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## Home Study Notes On Ephesians

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*Home Study Notes*  
on  
**EPHESIANS**

by  
**CHESTER J. PADGETT, D.D.**

*as given on*  
**THE BIBLE INSTITUTE HOUR**  
**JANUARY, FEBRUARY 1956**

**558 SOUTH HOPE STREET**  
**LOS ANGELES 17, CALIFORNIA**



*It is the prayer of each member of the BIOLA Radio Staff that the material in this booklet may contribute to consistent spiritual growth in the life of the truly born-again child of God.*

*If you have a prayer request, in which you would like us to join you, please feel free to let us know. Prayer works, because God works through prayer! John 16:24.*



## INTRODUCTION

The Prison Epistles are so called because they were written by Paul while he was a prisoner of the Emperor of Rome, chained in a Roman prison. There are *four* epistles in this group: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. In mood they are reflective — Paul had plenty of time to meditate and pray in prison. They are also philosophic — Ephesians gives the Christian philosophy of truth; Philippians the Christian philosophy of life; and Philemon the Christian philosophy of forgiveness.

The theme of the Prison Epistles is Christ: Ephesians presents Christ in relation to the Church; Philippians presents Christ in relation to Christian living; Colossians presents Christ with relation to wisdom; and Philemon presents Christ with relation to free forgiveness.

## THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

What was the occasion of the book of Ephesians? Why did Paul write the letter? We do not know the exact background except that the Holy Spirit led him to write. By studying the epistle, however, we may imagine something of the situation in Ephesus which made the epistle necessary.

Perhaps the church in Ephesus tended to over-stress the organization and to minimize the Church as an organism. There is real danger of this today. We need the emphasis of Ephesians on the spiritual body of Christ, the fellowship of all believers.

It may be that the Ephesian believers were getting their eyes off the eternal and spiritual blessings and fixing them on temporal things (ch. 1). Perhaps these believers were becoming proud and were forgetful of the pit from which they had been digged by God's grace (ch. 2-3). It may have been that some of the Ephesian Christians

were getting careless in their manner of life and needed to be reminded of how a Christian is expected to walk (4-5). Perhaps the believers in the city of Ephesus were not alert to the danger of attack by their spiritual enemies in this "seat of Satan," the headquarters of Diana worship (ch.6). At any rate, we are happy that Paul did write the letter and that God has preserved it for us today.

## THE OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

We are using a little outline suggested by Ruth Paxton:

- I. The Wealth of the Church (1-3)
- II. The Walk of the Church (4-5)
- III. The Warfare of the Church (6)

## INTRODUCTION

(1:1-2)

In his introduction, the Apostle identifies himself as an authoritative spokesman for God — he was an apostle "by the will of God." He also identifies the recipients of his letter — they were "saints," accepted in Christ Jesus; they were living in Ephesus, the capital of Diana worship; they were "faithful" in their stand for the Lord Jesus. Following these identifications, comes the usual apostolic benediction praying the grace and peace of God upon the believers.

### I

## THE BELIEVER'S WEALTH ACKNOWLEDGED

(1:3)

The first three chapters of Ephesians call the believers' attention to their heritage in the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1:3 this wealth is acknowledged and a number of things are

indicated about this wealth: *the source* — God; *the medium or channel* through whom the riches were poured out — our Lord Jesus Christ; *the time* — "hath blessed us" — this wealth is already bestowed and is available for every believer; *the scope* — all riches — nothing lacking; *the nature* of the riches — "spiritual" hence eternal and worth having; *the sphere* — "in heavenly places in Christ," hence, safety and security.

## THE BELIEVER'S WEALTH ASSESSED

(1:4-14)

In this wonderful section the Apostle lists seven spiritual blessings which are the birthright of every believer. The first is *sovereign selection* (v. 4). Paul teaches the believers that they had been chosen in Christ before the creation of the world. Charles Spurgeon once said, "I know that God chose me before I was born, for He certainly never would have afterward!" Parallel Scriptures are John 6:37; II Thess. 2:13-14.

The second blessing is that of *adoption* (v. 5-6). Each believer was adopted into the family of God from all eternity — marked out in the wisdom and grace of God for the privilege and high position of a son of God. This was all done out of God's own free will, His deliberate choice, His good pleasure, and it was done for the purpose of His own glory, the only legitimate end of anything!

The third blessing is *acceptance by God* (v. 6). *The basis* of acceptance is "His grace"; *the extent* — full acceptance; *the means* of acceptance is "the beloved." Only in Christ can a sinner be accepted by God. The fourth blessing is *redemption* (vv. 7-8). This means the forgiveness of our sins; it is through the blood of Christ; the ground of forgiveness is the grace of God.

