

1. Where is Ephesus? Ephesus is located in Asia Minor. It's about four miles inland from the Aegean Sea on the west coast of modern Turkey (Hoehner). It served as a harbor city for the Roman Empire. The temple of Artemis located in Ephesus was known as one of the greatest structures in ancient times.

It served as the provincial capital of Asia. It was also the largest trading center in Asia. The temple of Artemis made it an influential site for cultic worship.

2. What is Paul's relationship to Ephesus?
 - a. He first arrived at Ephesus after a year and a half in Corinth. Since Paul remained there only a short while, he left Priscilla and Aquila to minister there. They had the responsibility of mentoring Apollos, who arrived later.
 - b. During Paul's third missionary journey, Paul makes another visit. On this visit, he remained two years lecturing at the lecture hall of Tyrannus. Paul's ministry caused many to come to faith and give up their cultic books. But Demetrius opposed the ministry of Paul by inciting a mob at the theater. He may have left the city shortly after the mob.
 - c. The Ephesian elders met with Paul at Miletus on his journey to Jerusalem (Acts 20).
 - d. Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians during his imprisonment (Eph 3:1).
3. What is the significance of Ephesus? The drama of Ephesians causes the reader to wonder how God reconciles all things to himself through the church in his son Jesus Christ. The letter causes one to behold not only the reconciliation of human beings to one another in the church, but more importantly the restoration of relationship between God and Man.
4. What is the purpose of Ephesians?
 - a. Hoehner believes that the purpose of the Ephesians is to promote unity through love for one another, which is based upon a love for God and Christ (106).
 - b. Kuruvilla argues that the main thrust of Ephesians is found in 1:9-10.
 - c. O'Brien identifies the argument as "identity formation." Arnold supports this view as well. Arnold suggests that any purpose should include four elements: (a) believer's relation to supernatural (b) relation between Gentile and Jew (c) need for encouragement (d) understand identity in Christ.
 - d. Bruce believes that Paul wrote the letter to encourage the Ephesian believers to fulfill their calling.

- I. Paul reminds the Ephesian believers of their state prior to faith in Christ: dead and children of wrath (2:1-3)

- A. What do the two states mean: dead (v. 1) and children of wrath (v. 3)? BDAG defines dead as a spiritual deadness. But it still doesn't explain: What is spiritual deadness? Spiritual death calls to mind the idea of separateness. A person, who is spiritually dead, is separate from God.

What does it mean to be spiritually separate from God? Does it refer to the complete inability of man to desire things of God? In the context, it doesn't say much about inability. Instead Paul talks about how their behavior demonstrated their separation from God. Hence, dead may highlight more the idea of separation.

- B. How are we dead? How do we experience deadness? (v. 1) We experience spiritual deadness via the separation from God. Nothing we ever do can ever bridge the gap between the divine and humanity. Our behavior demonstrates this. Instead of doing what is God-pleasing, we do what is worldly. We are separated from that which gives us life – God. It's like a fish separated from water. It will die.
- C. What are trespasses? Trespasses refers to moral offenses. In this particular context, it highlights man offending God because failure to uphold his holy standard of moral conduct.

- D. What is the “course of the world” (v. 2)? Paul refers to the current course of this world, which is under sin, toward destruction. Society’s pull is equally destructive now just as it was in Paul’s time. Paul’s world, although distinct from our own, had similarly worldly temptations: sexual sin, greed, and success. These vices still present themselves in the films that we watch and songs that we hear. They tend to exercise an overwhelming influence over us.
- E. What does “world” mean in Paul’s eyes (v.2)? The world refers to everything in creation that is hostile to God. Other references include 1 Cor 3:19; 5:10a; 7:31b. But as mentioned above it may allude to the societal woes of our time.
- F. Who is the “prince of the power of the air” (v. 2)? Jews believed that Satan ruled everything in the world with the exception of Israel (IVPBBCNT). The air refers to a level of heaven below God and his angels. It is the dwelling place of demons and evil spirits (ZIBBC).
- G. Who are the “sons of disobedience” (v. 2)? The spirit (v.2) is most likely referring to the immaterial parts of human. If that’s the case then it cannot possibly refer to a personal evil spirit. The word: disobedience could also be an unbelief – refusal to place confidence in something. Hence, it is better to render this phrase as the NET has: “the ruler of the spirit that is energizing the sons of disobedience”.

The grammar of the Greek text also supports this reading. The word prince (ἄρχοντα) is followed by two genitives: rules/exercises authority (τῆς ἐξουσίας) over the air (τοῦ ἀέρος). That is followed by another genitive: the spirit (τοῦ πνεύματος). The head noun: “prince” is personal like “spirit”. Hence, these two nouns cannot be in apposition to one another.

This verse means that the ruler (Satan) rules not only over the external forces of the world, but he also exercises influence over the attitudes and thoughts of people.

