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THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

NEW TESTAMENT

BOOK 49

EPHESIANS



The Apostle Paul by Rembrandt

SUMMARY

The author identifies himself as Paul. Some have taken the absence of the usual personal greetings and the verbal similarity of many parts to Colossians, among other reasons, as grounds for doubting authorship by the apostle Paul.

However, this was probably a circular letter, intended for other churches in addition to the one in Ephesus. Paul may have written it about the same time as Colossians, AD. 60, while he was in prison at Rome.

Ephesus was the most important city in western Asia Minor (now Turkey). It had a harbor that at that time opened into the Cayster River, which in turn emptied into the Aegean Sea.

Because it was also at an intersection of major trade routes, Ephesus became a commercial center. It boasted a pagan temple dedicated to the Roman goddess Diana (Greek *Artemis*).

Paul made Ephesus a center for evangelism for about three years, and the church there apparently flourished for some time, but later needed the warning of Rev 2:1-7.

Unlike several of the other letters Paul wrote, Ephesians does not address any particular error or heresy. Paul wrote to expand the horizons of his readers, so that they might understand better the dimensions of God's eternal purpose and grace and come to appreciate the high goals God has for the church.

The letter opens with a sequence of statements about God's blessings, which are interspersed with a remarkable variety of expressions drawing attention to God's wisdom, forethought and purpose.

Paul emphasizes that we have been saved, not only for our personal benefit, but also to bring praise and glory to God. The climax of God's purpose, when the times will have reached their fulfillment, is to bring all things in the universe together under Christ.

It is crucially important that Christians realize this, so in 1:15-23 Paul prays for their understanding (a second prayer occurs in 3:14-21). Having explained God's great goals for the church, Paul proceeds to show the steps toward their fulfillment.

First, God has reconciled individuals to himself as an act of grace. Second, God has reconciled these saved individuals to each other, Christ having broken down the barriers through his own death.

But God has done something even beyond this: He has united these reconciled individuals in one body, the church. This is a "mystery" not fully known until it was revealed to Paul.

Now Paul is able to state even more clearly what God has intended for the church, namely, that it be the means by which he displays his manifold wisdom to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.

SUMMARY

It is clear through the repetition of heavenly realms that Christian existence is not merely on an earthly plane. It receives its meaning and significance from heaven, where Christ is exalted at the right hand of God.

Nevertheless, that life is lived out on earth, where the practical daily life of the believer continues to work out the purposes of God. The ascended Lord gave gifts to the members of his church to enable them to minister to one another and so promote unity and maturity.

The unity of the church under the headship of Christ foreshadows the uniting of all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. The new life of purity and mutual deference stands in contrast to the old way of life without Christ.

Those who are strong in the Lord have victory over the evil one in the great spiritual conflict, especially through the power of prayer.

NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 1:7** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace
- 1:8** which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,
- 1:9** having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,
- 1:10** that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.
- 1:11** In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- 1:12** that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.
- 2:7** that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
- 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,
- 2:9** not of works, lest anyone should boast.
- 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
- 2:19** Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
- 2:20** having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone,
- 2:21** in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,
- 2:22** in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.
- 4:1** I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,
- 4:2** with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,
- 4:3** endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued

- 4:4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;
- 4:5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
- 4:6** one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.
- 4:20** But you have not so learned Christ,
- 4:21** if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:
- 4:22** that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,
- 4:23** and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
- 4:24** and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.
- 4:25** Therefore, putting away lying, Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.
- 4:26** Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath,
- 4:27** nor give place to the devil.
- 4:28** Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.
- 4:29** Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.
- 4:30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- 4:31** Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.
- 4:32** And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.
- 5:5** For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.
- 5:6** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
- 5:7** Therefore do not be partakers with them.
- 5:8** For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light
- 5:9** (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),
- 5:10** finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.
- 5:11** And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.
- 5:15** See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,
- 5:16** redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
- 5:17** Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- 5:18** And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,
- 5:20** giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 5:21** submitting to one another in the fear of God.
- 5:33** Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
- 6:1** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued

- 6:2** Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise:
- 6:3** that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.
- 6:4** And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.
- 6:8** knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.
- 6:9** And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.
- 6:10** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.
- 6:11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
- 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.
- 6:13** Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
- 6:14** Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,
- 6:15** and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
- 6:16** above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.
- 6:17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;
- 6:18** praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints
- 6:23** Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 6:24** Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

BIBLE TIMELINE

62 AD

Paul Writes to the Ephesians

Ephesians 1 - 6

CHARACTER Definitions

EPHESUS - There had been a Jewish community at Ephesus for over three hundred years when Paul the Apostle visited Ephesus around 53 AD. Paul set out on his third missionary journey in 54 AD.

