

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS

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1. This letter was written by the Apostle Paul to the church at Ephesus during his first Roman imprisonment approximately AD60-64 [these dates are uncertain]. (Eph. 1:1; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Acts 28:30; Rom. 28:30)
2. It was the first of four epistles written during his imprisonment probably in Rome. The other epistles include: Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. (Philippians 1:7; Col. 4:10; Philemon 9, 10)
3. Paul addressed his epistle to the “*saints who are at Ephesus and those who are faithful in Christ Jesus.*” (Eph. 1:1) NOTE: Some ancient manuscripts omit the phrase “*at Ephesus.*”
4. This letter along with Colossians, Philemon, and probably Philippians were apparently encyclical letters to be circulated among the churches in Asia Minor.
5. Paul tells the Colossians to expect a letter from Laodicea, probably a reference to this epistle to the Ephesians, hand carried by Tychicus, who apparently was with Paul at the time. (Col. 4:7, 16; Eph. 6:21-22)
6. The church in Ephesus was most likely founded by Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla. (Acts 18:19)
7. Ephesus was a commercial center for Asia Minor, particularly crafting and selling idols and occult paraphernalia in celebration of pagan deities such as Artemis (Diana in Latin). (Acts 19:23-41)
8. On Paul’s third missionary journey, he held a conference at Miletus for the Ephesian elders in AD57 and warned them to beware of evil teachers outside the church and professing believers within the church who would teach false doctrine. (Acts 20:24-30)
9. Paul later returned to Ephesus and found faithful disciples there, so he continued ministering there for three years. (Acts 20:31)
10. Paul’s challenge to the Ephesians is to walk in a manner worthy of their new position in Christ and to walk in love. (Eph. 2:4-10; 4:1-3; 5:2)
11. Paul reiterated this message in First Timothy when he wrote from Macedonia to Timothy at Ephesus in AD63-66. (1 Tim. 1:1-7)
12. Specifically, Paul’s message was this, “*the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*” (1 Tim. 1:5)

13. One of the overriding themes of Ephesians is love. The noun *agape* (ἀγάπη – love) and the verb *agapao* (ἀγαπάω – to love) are found altogether 19 times in this epistle, more than any other New Testament book except the Gospel of John and his epistle, First John.
14. Paul teaches that both Hebrew and Gentile believers are one in Christ and that their position in Christ is demonstrated by their love for one another, a love that can only come from God. (Eph. 2:11-16; 5:1,2; 6:23)
15. Ephesus is mentioned by John in his “*Revelation of Jesus Christ*” as the church that did hold the line against false teaching; however, he states sadly that they had left their first love. (Rev. 2:1-7)
16. The first three chapters of Ephesians deal with the believer’s position in Christ, prayer and the calling of the church (*the mystery*-Eph. 3:1-10), while the last three chapters deal with the walk of the believer and the application of these doctrines.