



EPISODE 8: EPHESIANS MARCH 6 / 7

	Author	Date	Recipient	Place of Writing
Ephesians	Paul	62 A.D.	Church in Ephesus	Rome

I. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

- a. ²⁸ *When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:28)*
- b. The account of Paul's sojourn in Ephesus (Acts 19) indicates that the apostle had conflicts with various branches of the pagan community.
- c. The Crisis Paul was helping to address: **What is the basis for following Jesus Christ in an environment where the culture and economy is built on the worship of Idolatry and false gods?**
 - i. SUPERNATURAL CONFLICT: Paul's Conflict in Ephesus was a battle of Spiritual Warfare.
 - ii. Paul's Answer: The Preeminence of Gospel Truth over Pagan Superstition.
 - iii. The Reality of Evil: Ephesians 2:2, the devil is in fact "*at work in the lives of people.*"¹
 - iv. ¹² *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (6:12)*

II. WHAT IS POWERFUL (DOCTRINE)?

- a. The Cosmic Sovereignty of God and the Universal Supremacy of Christ
- b. Point #1: What does Paul pray for?
 - i. That they would "*Know God Better*": *A True Knowledge of God*

¹ The venerable Presbyterian theologian Charles Hodge said: *The fact is all that concerns us, we need not understand how they exert this influence. We do not know how the intercourse of disembodied spirits is conducted, and therefore cannot tell how such spirits have access to our minds to control their operations. ... Still it is an influence greatly to be dreaded.* He goes on to say, "These spirits of wickedness are represented as far more formidable adversaries than those who are clothed in flesh and blood, [but] The influence, whatever it is, and however effectual it may be, does not destroy our freedom of action, any more than the influence of one man over his fellows."

- ii. ¹⁶ *I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,** ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened,*
- iii. **What must they KNOW?**
1. **God's awesome benevolent LOVE and for us...** *that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,*
 2. **God's unmatched POWER over all things...**¹⁹ *and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe (beneficence), according to the working of his great might (power) ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion (authority), and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come (eternal honor).*
 3. **The complete SUPREMACY of Jesus** ²² *And he put all things under his feet (dominion) and gave him as head over all things to the church (rule), ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (1:15-23). Remember Colossians 1:15-20, also Philippians 2:5-11)*
- c. Point #2: The Cosmic Announcement of the Gospel
- i. ⁸ *To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the **mystery** hidden for ages in God, who created all things, ¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. (3:8-10)*
 - ii. What is "The **Mystery** of Christ?" ⁶ **This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. (3:1-6)**
- d. Paul's Apostolic Calling
- e. The mission of the church is to demonstrate the universal and earthly superiority of Christ Jesus over all powers dominions rulers forces. BY WHAT WE BELIEVE AND THE WAY WE LIVE (see below, 4-6:9)
1. ¹² *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (6:12)*

Key Themes

1. All people are by nature spiritually dead, transgressors of God's law, and under the rule of Satan.	1:7; 2:1-3, 5, 11-12
2. God predestined his elect to redemption and holiness in Christ according to the free counsel of his will.	1:3-14; 2:4, 8-9
3. God's rich mercy in Christ has saved sinners; this free gift is by grace through faith alone.	1:7-8; 2:4-14
4. Christ's earthly work of redemption was part of his cosmic reconciliation and exaltation in this age and the next.	1:15-23; 3:1-13

5. Christ's reconciliation entails uniting all people, whether Jew or Gentile, into his one body, the church, as a new creation.	1:23; 2:10–15; 3:1–21; 4:1–6
6. Christ's people are renewed to new lives of holiness in thought, word, and deed, and must reject their old, sinful lifestyles.	4:1–3, 17–32; 5:1–20
7. Holiness of life entails submission to proper authorities, and loving and considerate care for those in submission.	5:21–6:9
8. Christ has given powerful gifts to his church to bring about her unity, maturity, and defense against the onslaughts of the devil and his allies.	4:7–16; 6:10–19 ²

III. WHAT IS PROBLEMATIC (CONTROVERSIAL)?

a. Predestination—The Eternal Sovereignty of God and the *Proactive Promise of Grace toward God's people in Christ*.

i. ³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us **in Christ** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as **he chose us in him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he **predestined** us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, **according to the purpose of his will**, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ **as a plan for the fullness of time**, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined** according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Eph 1:3-14)*

b. The Necessity of Grace

i. *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ... (2:1-9)*

² Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 2260). Crossway Bibles.

IV. WHAT IS POETIC (THE RHETORICIAN-- JUST BEAUTIFUL)?

- a. The Armor of God: ...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 firm.* ¹⁴ *Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,* ¹⁵ *and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.* ¹⁶ *In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;* ¹⁷ *and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,* ¹⁸ *praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.* (6:10-18).

V. WHAT IS PERSONAL? ²¹ *So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything.* ²² *I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.* (6:21-22)

VI. WHAT IS PRACTICAL?

- a. **In a Pagan City, Be Different: (4:17-6:9)**¹⁷ *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.* ¹⁸ *They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.*
 b. Behavior-- Moral Admonitions (4:25-5:20)
 c. **Do not be Deceived or Seduced:** ⁶ *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.* (5:6)
 d. **Relationships...** ²¹ *submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.* (5:21-6:9)

VII. WHAT IS PRAYERFUL (THE PART HE PRAYS TO GOD)?

- a. **That they would “Know God Better (see above—1:17)**
 b. **For the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (3:14-19)**
 i. ¹⁴ *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,* ¹⁵ *from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,* ¹⁶ *that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,...*
 c. **For the Glory of God!** (3:20-21) ²⁰ *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,* ²¹ *to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

VIII. PASTORAL SUMMARY

- a. **Saved for a PURPOSE: Tying Salvation and Service Together:...**⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,* ⁹ *not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* ¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* (2:8-10)
 b. **Unity of Purpose: I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,** ² *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,* ³ *eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ...* ¹¹ *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,* ¹² *to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,* ¹³ *until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,* ¹⁴ *so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.* ¹⁵ *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,* ¹⁶ *from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.* (4:1-16).