

## Introduction to the Book of Ephesians

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 6-10-15

### Authorship

Vs. 1 - "Paul..."

2 positions: Paul himself; A loyal disciple

- No question for 1800 years (1820s in Germany)

Objections - 4 categories of "internal evidence"

- Depiction of Paul's relation to his readers - "heard of..." (1:15, 3:2) - no personal acquaintance
- Vocabulary and style
  - 80 words not found in the undisputed letters. What about Galatians?
  - Stylistic items not found elsewhere (1:3-14; 3:14-19; and 4:11-16)
  - John Stott: "Different themes require different words, and changed circumstances create a changed atmosphere."
- Theology - developed Christology, eschatology, and ecclesiology
  - The needs of Asia Minor required a more developed Christology
  - Ideas are either \_\_\_\_\_ in other letters or are only \_\_\_\_\_ developments
- Relationship to the Letter to the Colossians - similar/different
  - Similarities: A single author wrote both letters at about the same time
  - Differences: The distinct purposes of the letters and by the flexibility of his genius.

Notes regarding the process of authorship:

- The use of secretaries - Rom. 16:22 vs. 1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17
- Collaboration - co-senders, influence of companions (cf. Philemon 24)

If Paul did not write Ephesians, who did?

- No clumsy imitation - F.F. Bruce: "The man who could write Ephesians must have been the apostle's equal, if not his superior, in mental stature and spiritual insight... Of such a second Paul early Christian history has no knowledge."
- If not a foregone certainty, Pauline authorship is an extremely strong probability

Our position: \_\_\_\_\_

- Greeting
- Self identification
- The weight of tradition
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of a truly compelling argument.

Prison letter, along with Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon (3:1, 13; 4:1; 6:20)

V. 1 - "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God"

Apostolicity

- Same title as Lk. 6:12-13
- "One specially chosen, called, and sent to teach with authority.:"
- Charles Hodge: "The epistle reveals itself as the work of the Holy Ghost as clearly as the stars declare their maker to be God."

### **Date, Audience, and Occasion of the Letter**

Date: 61-66 AD

- Ephesus - capital of the Roman province of Asia, busy commercial port, headquarters of the cult of the goddess Artemis (cf. Acts 19:23-41)

Audience: encyclical letter - V. 2: "To the saints who (are at Ephesus) and who are faithful in Christ Jesus"

- "Saints" - all believers who belong to God in whom God's saving and sanctifying grace is at work
- "Faithful" - dual meaning of both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- "In Christ Jesus"
  - The key expression of the entire letter
  - To be "in Christ" is to be personally and vitally united to him as branches of a vine, or members of a body.
  - **To be a Christian is in essence to be "in Christ" - one with him and his people.**

Occasion: Gospel maligned by Jews (Acts 19:9), new doctrines (4:14) stripped of ethical principles (4:17-5:20). "Devil's schemes" (Eph. 6:11)

### **General Outline - God's New Society**

The family of God the Father...the body of Jesus Christ his Son...the temple of the Holy Spirit

1. New Life in Christ (1:3-2:10)
2. The New Society (2:11-3:21)
3. New Standards - unity and purity (4:1-5:21)
4. New Relationships (5:21-6:24)

"High" church vs. "low" church - Christ "gave himself up" (5:25), which is "his body", and even "his fullness" (1:23).