

Book in a Day

Ephesians

Stephen Boon

Timetable:

09:00-09:30 Registration and Coffee

09:30-10:45 Session 1

10:45-11:15 Refreshments

11:15-12:30 Session 2

12:30-13:45 Lunch

13:45-15:00 Session 3

15:00-15:20 Refreshments

15:20-16:30 Session 4

Ephesians

Book in a Day, Cornhill Scotland, 25th April 2023

The best book in the Bible?

Themes and ideas in Ephesians

What are some repeated words and ideas in Ephesians? Highlight them on the text if you have time.

But what's the letter *about*?

Ephesians 1:1-2

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who is it from?

Paul or The Pseudonymous Deutero-Paul?

Four arguments:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

An apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God

Who is it to?

The Ephesians or 'The saints who are and are faithful in Christ Jesus'?

Saints and faithful

Grace and peace

Christ

Ephesians 1:3-14

See sentence diagram overleaf.

- Read the passage
- Jot down questions
- Write a *first draft* of a 'What' sentence:

Verse 3: 'blessing'

Verse 4: 'in love'

Verse 10: 'a plan for the fullness of time'

Verse 11, 14: 'inheritance'

- Sharpen your 'What' sentence if required:
- Structure/headings:

³ Blessed [*be/is*] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the one-having-blessed (articular aor. act. part.) us
in every blessing of the Spirit
in the heavens
in Christ
⁴ just as (καθως)
he chose (aor. mid. ind.) us

in him
before the foundation of the world,
that we *should be* (inf.) holy and blameless in front of him in love
⁵ having predestined (aor. act. part.) us
for (εἰς) adoption-as-sons (one word)
through Jesus Christ
to (εἰς) himself
according to the pleasure of his will,

⁶ to (εἰς) the praise of glory of his grace,
which he 'graced to' (aor. act. ind.) us
in the Beloved (articular perf. pass. part.)

⁷ in whom we have (pres. act. ind.)
redemption through his blood
the forgiveness of trespasses,
according to the riches of his grace

⁸ which he lavished (aor. act. ind.) upon (εἰς) us,
in all wisdom and insight
⁹ having made known (aor. act. part.) to us the mystery of his will,
according to his pleasure,

¹⁰ for (εἰς) an administration of the fullness of the times
to-sum-up-under-a-head (aor. mid. inf.) all things in Christ,
the things in (ἐν) the heavens and the things on (ἐπ) the earth in him

¹¹ in whom also we were 'inherited' (one word; aor. pass. ind.)
having been predestined (aor. pass. part.)
according to the purpose of the one-who-works (one word; articular pres. act. part.) all things according to the counsel of his will,

¹² that (εἰς) it should be (inf.) us to (εἰς) the praise of his glory
the pre-hopers (one word; articular perf. act. part.) in Christ

¹³ in whom also you (nom.)
having heard (aor. act. part.) the word of truth,
the gospel of your salvation,

in whom also

having believed (aor. act. part.),

you were sealed (aor. pass. ind.) with the promised Holy Spirit,

¹⁴ who is (pres. act. ind.) the guarantee of our inheritance
until (εἰς) the redemption of the possession
to (εἰς) the praise of his glory.