The fifth blessing is *revelation* (vv. 9-10). God has been pleased to reveal Himself and His will to man. He

had done this through Christ and in His Word only because He desires that the believer co-operate intelligently with Him in the accomplishing of His eternal purpose.

The sixth blessing is *inheritance* (vv. 11-12). These verses really teach that the believer is God's possession, His prized possession, for which He invested everything, even the blood of His own Son.

The seventh blessing is *the sealing* (vv. 13-14). The steps in the conversion of a soul are given — hearing, believing, sealing. The sealing of the Holy Spirit is the stamping of God's mark ownership on the believer's life, namely, holiness.

#### THE BELIEVER'S WEALTH APPREHENDED (1:15-23)

This paragraph contains one of the two prayers of Paul given in Ephesians. In this prayer the Apostle requests that God would give a special spiritual understanding and insight to each believer so that he could comprehend three things: (1) the hope of God's calling — unto glory; (2) the riches of God in His ownership of the church; (3) the great power of God exercised in and through the believer. Each of these three prayer requests deserves our interest and attention.

#### THE BELIEVER'S WEALTH ADMINISTERED (2:1-3:13)

In this section the Apostle shows the riches of God's mercy, love and grace freely administered to all His elect — both Jew and Gentile — in the formation of a new fellowship of heirs. The emphasis here is on the wonder of God's grace in including the pagan Gentile world as His beneficiary!

*The basis of God's administration* is presented in

2:1-10. It is sovereign, full, free, rich grace! It is sovereign because God acts independently of His creatures in bestowing His spiritual blessings; it is full, because He grants complete salvation; it is free, because no personal merit is demanded; it is rich, because He bestows all of Christ.

*Note the need for this grace:* every man is a sinner by nature under the wrath and curse of God (2:1-3). Every man out of Christ is spiritually dead. He is a slave of Satan; he is a child of disobedience and a child of wrath! In short, the unregenerate is totally depraved and separate from God. But God has met this need in Christ, and has identified every one of His elect with the Lord Jesus in His resurrection (v. 5), and in His ascension (v. 6). In the sight of God every believer is as good as in Heaven — he is seated at God's right hand in Christ!

The benefits of Christ's redemptive work now applied to the believer are contrasted with his previous pitiable state (2:11-22). Formerly, without Christ, he had no Saviour, king or ruler, no country, no promises, no hope, no God! But now, in Christ, he has been reconciled to God (vv. 13-19), incorporated into the family of God (vv. 20-22), in which he has stability (v. 20), and in which he functions as an integral part of the holy building (v. 22).

How did Paul learn this wonderful secret of God's grace in forming the church, the body of Christ? He tells us in 3:1-13. God whispered the great secret, the "mystery" in Paul's ear, and led him to write it down so that all believers might know the method and the purpose in God's gracious election.

#### THE BELIEVER'S WEALTH APPROPRIATED (3:14-21)

Here is the second of Paul's prayers in Ephesians. In the prayer the Apostle requests God that the believers for

whom he prays might be given a spirit of comprehension so that they might fully appreciate all that He had done for them in Christ.

The Apostle makes the Fatherhood of God the ground of his plea (vv. 14-15); he appeals to the grace of God (v. 16); he prays that each believer might be made strong inwardly, in the spiritual life (v. 16), that he might be sustained by the indwelling presence of Christ (v. 17), that he might be made stable in the love of Christ (v. 17), that he might be fully satisfied with Christ (v. 19).

If this prayer seems impossible of fulfillment, let the believer remember that God is able to do the impossible, and that when He does, all the glory belongs to Him (vv. 20-21).

## II

### THE BELIEVER'S WALK

(4:1-6:9)

Turning now from his exposition of the believer's wealth, the writer begins to deal with another important truth, namely, the believer's walk. Since each believer is the heir of God and the recipient of the wealth recorded in the previous section, it is incumbent upon him that he live a life consistent with his high position. The Apostle makes mention of three important areas with regard to the believer's life: his responsibility toward the church; his obligation to live a holy life, and his attitude and conduct toward the home.

### UNITY IN THE CHURCH

(4:1-16)

How greatly this paragraph in Ephesians is needed today! Here is Paul's personal, earnest, impassioned plea for a spirit of oneness among God's people. In order for

unity to exist in the church there must be the right attitude: *humility* (v. 2), *patience* (v. 2), *endurance* (v. 3); there must be *active effort* — God's people have to work at oneness (v. 3).

