

Ephesians

Who, When, Where

Written by Paulus (Paul). Paulus was originally a fanatical Pharisee, persecuting, imprisoning, and even killing Christians for teaching what he thought was heresy, that Yeshua was the Anointed, (The Jewish Messiah). After meeting Yeshua in a miraculous way on the road to Damascus, Paulus became not just a Christian but one of Christianity's most fervent preachers and teachers. He spent most of his life as an itinerant missionary, with all the life threatening perils that that brought with it, to the towns and cities which lay along the route between Jerusalem and Rome. Paulus died in Rome somewhere in the 60'sAD, and he wrote most of the letters which we have in the New Testament. Ephesians was written by Paulus, probably during his house arrest in Rome, around 62AD.

The assembly in Ephesus is one of the seven mentioned in the Revelation.

Ephesus was a Greek city on the west coast of Asia Minor, (what is now modern Turkey). It was large by the standards of the time with a population of well over 100,000 people. It was famous for the temple of the Greek goddess Artemis, (built around 500BC, and rebuilt 150 years later). Artemis was thought by the Romans to be the same goddess as their goddess Diana.

Summary

On the surface, the letter to the Ephesians is a list of "rules for a happy life". But Paulus is actually showing us a bigger picture of our lives. It's not just about us. It's not just physical. Our life is spiritual and we are a part of the body of Yeshua.

We are part of something much bigger and more important than ourselves, and how we live has an impact on our contribution to that, way beyond our own lives.

Before You Read

How much are your physical world problems just manifestations of your spiritual issues? What is the best way to handle someone at work you don't like?

Do different people have different roles in a church? Who decides that?

Do men and women have different roles in marriage? Who decides that?

Your salvation is guaranteed by what Yeshua has already done for you 2000 years ago. So why does it matter what you do? Why does it matter how you live?

Key Verses

Ephesians 1:4-5

Just as, in love, he selected us in him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in his sight, having destined us beforehand to sonship, to himself, through Yeshua the Anointed...

Yahweh selected us as sons before the foundation of the world. That's pretty huge. Of course we can't avoid the flip-side of that. He selected some people to not be his sons. But it is not totally clear here whether Paulus means he selected us individually, or whether he selected "all those who end up in Yeshua" to be saved. (As in he decided what the rule would be for who will be saved and who won't). Which do you think it was? In verses 13 & 14 Paulus talks about our inheritance being guaranteed once we're sealed by the holy spirit, when we trust in Yeshua. If we were selected individually before Creation, then wouldn't we be sealed at birth? Who knows.

But one thing for sure. You weren't selected because you're better than they are. So, be glad you were, but don't get up yourself.

Ephesians 1:16-19

I also don't cease giving thanks for you, making remembrance of you in my prayers, so that the god of our lord Yeshua the Anointed, the father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in knowledge of him – so that, having had the eyes of your heart enlightened, you'll know what the expectation of his calling is, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the holy are, and what the exceeding greatness of his power is to us...

How does that compare to what you pray when you pray for other people? It's easy to get caught up in the now, in the physical, and find yourself praying for things which so totally don't compare to the kind of things Paulus prayed for.

What if you could pray this prayer and it would happen for them? Who would you pray it for?

You can.

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you were dead in your transgressions and your sins, in which you used to walk according to the age of this world, just as the ruler of the authorities of the air, of the spirit which now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom we also used to conduct ourselves in the desires of our flesh, doing the wills of the flesh and of the understanding, and we were by birth children of wrath – just like the rest of them.

Remember this when you're tempted to judge non-Christians for their behaviour - you used to be like that too. And if it wasn't for Yeshua, you still would be.

Do you think your sin wasn't as bad as theirs? Was it enough to keep you out of heaven?

Ephesians 2:4-5

But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loves us, (and us being dead in transgressions), made us alive with the Anointed.

You didn't do it. He did.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For you've been saved by grace, through faith. And this isn't from yourselves – it's a present from God, not by works, so that nobody should boast.

Are you getting it?

You have nothing to boast about. **You** didn't do it.

God saved you because he chose to. Not because of anything you did. In fact, everything you did was moving you further and further away from him.

Ephesians 2:10

For we're his workmanship, created in Anointed Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we should walk in them.

This is pretty cool! We are God's workmanship, and he created us to do good things on his behalf.

What are the good things he created for you to do? Are you looking? Are you finding? Ask him to show you.

Ephesians 2:11

God had his people. Israel. We weren't part of that. We were enemies of God.

But fortunately for us, Yeshua healed that division. Yeshua joined them and us and made peace between us and God.

This is a big topic. It is one of the important teachings of the Bible. Without Yeshua, only the Jews would have any chance of salvation. Only the Jews would ever be "God's people". But now, "God's people" includes us.

Ephesians 3:4-6

...the secret of the Anointed. Which wasn't made known to the sons of mankind in other generations, as it's now been revealed to his holy ambassadors, and to prophets in the spirit – that the nations are joint heirs, and of the same body, and fellow partakers of his promises in the Anointed

It was always a secret. Hidden by God. It was there in the Scriptures, but nobody ever saw it until he revealed it to the ambassadors and the first century prophets.

Salvation was not just for the Jews. Salvation is also for non-Jews... "the nations".

Wow. Whew!

Now we look back on that and are like "well of course! we know that." But back then it was huge news. I'm sure many well meaning, learned Jews thought it was total heresy. But they were wrong.

Are you wrong on anything? Or do you know the Bible so well God couldn't keep a secret from you?