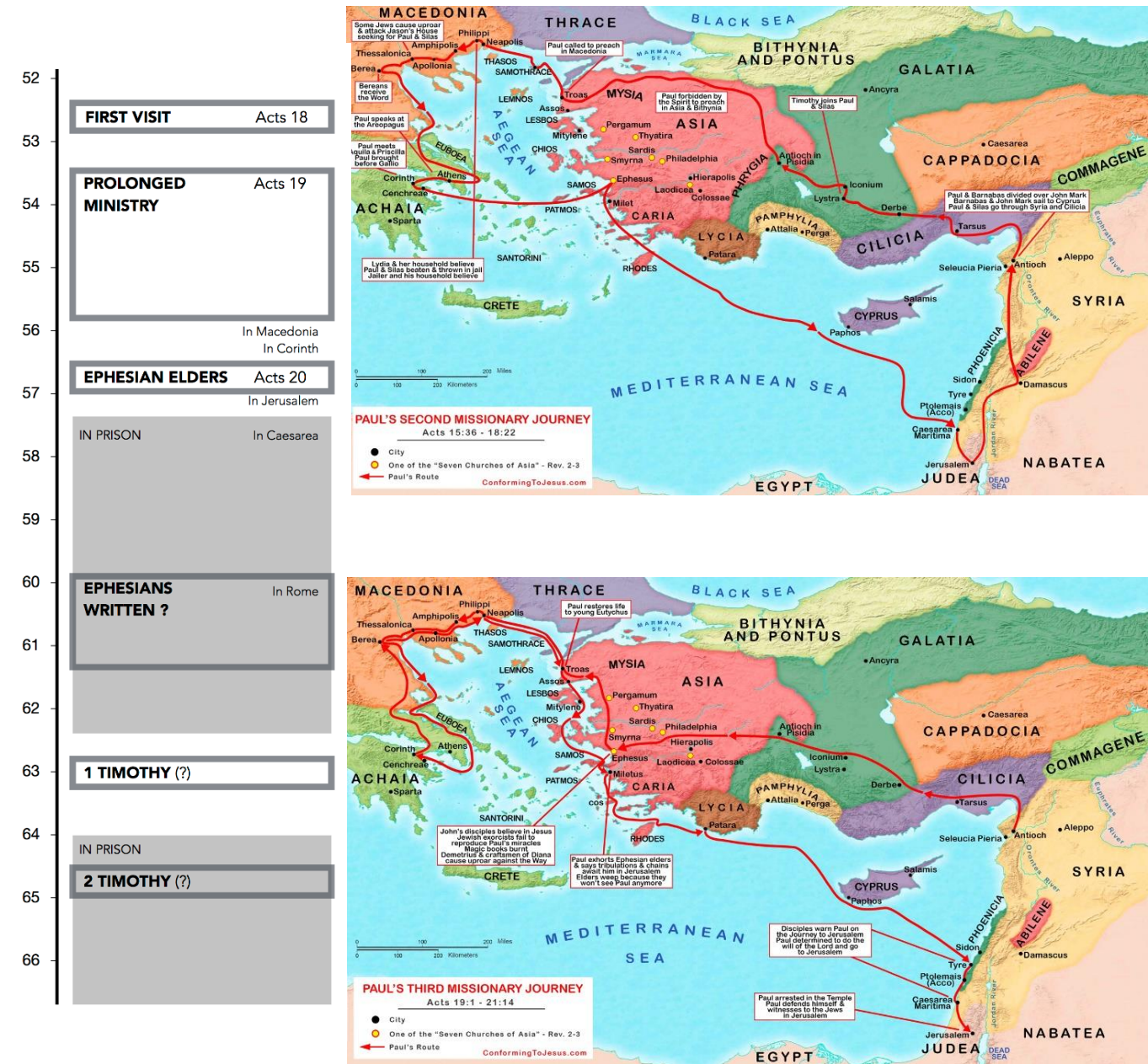
Ephesians 1:15-23

“When I listen to a sermon, I always listen carefully to the preacher’s prayer at the beginning and the end, because that’s where I find out what he’s hoping I’ll get out of the sermon. The rest of the sermon may or may not actually achieve it, but I least I know what he’s shooting for.”¹

Read the passage and summarise the heart of Paul’s prayer in a single word:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

History and geography



¹ Kirkley Boon, private communication.

Background

Acts 19:1-41

What do we learn about Paul's ministry in Ephesus?

Acts 20:17-38

What do we learn about Paul's ministry in Ephesus?

Acts 21:27-30ff: Trophimus *the Ephesian*...

How might Acts 19-21 help us to understand the letter to the Ephesians?

Ephesians 2:1-10

In these verses, what is the most important thing God has done for Gentile believers?

Ephesians 2:11-22

On the text, highlight:

- Repeated words / ideas
- Commands

‘Resurrection’ language in Ephesians 2:11-22...