- H. How does the participle (following) function in v. 2? There is no Greek word for follow. Instead there is a preposition (κατὰ). The NASB translates the verse: “according to the prince of the power of the air.”
- I. What does Paul mean by “flesh” (v. 3)? For Paul, the flesh refers to the inward disposition of man that is opposed to God. Prior to becoming a believer, the flesh ruled our decisions, which highlighted our separation from God. We had no choice in the matter because we were under the authority of sin. Only here is there a negative connotation associated with the flesh.

Note that Paul talks about having both these fleshly desires and carrying them out in the same verse. Not only do fleshly desires dominate the unbeliever, but they carry out those desires.

- J. Observation: There seems to be three influences in these particular verses: (a) the world. We follow the course of the world. The world’s values become our values. (b) the prince or ruler of the power of the air. He exercises influence over humanity (c) the flesh. Some may call it selfishness or pride. The flesh also directs us toward sinful action.

- II. Paul teaches the Ephesian believers that God saved them by grace because of his love for them (2:4-7)
 - A. What does it mean: “rich in mercy”? (v. 4). BDAG talks about πλούσιος as being having plenty. In the LXX, the word: “mercy” refers to the steadfast love of God. Unlike the OT, the NT usage of mercy refers to pity or compassion toward those who suffer misfortune (Hoehner, 326).
 - B. What is “great love” (v. 4)? This love is connected to the demonstration of God’s love via Christ dying for our sins on the cross.
 - C. Why does God love humanity (v. 4)? In light of humanity’s utter helplessness, God loves humanity. It may be stem back to Gen 1:26 – the creation of man in the image of God.

- D. What does Paul mean by “made us alive together” (v. 5)? Christ is made alive again from death via resurrection and ascension. Redeemed humanity will be brought to life in like fashion in the near future. Note that this doesn’t refer to a physical resurrection. Instead it refers to a spiritual reality at the moment. This truth would be fulfilled in a physical sense in a future time. “With Christ” highlight a believer’s union with Christ.

Paul refers to identification with Christ in a few ways: (a) made us alive together with Christ (b) raised us up with him (c) seated us with him. These three elements of identification with Christ parallel the three influences in v. 1-2: (a) the world (b) the devil (c) the flesh. We have to ask: “when is this identification realized?” After all, we currently are not seated with Christ nor are we are raised in a physical sense. So what is this imagery supposed to depict? While we may not have inherited all these aspects of salvation yet, experience them in part via the Holy Spirit. Earlier in the letter, Paul writes about the Holy Spirit being the guarantee of our inheritance (1:13-14). One might conclude that we experience this new life in Christ via the Spirit.

What do each of these elements of identification mean?

1. To be made alive with Christ means that we are no longer spiritually dead (2:1). Identification with Christ invigorates us.
 2. To be raised up with him refers to the fact that we died to our old values and live to new values in Christ.
 3. Seated with him in the heavenly places refers to the new spiritual power we have to overcome our fleshly tendencies. This new spiritual power comes from depending upon the Spirit (5:18).
- E. What does grace mean (v. 5)? Hoehner defines grace as the following: “God’s unmerited or undeserved favor in providing salvation for sinners through Christ’s sacrificial death and enablement for the believer.”
- F. What does grace do (v. 5)?
1. Grace provides salvation for sinners through the sacrificial death of Christ
 2. Grace enables believers to live acceptably before God
 3. NOTE: It is something granted from a superior to an inferior.
- G. What are the coming ages (v. 7)? The coming age refers to the second return of Christ. Hoehner suggests three possibilities for the meaning of “ages”. (a) It could refer to the time leading up to the rapture (Parousia). (b) It could refer to the time following the rapture. (c) It could be the entire time preceding and following the rapture. He prefers view c.
- H. What is the significance of being seated in the heavenly places (v. 6)? The idea of being seated in the heavenly places implies that believers will receive heavenly power to overcome sin in their resurrection state.
- I. Why does Paul closely associate the Ephesians with the work of Christ via phrases: with Christ, in Christ? Apart from Christ and his work, a believer cannot be saved from their sinful state.
- III. Paul explains that the salvation of the Ephesian believers is the gracious work of God rather than their own (2:8-10)
- A. Why is faith the only means by which one can be saved (v. 8)? Paul teaches that one’s work will not save them. Salvation depends upon what they believe. Faith is a natural response to understanding and believing in what Christ has done for a believer. It is not a meritorious act.
 - B. What is the “this” in v. 8? Some believe that it refers to one of three options: (a) grace (b) salvation (c) faith. But Hoehner believes that it refers to the preceding section – the concept of salvation by grace through faith. Furthermore, the source of this concept is not from human beings.
 - C. Why is it significant that means to salvation in the Christian faith should not lead to boasting v. 9? Since God saved us via the cross, it should humble us because no effort of our own contributed to our salvation.
 - D. For what good works are we prepared to do (v. 10)? The word for workmanship refers to a work of a craftsman – a crown. But God has also prepared us for works that benefit ourselves, those around us, and God. This contrasts the works of transgression and sin mentioned in the beginning of the text.

