

Ephesians 1:1-2

KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

The Letter to the Ephesians is one of the most significant documents ever written. Samuel Taylor Coleridge called it "the divinest composition of man." This letter was John Calvin's favorite. J. Armitage Robinson described it as "the crown of St. Paul's writings." ...Among the Pauline writings, Raymond Brown claimed, only Romans could match Ephesians "as a candidate for exercising the most influence on Christian thought and spirituality."

—Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*

WHY EPHESIANS?

1. Teaching the whole _____ of God (Acts 20:27).
2. Highlighting our _____ in Christ.

KNOW WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST (ch. 1-3)

- Our Blessings in Christ (1:3-14)
- Prayer—Know Your Blessings! (1:15-23)
- Our Salvation in Christ (2:1-10)
- Our Unity in Christ (2:11-22)
- Our Purpose in Christ (3:1-13)
- Prayer—Know Christ's Love (3:14-21)

BE WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST (ch. 4-6)

- Walk in Unity (4:1-16)
- Walk in Newness of Life (4:17-32)
- Walk in Love (5:1-6)
- Walk in Light (5:7-14)
- Walk in Wisdom (5:15-6:9)
- Stand in Warfare (6:10-20)

3. Highlighting our _____ in Christ.
4. Training us to live effectively in a sin-filled culture and to gain victory in spiritual warfare (Acts 18:24-20:1).

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

—Ephesians 6:12

This letter is pure music.

—John A. Mackay
Former President of Princeton
Theological Seminary (1936-59)

Only the Psalms, the Gospel of John, and Romans have been as significant as Ephesians in shaping the life and thought of Christians. ...The main purpose of Paul's letter to the Ephesians is "identity formation."

—Klyne Snodgrass

Nearly all the wisdom which we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But, while joined by many bonds, which one precedes and brings forth the other is not easy to discern. —John Calvin

Ephesians is a mini-course in theology, centered on the church.
—James Montgomery Boice

Ephesus rivaled Corinth as the "filth capital" of the Roman world. People from all over the world came to Ephesus to see the temple of Artemis and to patronize the sacred prostitutes whose services were offered as the consummation of worship. Sin was at the very heart of religion in Ephesus.

—John Phillips

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER (1:1-2)

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,
To the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus.
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

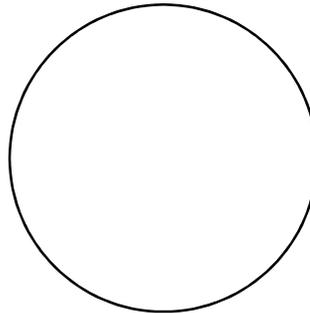
- **The Author:** _____

Paul writes this letter to the Ephesians around AD 60-62 while imprisoned in Rome (cf. Acts 28:16-31). During this time, Paul also wrote Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

- **The Recipients:** _____

Ephesus was one of the leading cities in the Roman Empire with an estimated population of over 250,000 people. Paul spent close to three years in Ephesus, establishing perhaps the strongest and largest church among the early churches in the first century.

- **The Theme:** Our Identity and Unity in Jesus Christ—Known and Lived Out Where We Are



- **The Blessing:** *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

- Everything I have is a gift of _____.
- Knowing God's grace leads to _____, _____, and a greater response of love (cf. Rev. 2:1-7).
- The ultimate purpose of grace is to bring _____ (shalom).

He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.
—Ephesians 1:9-10 (NIV)

Ephesus had been a city for about 1000 years when Paul arrived there on his 3rd missionary journey. The worship of Artemis in Ephesus was as ancient as the city itself. The temple, built in the middle of the 6th century BC, was the largest edifice in the Hellenistic world and the first of monumental size ever to be constructed entirely of marble. ...The temple of Diana [Artemis], "mother of the gods," was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

—Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

The phrase 'Ephesian writings' (Ephesia grammata) was common in antiquity for documents containing spells and magical formula.

—Richard N. Longenecker

Possibly realizing that the Ephesians were starting to forsake their first love, Paul wrote this letter to encourage them to love both God and their fellow saints more deeply.

—Harold Hoehner

The key thought of Ephesians is the gathering together of all things in Jesus Christ.

—William Barclay

Christ is the one in whom God chooses to sum up the cosmos, the one in whom he restores harmony to the universe. He is the focal point. ...The emphasis now is on a universe that is centered and reunited in Christ.

—Peter T. O'Brien

A life contemplating the blessings of Christ becomes a life acting the love of Christ.

—Ann Voskamp