### BASIC ONENESS

Notice the steps as outlined by the Apostle for the attainment of unity in the church: first of all, *there must be the acknowledgment of the fact* of the basic oneness of the church (vv. 4-6). There is only *one body* — the true church composed of all born-again believers (v. 4); there is only *one Spirit* — the Holy Spirit, the Administrator of the church (v. 4); *one hope* — one Heaven (v. 4); *one Lord* — no man can have *two* masters (v. 5); *one faith* — one body of revealed truth, one standard, one norm, the Word of God (v. 5); *one baptism* — as to its essence, if not its mode! The one Christian baptism signifies admission of sin, acknowledgment of Christ as the only Saviour, and identity with Him in His atoning work; *one God* — the Supreme Creator, transcendent — “above all”; immanent — “through you all”; incarnate — “in you all” by His indwelling Spirit! (v. 6).

### GIFTS IN THE CHURCH

The second step in the attaining of spiritual oneness in the church is the acknowledgment of the ministry gifts to the church (4:7-16). Note that these gifts are universal in the church (v. 7); they are sovereignly distributed by God (v. 7-10); they are designed for spiritual service in the church (12-16); for the building up of the faith of believers; for promoting unity of doctrine and stability of Christian living, and for functional harmony in the church.

## HOLINESS IN THE CHURCH (4:17-5:20)

If the believer is to walk worthy of his high calling, he is not only to walk in unity, but also in holiness. Note that this is a *distinctive holiness* (vv. 17-19) — the believer is different from the unbeliever; this is *Scriptural holiness* (vv. 20-21) — the believer is taught by Christ Himself through the Spirit; this is *deliberate holiness* (vv. 22-24) — deliberate discarding of the “old man” and donning of the “new man”; this is *practical holiness* (4:25-5:4) — because it involves the following: truthfulness (v. 25), self-control (v. 26), resistance to evil (v. 27), honesty (v. 28, industry (v. 28), brotherly love (4:29-5:2, purity (5:3-41), thankfulness (5:4).

The holiness to which Paul calls each believer is *indispensable holiness* (5:5-6) — without such holiness no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14); it is *inevitable holiness* (5:7-10) — if Christ is really in the life there will be holiness; this is *separative holiness* (vv. 11-12); this is *manifest or apparent holiness* (vv. 13-14); this is *intelligent or reasonable holiness* (5:15-17); this is *dynamic holiness* (5:18; this is *joyful holiness* (5:19-20); finally, this is *submissive or co-operative holiness* (v. 21).

## RIGHT DOMESTIC RELATIONS (5:22-6:9)

It may seem somewhat incongruous to deal with the relationships of the home in the setting provided here in Ephesians, but what subject is more important than that of the home? As the home goes, so goes the church, the community and the nation. When homes break up, the moral and spiritual strength of the people break down. The home is the basic unit of the church, and, since Ephesians is the church epistle, it is proper and fitting that this section be included just where it is.

*Notice the place of the wife in the home (5:22-24).* She is to love her husband. If she truly loves her husband, she will not find it difficult to be submissive to him, especially if she loves the Lord, too. The modern unsaved wife does not like the teaching of this section; she thinks it infringes on her “rights.” The truth of the matter is her best right is to obey God. Loving submission on the part of a wife to her husband as unto the Lord makes it possible for the Holy Spirit to bless, leads to harmony and unity in the home, and creates an atmosphere of oneness and peace that becomes an integral part of the psychological constitution of every member of the home.

*The husband also has his important part* — he is to love his wife (vv. 25-32). If he loves her, he will not take advantage of her, he will not make a door-mat or a slave of her, — what Christian man would want to behave this way toward his wife? The husband is to love and care for her as the Lord Jesus loves and cares for His church (vv. 25-27). He is to love his wife even as he loves and nurtures his own body, for, in reality, husband and wife are one body, one flesh, just as Christ and His church are one.

*The children, too, have their obligations in the home (6:1-4).* Their main responsibility is to obey their parents in the Lord. This is the fifth commandment and the first commandment with promise (v. 2). The promise is, “that thy days may be long upon the land.” This means that where there is love and respect and obedience to parental authority and discipline, there is no development of the spirit of lawlessness that brings about the dissolution of both the physical and spiritual well being. If children will not love and obey their parents, they will not love and obey God.

