seated us with him in the heavenly places** in Messiah Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show **the immeasurable riches of his grace** in kindness toward us in Messiah Jesus.
- (8) **Eph 3:6** 6 This mystery is that **the nations are co-heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise** in Messiah Jesus through the gospel.
- (9) **Eph 3:8** 8 To me [Paul], though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles **the unsearchable riches** of Messiah....
- (10) **Eph 3:16-19** 16 ...That according to **the riches of his glory** he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints **what is the breadth, length, height, and depth [of your inheritance]**, 19 and to know the love of Messiah that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all **the fulness of God**.
 - (a) **Ge 13:14-17** 14 [Yahweh] said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward, southward, eastward, and westward, 15 for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your seed forever. ...17 Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.
- (11) **Re 2:9** 9 I [Jesus] know your tribulation and your poverty (**but you are rich**)....
- (12) Principles.
 - (a) #FOMO: Do you have a fear of missing out? In this case, you should!
 - (b) We are blessed in Jesus, recipients of the riches of divine grace. We have an eternal inheritance awaiting us. We are indescribably rich.
 - (c) We are to know the content of our heavenly bank account. We are not to be ignorant of our wealth.
 - (d) Our spiritual wealth is the foundation for our spiritual walk.
 - (e) Do you have low self-esteem? Understanding your riches in Jesus is the key to real self-esteem.
 - 1) Example: I struggled with self-esteem until the “40 Things God Does at the Moment of Salvation” totally changed my outlook.
 - (f) There is a worldly elite, but we are the spiritual elite. As King's kids, we are a spiritual aristocracy. We are not to live as spiritual paupers.
- f. The Church.
 - (1) The Church was a unrevealed mystery that is now revealed.
 - (a) **Eph 3:3-4** 3 ...How the mystery was made known to me [Paul] by revelation, as I have written briefly. 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Messiah....

- (b) **Eph 3:9** 9 ...And to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things....
- (c) **Eph 5:32** 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Messiah and the Church.
- (2) The Church is hugely important in God's plan.
 - (a) **Eph 1:22-23** 22 ...[God] put all things under [Messiah's] feet and gave him as head over all things to the Church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all.
 - (b) **Eph 3:10** 10 ...So that through the Church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.
- (3) The Church is God's new community the present age.
 - (a) "...[W]e [the church] are nothing less than God's new society, the single new humanity which he is created in and which includes Jews and Gentiles on equal terms. We are the family of God the Father, the body of Jesus Christ his Son and the temple or dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Therefore we are to demonstrate plainly and visibly by our new life the reality of this new thing which God has done...."⁵
 - (b) Karl Marx and many others have presented a vision of a new society, a utopia. But in Ephesians we have the only new society that is realistically possible. The new society must be created by God. The new man and the new society are God's creative work.
- (4) Principles.
 - (a) While *Ephesians* it is not a systematic theology of the Church, *Ephesians* is where Paul outlines most deeply and consistently a theology of the Church.
 - (b) The Church is one living organism created from individual believers of the Church age.
 - (c) The Church was planned in eternity past, is being built in the present, and will serve the purposes of God throughout eternity future.
- g. Understanding.
 - (1) **Eph 1:17-19** 17 ...That the God of our Lord Jesus Messiah, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of **wisdom** and of **revelation** in the **knowledge** of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts **enlightened**, that you may **know** what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe....
 - (a) We need our hearts enlightened, that we may know and understand.
 - (2) **Eph 3:18-19** 18 ...May have strength to **comprehend** with all the saints what is the breadth, length, height, and depth, 19 and to **know** (γινώσκω, aor.) the love of Messiah that surpasses **knowledge** (γνώσις), that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
 - (a) We need strength to comprehend and know.

⁵ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 25.