He spent three months teaching in a synagogue in an effort to bring the Jews to accept union with the gentiles in Christianity, but without success. For the next two years he stayed in Ephesus seeking to convert Hellenized Jews and gentiles, and appears to have made many converts.

The Apostle John (4 BC - 100 AD) was traditionally said to have come to Ephesus during the period when Agrippa I (37-44) was suppressing the church of Jerusalem. There are records of John being arrested by the Emperor Domitian (reigned 81 - 96 AD).

He was released late in his life and returned to Ephesus, where it is thought that he wrote his Gospel. Tradition says that the Virgin Mary lived in Ephesus near to John. Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria who was a disciple of John the Baptist, arrived in Ephesus and met with Aquila and Priscilla.

Christian canon identifies the Epistle to the Ephesians as a letter to the church in Ephesus, and John of Patmos mentions the church as one of the seven churches of Asia in the Book of Revelation.

In Revelation (2:1-3), the church's perseverance, scrutiny toward alleged apostles and hatred of the Nicolaitans are lauded, but the church is said to have left its first love, to which Revelation calls on it to return.

Based on these traditions, it is generally believed that the city hosted a significant Christian community already from the 1st-2nd centuries.

Ephesus associated with the life of several saints of that era, such as the Philip the Evangelist, brother of the Apostle Barnabas, Hermione, Aristobulus, Paul of Thebes, Adauctus and his daughter, Callisthene.

It is also thought that Mary Magdalene also lived there. Moreover, according to the Christian tradition, the first bishop of Ephesus was Apostle Timothy, student of the Apostle Paul.

Until the 4th century AD, Christianity and Paganism co-existed in the city, but Christianity became the dominant religion in Ephesus in the course of time.

This is mainly evident from the conversion of religious monuments, the increased use of Christian symbols, as well as the destruction of various pagan places of worship. The apostle John has his grave in Ephesus.

CHARACTERS Continued

TYCHICUS - Tychicus is one of those Bible characters who probably don't receive the recognition due them. True, Tychicus is only mentioned five times in the New Testament, but the ministry he provided was noteworthy.

We first meet Tychicus in Acts 20:4, during Paul's third missionary journey. He is mentioned as one of Paul's companions on the way from Corinth to Jerusalem to deliver a gift to the church there. We learn that Tychicus was a native of Asia, or what we would call Asia Minor today.

Tychicus is called a dear brother of Paul's and a faithful servant of the Lord's. In Colossians 4:7, Tychicus is a faithful minister and fellow servant who was with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment.

He was entrusted to deliver Paul's epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians and to bring news of the apostle to those congregations: Tychicus will tell you all the news about me.

I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. Encouragement is also mentioned as part of Tychicus's ministry in Ephesians 6:22.

In traveling to Colossae, Tychicus accompanied Onesimus, the former slave who was returning to Philemon. No doubt, Tychicus, as a good friend of Paul's, emphasized the need for grace in receiving Onesimus back home.

Paul intended to send either Tychicus or another man to Crete in order to give Titus a chance to visit Paul. Later, Tychicus was with Paul in Rome during the apostle's second Roman imprisonment, and Paul sent him to Ephesus in order to free up Timothy for a visit. In both Crete and Ephesus, then, Tychicus was an interim pastor of sorts, filling in for Titus and Timothy.

There is an unnamed believer alluded to in 2 Corinthians 8:22, described as a brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. Many commentators surmise that this is a reference to Tychicus. The description seems to fit.

We may not know much about Tychicus, but what we do know is impressive and praiseworthy. Tychicus was a trusted messenger, faithful preacher, and loyal friend. Paul placed great confidence in him, sending him to accomplish important works.

Tychicus obviously had the ability to minister in a variety of situations, bringing encouragement to those he served. Tychicus surely modeled the quality that all church elders are to possess.

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

MAP REFERENCES