Ephesians 3:18-19

so that you will be strong enough to grasp, together with all the holy, what the breadth and length and depth and height is, and to perceive the love of the Anointed which goes beyond knowledge, that you might be filled to the whole fullness of God.

Secrets in the Bible aren't uncovered by you being super smart. They are uncovered by the spirit of God when he decides to reveal them to you. And **only** when he decides to reveal them to you.

Do you want to know the secrets? Better start praying.

Ephesians 4:1-3

...walk worthy of the calling to which you were called. With all humility and gentleness, with patience, being tolerant of one another in love, being diligent to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

In light of this newly revealed secret it doesn't make sense to have division in the church does it. Jews are not better or worse than non-Jews. We are all the same to God. He has given salvation to each of us.

To divide like that is almost as dumb as dividing over skin colour or ethnic origins. We are **all** descendants of Adam, we are **all** descendants of Noah. We are **all** part of the same family. So racism is just showing your ignorance.

So is division in the church.

Ephesians 4:11-12

And indeed he, himself, gave some to be ambassadors, and some to be prophets, and some to be good news bringers, and some to be shepherds and teachers, to the restoration of the holy for a work of service, for the building up of the body of the Anointed

Yeshua chooses who gets what role on his team, (the church). Our job is to do that role as well as we can for the benefit of the rest of the team.

Which role are you?

Are you an important one?

It is not that one role is more important than another, they are just different. They are **all** important. And they are **all** supposed to be focused on serving everyone else.

Ephesians 4:17

I say this then, and I'm earnestly declaring in the lord, that you must no longer walk as the rest of the nations walk, in the purposelessness of their thinking...

How about you? Are you different from the non-Christians around you? Or do you blend in.

Are you a sheep in wolves' clothing? A spiritual chameleon?

Do you justify that with being trendy, leading edge, an emerging church evangelist? Or are you just afraid to stand out for Yeshua?

Hebrews 13:13 "Now then, let's go out to him, outside the camp, bearing his reproach." Let's be seen to belong to Yeshua. Let's be seen to be different.

Ephesians 4:22-24

Regarding the former way of life, take off the old person, the one which is being corrupted by the desires of deceit, and be renewed by the spirit of your mind, and put on the new person, which is being created, just like God – in righteousness and in the piety of the truth.

Choose it. Do it.

Ephesians 4:29

Don't let any putrid message go out from your mouth, but only what's good for building up where it's needed, so that it might give grace to those who hear it.

So easily to say, so hard to do.

How totally awesome it would be to live like this. If every word out of your mouth was a blessing to those who heard it.

You could sleep well that night.

Ephesians 5:1

Become imitators of God then, as beloved children.

I worked in a church school for a while. I would see the parents do something odd as I knew the children that I was teaching. I would see one of the kids do something odd, some behaviour pattern, some way of doing things. And one day I suddenly realised... oh, his Dad does that too. Then as I studied the children I noticed little things and started looking for them in the parents. Sure enough. How about you? Can I see what your parents are like by looking at you? Can I see what God is like by looking at you? Do you imitate him? Is he **really** your father? Or is that just Bible talk?

Ephesians 5:22-23

Women, be subject to your own husbands as to the lord, because the man is the head of the woman as the Anointed is also the head of the assembly...

Not a popular verse to take literally these days. But it's still in the Bible, and it still means what it says.

Yeshua is the head of the assembly; And in a marriage the man is the head of the woman.

It's a big topic, so I recommend you read [this article](#).

Sometimes I hear that wives should submit to their husbands if they are right. But who decides? The wife? Then how is that submitting? Isn't that just doing what you think is right?

Ephesians 5:25

Men, love your own wives, just as the Anointed also loves the assembly, and handed himself over for her sake...

Men don't get away with being lords of their household. Men should love their wives the way Yeshua loves the assembly. Sacrificing himself for her benefit.

Are you doing that guys? Are you sacrificing? Always? In big things and small things? What a different husband you would be if you did.

Ephesians 6:1

Children, obey your parents in the lord, for this is right.

It might be too late for you.

Maybe you can help your children do better than you did?

Ephesians 6:2

Honour your father and mother, which is the first command with a promise...

Do you?

What have you done to honour them? Did you build a statue? Hold a parade?

This command is not the same as, "Don't dishonour your parents".

What are you going to do to honour your parents?

Ephesians 6:4

And fathers, don't provoke your children to anger, but nurture them in the training and admonition of the lord.

It's tough being a father. You have to be firm enough with your kids that they learn to obey those who are in authority, but soft enough that they don't just rebel in anger against it.

How about your dad? How did he do?

Don't hold it against him if he wasn't great. He almost certainly did his best, and a lot of it was probably your own stubborn self-will.

Ephesians 6:5

Slaves, obey those who are masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the oneness of your heart, as to the Anointed.

Would that change your work life?

Would it help if you thought of it as something you can do to honour and glorify God?

Ephesians 6:12

Because for us, wrestling isn't against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the lords of the world of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavens.

Never forget. Your problem is not flesh and blood. Your problem is spiritual.

It's not an illness, it's not a person, it's not money, it's not food. It's spiritual.

The best way to fight spiritual enemies is to let God do the fighting. You fight spiritual enemies with prayer. If you've never read it, read "Sit, Walk, Stand" by Watchman Nee.

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

Do you get that everything is spiritual?

What can you do to make yourself see things through your spiritual eyes? The "eyes of your heart".

What do you need to change in your physical life?

How can you pick up real spiritual weapons and fight your actual enemies instead of beating your head against a wall by fighting the wrong things in the wrong way?

How does it feel to have been selected by Yahweh?