‘Temple’ language in Ephesians 2:11-22...

John 2:19-21...

Structure of Ephesians 2:11-22:

‘What’ Sentence:

‘Why’ Sentence:

Ephesians 3:1-13

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—

² assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of

God's grace that was given to me for you,

³ how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.

⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,

⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations

as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

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.

⁷ Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.

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.

¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,

¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

¹³ So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

'What' sentence:

'Why' sentence:

Structure

Suggestion 1

1:1-2: Greeting

1:3-14: Blessing

1:15-23: Prayer

2:1-10: What's happened to individuals

2:11-22: What's happened to the Gentiles

3:1-13: What's happened to Paul

3:14-19: Prayer

3:20-21: Blessing

4:1: Walk worthily

4:2-16: Growing toward maturity in Christ

4:17-32: Being Gentiles who don't act like the Gentiles

5:1-21: Living in the light

5:22-6:9: Specific asymmetrical relationships of submission

6:10-20: Stand firm in the gospel

6:21-24: Farewell

Suggestion 2

Ephesians 3:14-21

Commentaries on ‘filled with all the fullness of God’ (v19)

Pick a commentator. What is helpful about their comments on ‘filled with all the fullness of God’?
--

Wood

The final item in Paul’s prayer is introduced with “that” (*hina*) in v. 19b, though some regard it simply as a consequence of knowing Christ’s love. It seems preferable to treat it as the climax of Paul’s intercession. He makes the bold request that his readers may be filled up to the measure of the divine fullness. This is not, of course, to be filled as God himself is full nor, it would seem, with the fullness of God himself (NEB, Barclay). It is rather “the fullness which God requires” (NEB footnote). As Hendriksen argues (p. 174), even the communicable attributes of God are not communicable in the measure in which they exist in God. The fulfillment God intends for man is the maturity that is measured by the full stature of Christ (Eph 4:13).²

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown

filled with—rather, as *Greek*, “filled even *unto* all the fulness of God” (this is the grand goal), that is, filled, each according to your capacity, with the divine wisdom, knowledge, and love; “*even as God is full,*” and as Christ who dwells in your hearts, hath “all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily” (Col 2:9).³

Stott

‘Fullness’ is a characteristic word of Ephesians, as it is of Colossians. In Colossians Paul tells us not only that God’s fullness dwells in Christ, but also that in Christ we ourselves have come to fullness. At the same time, he makes it plain in Ephesians that we still have room for growth... ‘Growth into fullness’ is therefore the theme of Paul’s fourth and last petition for his Asian readers. He prays that they *may be filled with all the fullness of God*. It is uncertain how this genitive should be understood. If it is objective, then God’s fullness is the abundance of grace which he bestows. If it is subjective, it is the fullness which fills God himself, in other words his perfection. Staggering as the thought may be, the latter seems the more probable because the Greek preposition is *eis*, which indicates that we are to be filled not ‘with’ so much as ‘unto’ the fullness of God. God’s fullness or perfection becomes the standard or level up to which we pray to be filled.... Such a prayer must surely look on to our final state of perfection in heaven when together we enter the completeness of God’s purpose for us, and are filled to capacity, filled up to that fullness of God which human beings are capable of receiving without ceasing to be human. Another way of expressing the prospect is that we shall become like Christ, which is God’s purpose and promise, for Christ is himself the fullness of God. Yet another way of putting it is to say that we shall attain the fullness of love, of which Paul has just spoken in his prayer.⁴

Bond

He prays that the Ephesian believers would **be filled with all the fullness of God**. Filled (*plēroō*) and fullness (*plērōma*) are related words as the NKJV translation suggests. This might be paraphrased *that you might fully manifest God’s greatness*. God desires for each believer to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29), in whom the fullness of God dwells (Col 1:19; 2:9, has the same word, *plērōma*, “fullness”).⁵

Erickson

And here is the sum of the matter; here is the final purpose of all the foregoing purposes, the supreme goal of the family-minded God: that the readers be filled with all the fullness of God (v. 19). Redemption, re-creation, and empowerment are all aimed at one and the same object: to have again upon the earth a race of human beings who truly love both each other and their Creator. And not only so in the future “new heaven and new earth” (Rev. 21:1), but even now in this old and dying age. For in the coming of Christ and in the power of the Spirit of Christ the new age has arrived and overlaps with this age of death and sin.⁶

² A. Skevington Wood, “[Ephesians](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians through Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 52.

³ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible](#), vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 349.

⁴ John R. W. Stott, [God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 138–139.

⁵ J. B. Bond, “[The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians](#),” in *The Grace New Testament Commentary*, ed. Robert N. Wilkin (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2010), 875.

⁶ Richard J. Erickson, “[Ephesians](#),” in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker reference library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 1026.

^{3:14} *For this reason*

I bow my knees before the Father,

¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

¹⁶ *that* he may give you

according to the riches of his glory

with power

to be strengthened

through his Spirit

in the inner man,

¹⁷ to dwell

Christ

through faith

in your hearts

in love

being rooted and grounded,

¹⁸ *that* you may be enabled

to grasp

with all the saints

what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

¹⁹ and to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ,

that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

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 in us,

²¹ to him [be] glory

in the church

and in Christ Jesus

throughout all generations, forever and ever.

Amen.

‘Temple’ language...

Logic:

2:19-22 (and probably earlier): God is building his new temple out of Jews and Gentiles.

→ 3:1-13: *For this reason* (in order to achieve this project)

the resurrected Jesus took me prisoner and put me to work for you Gentiles.

→ 3:14-19: *For this reason* (given my central role in the project of your being built into the temple)

I pray that you’d know yourself to be God’s new temple

Paul’s “petitionary prayer is a vital part of his ministry to those for whom his apostolic responsibility has just been so eloquently recounted.”⁷

‘Strength’ and ‘power’ language...

⁷ O’Brien, Peter T. *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 254.

Ephesians 4:1-16

What possible allusions can you find to:

- a) other parts of Ephesians?
- b) the Old Testament?

What is the significance of each?

What is God's plan for building the body of Christ?

The risen Lord Jesus gives... (7-10)

...his word and word ministers... (11)

The apostles, the prophets

The evangelists, the shepherds and teachers

...to equip the saints for ministry... (12a)

...to build up the body to maturity... (12b-14)

...by speaking the truth in love (15-16)

The ministry of prayerfully proclaiming the word of God to people for the building up of the body *is a job for every believer.*

The *particular* job of the pastor-teacher is to equip the saints for the work of word ministry.

Ephesians 4:17-32

- Read the passage
- Highlight repeated words / ideas
- Divide into sections – summarise each in a short sentence
- Context: Where does this fit into the flow of the book?
- What are the puzzles / surprises?
- Write a 'What' sentence
- Write a 'Why' sentence

The Message of Ephesians

'What' sentence (what is the big thing that Paul is teaching in this book?):

'Why' sentence (summarise the appropriate response to this book in the form of a command):

The Ephesian danger of discouragement:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

Ephesians 5:1-21

2:1-10 / 5:1-21: Resurrection!

5:5: 'An idolater'

'What' sentence:

'Why' sentence:

Ephesians 5:22-6:9

5:18ff

18b ...be filled with the Spirit

19a addressing...

19b singing...

19c making melody...

20 giving thanks...

21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ

22 wives to your own husbands...

Ephesians 5:22-33

What are the commands?	
What are the motivations?	
What makes this 'Ephesiansy'?	

Ephesians 6:1-4

What are the commands?	
What are the motivations?	
What makes this 'Ephesiansy'?	

Ephesians 6:5-9

What are the commands?	
What are the motivations?	
What makes this 'Ephesiansy'?	

Ephesians 6:10-20, 21-24

Introduction: How can we stand firm? (10)

1) Know your enemy (11-12)

2) Take up the armour of God (13-17a)

3) Wield the sword of the Spirit (17b-20)

Conclusion: Be encouraged! (21-24)