

‘Go To’ Books of the Bible

Week 1: EPHESIANS



Why this series?

- Overview of different types of Biblical literature.
- Read with our ears open to the voice of the Spirit
- Read with our minds open to the voice of our intellect



Ephesians



What type of literature is Ephesians?

- **Format of a letter**
- **Traditionally to Ephesus, though addressee not in earliest manuscripts**
- **No personal greetings/references to individuals (like Phil 4:2) and no specific issues addressed**
- **So general letter to an area?**



Two distinct parts

- Chapters 1-3 comprise a wide reaching overview of everything that God has done in and through Jesus – who we now are in Christ



Two distinct parts

- Chapters 4-6 ask the ‘so what’ question.
- Definite sense in original text of 4:1 “because of all I have said so far.....there are consequences.”



Purpose

- To give the readers/hearers a deeper understanding of the amazing scope of God's work in Christ.
- A message of inclusion, of grace, of blessing and spiritual authority.



Purpose

- But also a message to ground those things in everyday life – in relationships, in personal growth and overcoming difficulties.



Readers Digest

Ephesians



In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. He has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. I pray.. with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.



Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. That is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. Power to comprehend...and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God, power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.



I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. Let no evil (*of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless*) talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light - for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.



What view does this give me of God?

- A God who has a plan to draw all creation to himself in love and blessing.
- A God who invites us to stretch our imaginations with the dimensions of his love.



What view does this give me of God?

- **A God who is interested in the everyday interactions of our lives.**
- **A God who is supremely powerful and who gives us the power we need to live lives well.**



When did my Ephesians journey begin?

- Story probably starts in early 1970s!
- Eph 2:8



‘So what’ for us?

- **Read through chapters 1-3 and ask yourself if your view of God’s love is as big as Paul describes.**
- **Read Chapter 4:1-3 and go through a day asking yourself if you are living ‘worthy’ of this calling.**

