

EPHESIANS – FACT SHEET



Authorship:

Apostle Paul (Eph. 1:1, 3:1, 3:7, 4:1, 6:19-20)

Some have doubted authorship as no personal greetings etc, & Paul knew the church at Ephesus well (Acts 18-20). However, letter was probably a *circular* letter for several churches (early manuscripts do not have 'at Ephesus') – plus detailed study of letter has all the 'trademarks' of Pauline authorship & theology.

Ephesus:

- Most important city in western Asia minor (now western Turkey)
- Had a harbour – a great trading city
- Also home to one of 7 ancient wonders of the world – a pagan temple to the Roman goddess Diana (Acts 19:23-31)
- Paul laboured in Ephesus for around 3 years and used it as a base for his evangelism campaign

Message & Audience:

- Written to believers in church at Ephesus and probably other Christians in 'Asia Minor'
- No particular or specific heresy or error addressed
- Themes include: God's eternal purpose for His people/Church, salvation by grace through faith alone, the role & nature of the church in God's plan, the practical implications of a saving faith to be lived out in church, family & work, the victory over the 'enemy' (Satan).

Theology:

Several key theological topics within Ephesians are:

Predestination: 'God's eternal plan or purpose' – His Divine decree. Usually spoken of in two senses: **Election & Reprobation.**

Election: God's purpose to save some of the human race in and by Jesus Christ.

Reprobation: Others allowed to follow their own natural, sinful bent and reject God.

For further study:

Examples of Election in the Old Testament:

Deut 4:37, 7:6-8, Hosea 13:5 – Election of Israel as OT people of God

Deut 18:5, 1Sam 10:24, Jer 1:5 – Election of people to a certain office

Examples of Election in the New Testament:

Matt 22:14, Rom 11:5, Eph 1:4 – Election of individuals to salvation

1Thess1:4-5, 2Thess2:13, 1Peter1:1, Rom 8:28-29, 2Tim2:10 – encouragement for evangelism

Acts 13:48, Acts 16:14 – Narrative examples

2Tim1:9, Eph 2:5 – That it is by grace.

Adoption: An act of God whereas He makes us members of His family – John 1:12, Rom 8:14-17, Rom 9:7-8, Gal 3:23-26, Gal 4:4-7, 1John3:1-2

In the Old Testament, Adoption not FULLY realised under old covenant – full benefits did not come until Christ came & the Spirit of God was poured into our hearts.

Example OT references to 'Father': Psalm 103:13, Isaiah 43:6-7, Malachi 1:6

References for those not adopted:

'Children of wrath' – Eph 2:3, 'Sons of disobedience' – Eph2:2, 5:6,

Sons of their father the devil – John 8:42-44

Redemption: "Deliverance by payment of a price" (Stott)

- Specially applied to the ransoming of slaves
- Ransom – "a price paid" – to "buy back" – "deliverance from some evil by payment of a price or ransom"
- Mark 10:45 – Jesus, a 'ransom for many'
- John 8:34 – People in their unsaved state are 'slaves to sin'
- Eph 1:7, 1Cor6:19 – Price paid – Christ's shed blood
- 1Tim2:6 – Christ a ransom for all
- 1Peter1:18-19 – Not redeemed by silver & gold but by precious blood of Christ

The "Order" of Salvation:

God's pre, present and post activity in the lives of individuals can be seen through:

1. **Election** – God's choice of people to be saved
2. **The Gospel call** – proclaiming the message of the Gospel
3. **Regeneration** – Being "born again"
4. **Conversion** – faith and repentance
5. **Justification** – our right legal standing in Christ
6. **Adoption** – membership into God's family
7. **Sanctification** – right conduct of life, becoming Christ like
8. **Perseverance** – remaining a Christian
9. **Physical death** – going to be with the Lord
10. **Glorification** – receiving a resurrection body

General facts about Ephesians:

- Paul's Ephesian visits captured in Acts 18-20
- Ephesians has 6 chapters, 155 verses!
- 'Heavenly places' phrase mentioned 5 times!
- Does not mention 'justification' or Lord's second coming (as Paul would often do!)
- One of four prison epistles written during first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28) – Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon
- Six chapters: Blessings, doctrine & theology (1-3), Duties & responsibilities (4-6)
- Paul's impact in Ephesus was:
 - a) Conversion of a great number of Jews/Gentiles
 - b) Magicians etc burning their books
 - c) Spread of Gospel throughout Pro-consular Asia
 - d) Downturn in 'Diana' worship
 - e) Large church established
- Expressions in Ephesians & Colossians NOT found in other Paul's letters: "The fullness of God or Christ", "Alienation from God or His people", "Redeeming the time", "The Word of truth of the Gospel"



Further Reading/Bibliography – My thanks go to!

- *The Holy Bible – (first of course!)*
- *Chosen for Good – Lewis, Clements, Haslam – Kingsway, 1986*
- *The Message of Ephesians – Stott – IVP, 1979*
- *God's Ultimate Purpose – Lloyd Jones – Banner, 2004*
- *Systematic Theology – Grudem – Zondervan, 1994*
- *Systematic Theology – Berkhof – Banner, 1994*
- *Epistle to the Ephesians – Hodge – Banner, 1964*
- *Ephesians – Wilson – Banner, 1978*
- *Ephesians – Foulkes – IVP, 1963*

"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your Word"
Psalm 119:18

