**Study on Ephesians**

**Background**

Who wrote it?

Paul

When written?

Around 62 AD

To whom written?

The church of Ephesus and the “saints” or the “holy ones”.

Holy ones=hagiois

* Refers to the nation of Isreal
* Spiritual beings
* Those set apart; who trust in Jesus.

What style?

Letter

Apocalyptic literature

* Modern meaning: end of the world stuff
* Original meaning: (literal) uncover, reveal; (metaphorically) reveal (new idea, knowledge, illumination)
* Greek word: apokalypsis: means to uncover or reveal

Ephesians summarizes the most important apocalyptic event in history: Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection as well as the gift of the Spirit.

Why written?

To offer instructions in the truths of God’s redemptive work in Christ and how we are to respond/live according to these truths.

Identify the Metanarrative Overview of Ephesians (Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration; Remember: It’s the BIG Picture; Overarching storyline that flows through the Bible and points to Jesus).

**Who is Paul?**

* Born Saul, in Tarsus, Cilicia, around 1-5AD. Tarsus is in modern-day Turkey.
* He was of Benjamite lineage and Hebrew ancestry.
* His parents were Pharisees.
  + They fought to protect their children from contamination from the Gentiles (non-Jews).
  + What is a pharisee?
    - Fervent Jewish nationalists. Strict followers of the laws of Moses.
* He was a Roman citizen.
* At 13 he was sent to Judea to study under Rabbi Gamaliel.
  + Mastered Jewish history, the Psalms, and the works of the prophets.
  + He also spoke Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and possibly Latin.
  + Well educated.
* He later became a lawyer and was on track to join the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court.
  + They are the same people who persecuted Jesus.
* He was zealous about his faith and was considered a religious extremist (one may even say terrorist).
* Saul became determined to persecute the followers of Jesus.
  + Acts 8: Paul Ravages the Church
  + However, he believed he was acting in the name of God.
* Saul has a radical transformation after an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.
* Shares his transformation 3 times in Acts.
  + 9:1:22; 22:6-17; 26:12-18
* Boldly and unashamedly spread the gospel of Jesus with Jews and Gentiles.
* He suffered and was imprisoned for his devotion to sharing the gospel.
* He died in the mid-to-late 60’s AD in Rome. Possibly beheaded.

What can we learn from the life of Paul?

**What do we know about Ephesus?**

* It was the capital city of a Roman province in Asia Minor.
* Significant center of trade.
* Famous temple of the Greek goddess Artemis in Ephesus.
* It was a huge city, the epicenter of the worship of most of the Greek and Roman gods.
* Paul was in Ephesus for about 3 years preaching and converting people to Christ.

**Uniqueness of letter to Ephesians.**

* This is one of Paul’s only letters not written for a specific person or a specific crisis he sees in the church.
* One of 4 letters written while imprisoned in Rome.
  + Ephesians
  + Colossians
  + Philemon
  + Philippians
* Two main sections:
  + Chapters 1-3: Comprehend the gospel
  + Chapters 4-6: living out the gospel
* It is a formal letter, thought to be sent around the churches in Ephesus and read before the congregation.
* It deals with topics that are at the very core of what it means to be a Christian.
  + In faith and practice.

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