- (3) **Eph 4:13** 13 ...Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the **knowledge** (ἐπίγνωσις) of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Messiah....
 - (a) We are to attain to the unity of the knowledge of Jesus.
 - (4) **Eph 4:17-18** 17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord [Jesus], that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their **minds**. 18 They are darkened in their **understanding**, alienated from the life of God because of the **ignorance** that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.
 - (5) **Eph 4:23** 23 ...And to be renewed in the spirit of your **minds**....
- h. Christian Walk.
- (1) Seven times Paul speaks of how we should, or should not, walk.
 - (a) **Eph 2:2** 2 ...In which you once walked (περιπατέω, aor.), following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience....
 - (b) **Eph 2:10** 10 ...We are his workmanship, created in Messiah Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk (περιπατέω, aor.) in them.
 - (c) **Eph 4:1** 1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk (περιπατέω, aor.) in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called....
 - (d) **Eph 4:17** 17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk (περιπατέω, pres.) as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.
 - (e) **Eph 5:2** 2 And walk (περιπατέω, pres.) in love, as Messiah loved us and gave himself up for us....
 - (f) **Eph 5:8** 8 ...For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk (περιπατέω, pres.) as children of light....
 - (g) **Eph 5:15** 15 Look carefully then how you walk (περιπατέω, pres.), not as unwise but as wise....
 - (2) We are to *walk* in accordance with our *wealth*. As new *creatures*, we are to engage in new *conduct*. With so much *blessing*, our *behaviour* is to be different. Our *riches* entail *responsibility*. Our *position* is to impact our *practice*.
- i. Relationships.
- (1) Our church, marriage, family, and work relationships are so important.
 - (a) Church relationships (Eph 4:1-6, 15-16).
 - (b) Marriage relationships (Eph 5:22-33).
 - (c) Family relationships (Eph 6:1-4).
 - (d) Work relationships (Eph 6:5-9).
 - (2) Mutual submission in the fear of Jesus is the basis of all human relationships.
 - (a) **Eph 5:21** 21 ...Submitting to one another out of reverence for Messiah.
- j. Love.
- (a) The noun ἀγάπη is found ten times, and the verb ἀγαπάω is found ten times.
 - (2) **Eph 1:4-5** 4 In love 5 [the Father] predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Messiah....
 - (3) **Eph 1:6** 6 ...To the praise of [the Father's] glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
 - (4) **Eph 1:15** 15 For this reason, because I [Paul] have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints....

- (5) **Eph 2:4** 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us....
 - (6) **Eph 3:17** 17 ...So that Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love....
 - (7) **Eph 3:19** 19 ...And to know the love of Messiah that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.
 - (8) **Eph 4:2** 2 ...With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love....
 - (9) **Eph 4:15-16** 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Messiah, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.
 - (10) **Eph 5:2** 2 And walk in love, as Messiah loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
 - (11) **Eph 5:25** 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Messiah loved the church and gave himself up for her....
 - (12) **Eph 5:28** 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.
 - (13) **Eph 5:33** 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself....
 - (14) **Eph 6:23-24** 23 Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Messiah. 24 Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Messiah with love incorruptible.
- k. Power.
- (1) **Eph 1:18-19** 18 ...Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might....
 - (2) **Eph 3:16-18** 16 ...That according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth....
 - (3) **Eph 3:20** 20 Now to [the Father] who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us....
 - (a) The Father’s power is at work within us.
 - (4) **Eph 6:10-11** 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.
 - (a) We able to stand against Satan’s schemes, but we must put on the whole armour of God.
- l. Prayer.
- (1) **Eph 1:16-17** 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Messiah, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him....
 - (2) **Eph 3:14-16** 14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the

riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being....

- (3) **Eph 6:18-20** 18 ...Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

7. Central Truths.

- a. God's great plan centres on the Lord Jesus Messiah.
- (1) **Eph 1:9-10** 9 ...Making known to us the mystery of [the Father's] will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Messiah 10 as a plan for the fulness of time, ***to unite all things in him***, things in heaven and things on earth.
- (2) **Eph 1:20-23** 20 ...That [the Father] worked in Messiah when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far ***above all rule, authority, power, and dominion***, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And [the Father] put all things under [Jesus'] feet and gave him as ***head over all things*** to the Church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all.
- (3) **Eph 4:21** 21 ...Assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as ***the truth is in Jesus***....
- b. We are to walk in Jesus according to our wealth in Jesus.
- (1) **Eph 2:10** 10 For we [believers] are [God's] workmanship, created in Messiah Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should ***walk*** in them.
- (2) **Eph 4:1** 1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to ***walk*** in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called....
- (3) Our wealth is to result in a walk. Our position is to result in a practice. Our blessings are to result in behaviour. Our riches entail responsibilities. Our doctrine entails duty.

8. Application.

- a. Catch God's vision for the church.
- (1) "It is only when we are heavenly minded that we are of any earthly good."
- (2) "The church of God can never help God when she ceases to be other-worldly. When she is other-worldly she helps the world; and cannot avoid doing so."⁶
- b. Realise your tremendous spiritual riches. Draw upon your heavenly bank account.
- c. Walk according to your wealth.
- d. War against the forces of evil.

⁶ G. Campbell Morgan.

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Videos



XXX

We learn a lot about God the Father in this letter. It is Trinity focused and Father-directed.

For Paul's dominant use of "Lord" to refer to Jesus, see, e.g., Ephesians 1:2–3, 15, 17; 3:11; 4:1; 5:20; 6:23–24.

William W. Klein, "[Ephesians](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Ephesians–Philemon (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 146.