

Introduction to NT Books

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IX. The Book of Ephesians

A. The Authorship of Ephesians

1. The External Evidence

- a. Early patristics attested Pauline authorship including Marcion, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Tertullian.
- b. Critics rejected Pauline authorship because of vocabulary, style, lack of personal references, and heavy dependence on author of Colossians.

2. The Internal Evidence

- a. Paul claimed authorship twice (1:1 and 3:1).
- b. The author was an apostle and prisoner.

B. The Date of Ephesians

1. The author was imprisoned (3:1; 6:20).

2. This Epistle is harmonious with Luke's account of Paul's Roman imprisonment around AD 60, and with three other "prison epistles" (Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon).

C. The Origin and Destination of Ephesians

1. Paul wrote this during his first Roman imprisonment, after having started the Ephesian church about 5 years prior.

2. He wrote to the faithful saints "at Ephesus" (ἐν Ἐφέσῳ). The CT omitted these Greek words which in turn allowed the audience to be the universal church (*sic*). For instance, D. Guthrie states, saying, "In this Epistle the Church is universal and not local as in often is in Paul's other Epistles (*NT Introduction*, p. 488)."¹

D. The Purpose of Ephesians: Paul instructed his church plant (Acts 18-19) on the doctrine (1-3) and duty (4-6) of the NT assembly.

E. Characteristics of Ephesians

1. Paul wrote the longest known sentence in all of Greek literature, seemingly unable to bring to a literary close the blessings of salvation (1:3-14).

¹Those that posit that the Epistle was addressed to the "spiritual, mystical, invisible body," by necessity must omit the latter part of Eph. 5:30, "For we are members of his body, **of his flesh, and of his bones.**" The CT conveniently does this, but defenders of the TR/KJV who desire to defend "the spiritual body" have a major dilemma—"spiritual flesh and bones"!

2. The Apostle identified the church at Ephesus with the body of Christ (at Ephesus). Whatever the church, that is the body. Christ was the head of the body at Ephesus (4:15) of whom He loved and for whom He gave Himself (5:25). The Ephesian church, as well as all NT assemblies, is the instrument through which the Father is glorified in time and eternity (3:21).
3. He revealed that Christ's work on the cross reconciled sinners to God and Jews to Gentiles (2:13-17).
4. He taught that the Lord Jesus gave to churches the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist (these three now extinct), and pastor/teacher who prepare church members for ministry (4:11-12).
5. He encouraged church members to be filled with the Spirit so that they could be right with their master, mate, minors (children, slaves, masters), and ministry (5:18-6:18).
6. The Apostle Paul revealed that the individual words (ῥῆμα) of God are the sword of the Spirit (6:17), to be employed in supernatural battle with Satan (cf. Mt. 4:1 ff.).