

## THE BIG READ (10)

### Jesus in Ephesians

#### A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”  
(Luke 24:45-47)

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

2. After the four Gospels that tell the story of Jesus’ earthly life, and Acts which traces the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, the remainder of the New Testament is made up of epistles or letters that were sent to individual Christians or churches.

These letters address specific situations in the lives of believers and through them we are taught how to live as God’s people.

3. Ephesians is one of the so-called prison letter written by the apostle Paul.

Paul wrote it during his imprisonment in Rome in the early AD60s.

“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles.” (Ephesians 3:1)

“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” (Ephesians 4:1)

4. Ephesus was a major city in the Roman Empire.

It was the capital of the Province of Asia.

It was a busy sea port and a prosperous commercial and administrative centre.

It was home to the temple built for the goddess Diana (called Artemis by the Greeks), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

5. The book of Acts records three encounters between Paul and the church at Ephesus.

In Acts 18:18-21 Paul made a brief visit at the end of his second missionary journey promising to return.

“But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God’s will.” (Acts 18:21)

In Acts 19:1-31 some of the events of Paul’s 3-year stay in Ephesus are recorded.

In Acts 20:17-38 Paul meets the elders of the church, at Miletus, to pass on some final instructions.

#### B. Why did Paul write this letter?

1. We don’t know!



We are those who have received grace and peace (what God has done for us) and in response we are called to live it out (what we must do).

2. Ephesians has a straightforward structure.

Chapters 1-3: What God has done.

Chapters 4-6: What we must do.

3. In Ephesians 1-3, Paul gives us a breath-taking description of what God has done for us.

Paul writes about the many spiritual blessings God has given them in Christ: He has chosen them, adopted them, redeemed them, forgiven them, revealed to them His will, sealed them.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And 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 will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1:3-14)

Paul prays that they would know this more and more.

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe." (Ephesians 1:17-19)

All this is down to God's grace.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

And God's grace, as well as bringing peace between people and God, has brought peace between Jew and Gentile.

"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility." (Ephesians 2:14-16)

"This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 3:6)

So Paul prays for God's power to be at work in them so that this unity would become a reality.

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses

knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:16-19)

Through all this, God brings glory to Himself.

4. In Ephesians 4-6, Paul goes on to explain what they must do in response.

“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” (Ephesians 4:1)

They are to display the unity they have in Christ.

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3).

They are to be different from the world.

“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.” (Ephesians 4:17)

“For you were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.” (Ephesians 5:8)

“Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” (Ephesians 5:15-16)

They are to stand by continuing to trust in Christ.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 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. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” (Ephesians 6:10-13)

## **D. Jesus in Ephesians**

1. Jesus is the Head of the Church

He rules, governs and directs His people.

“And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” (Ephesians 1:22-23)

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.” (Ephesians 4:15)

“For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour.” (Ephesians 5:23)

We should listen to Him.

2. Jesus is the Cornerstone.

He is like the first stone laid in the foundation, the one from which the rest of the building is aligned to.

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:19-22)

We should line ourselves up with Him.

### 3. Jesus is the Loving Bridegroom.

He shows His love for us by dying as a sacrifice in our place to make us holy.

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 5:1-2)

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” (Ephesians 5:22-33)

We should love Him.

### 4. Jesus is the Victorious Captain

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 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. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” (Ephesians 6:10-13)

We should stand in Him.