In the society of which Paul was a part there were thousands of slaves; in fact, the majority of the population of the Roman Empire were slaves. When a slave became a Christian, and thousands did, what was their responsibility to their masters? Paul says that the slaves

were to be even better slaves, not to please men, but to please the Lord. If this were the attitude of all employees today, there would be little labor trouble. Certainly Christians should be the best employees.

*Nor does the Apostle neglect the duties of masters (in common language — employers) (6:9).* The “boss” is to be kind, considerate, and aware of the fact that he too is actually an underling, under the mastery of the Lord Jesus Christ. As such, he will have to give account of his treatment of his employees.

### III

#### THE BELIEVER'S WARFARE

(6:10-20)

In writing to the Ephesian believers, the Apostle was not unmindful of the religious character of the city in which they lived. Ephesus was the headquarters of Diana worship, one of the most influential pagan deities in the Empire. As such, this city was under the dominion of Satan and the powers of darkness. The believers, then, would have to know how to fight the good fight of faith. Thus the Apostle writes this closing section of his epistle.

#### ENERGY TO BATTLE

The reason some believers are not winning the battle against Satan is because they are fighting in their own strength which is far too inadequate. The believer does not have to rely upon his own strength — he is to be strong “in the Lord” and “in the power of His might” (v. 10).

#### A FEARSOME FOE

Most believers do not take Satan as seriously as they ought. He is an invisible spiritual foe, and most of us are

accustomed to consider only that which we can see. Nevertheless, the Christian has an unseen enemy, and he must come to grips with him; he must “wrestle” him in mortal combat. Thank God, we have the victory in the Lord Jesus Christ and through His shed blood, and we have full protection in the armor of the Christian soldier. Note that Satan's realm is well organized, which is the meaning of “principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world.” His Satanic majesty, the devil, leaves nothing to chance; he is not slipshod or careless in his strategy; he has a plan, well-conceived and efficiently carried out, and no Christian of himself is a match for him.

#### ADEQUATE ARMOR

You will notice that Paul urges the believer to use all the equipment God has made available (v. 11). The wise soldier of the Cross will do this for he knows that every piece is important. He will take *the girdle or belt of truth* — God's eternal truth in Jesus Christ (v. 14); he will take *the frontal protection of righteousness* — both God's imputed righteousness (II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:1), and personal holiness (Heb. 12:14); he will don *the footwear* so vital to a well-equipped soldier — the gospel of peace, — that is, he will walk in the light of the Gospel of Christ (v. 15); he will bear *the shield of faith*, and with this protection he can ward off every arrow shot at him by Satan (v. 16); he will put on *the helmet of salvation* — salvation from the guilt and the power of sin (v. 17); and he will wield *the sword of the Spirit* which is the Word of God (v. 17). Finally, he will not forsake the place of prayer, but will live in the very atmosphere of the throne room of God (v. 18). No Christian can win out against the wiles of Satan without wearing and using every piece of this equipment. Dear Christian, are you fully clad in this armor today?



## CONCLUSION

While urging the believers to pray constantly, the Apostle beseeches them to pray for him (vv. 19-20). Paul believed in prayer. He believed that believing prayer set God free to act, and that without our prayers God would not work (cf. Rom. 15:30-32). The thing Paul wanted more than all else was that he might be an effective preacher of the Gospel (vv. 19-20).

The Apostle knew that the Ephesian Christians loved him and were concerned about him so he sent his letter off by a messenger who was instructed to inform them about all things (vv. 21-22). What a wonderful and blessed fellowship believers enjoy in the Lord!

Paul asks God that His peace may reign among the brethren, that they might have love and faith, and that the grace of God, His rich blessing might rest upon them through Christ (vv. 23-24).

*"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."*  
— Ephesians 2:8, 9

## §

## REMEMBERED SIN

I made a lash of my remembered sins.  
I wove it firm and strong, with cruel tip,  
And though my quivering flesh shrank from the scourge,  
With steady arm I plied the ruthless whip.

For surely I who had betrayed my Lord,  
Must needs endure this sting of memory.  
But though my stripes grew store, there came no peace,  
And so I looked again to Calvary.

His tender eyes beneath the crown of thorns  
Met mine, His sweet voice said, "My child, although  
Those oft-remembered sins of thine have been  
Like crimson, scarlet, they are now like snow.

My blood, shed here, has washed them all away,  
And there remaineth not the least dark spot,  
Nor any memory of them, and so  
Should you remember sins which God forgot?"

I stood there trembling, bathed in light, though scarce  
My tired heart dared to hope. His voice went on,  
"Look at thy feet, My child." I looked, and lo,  
The whip of my remembered sins was gone!

— *Martha Snell Nicholson*

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