

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

JANUARY 4, 2010 SESSION 1

Tonight we begin a fresh, new study. This book has been given titles such as the believer's bank, the Christian's checkbook, and the treasure house of the Bible. It tells of the Christian's great riches, inheritances, and fullness of Christ. It tells what we possess and how we can claim and enjoy these possessions. God has graciously provided for His children.

The greatness of this book is hard to put into language. Some writer described it as 'the crown and climax of Pauline theology'. Another writer said that "it is the distilled essence of the Christian religion, the most authoritative and most consummate compendium of our holy Christian faith."

Martin Lloyd Jones said "it is a letter in which the apostle looks at the Christian salvation from the vantage point of the heavenly places." "looking down at the great panorama of salvation and redemption"

Martin Luther said of Romans "the most important document in the New Testament the gospel in its purest expression., and in many ways I agree that there is no purer, plainer statement of the gospel, so the epistle to the Ephesians is the sublimest and the most majestic expression of it.(Jones)

Paul is swept away by it as he loses himself in a great outburst of worship and praise and thanksgiving.

There is nothing more sublime in the whole range of scripture than this epistle to the Ephesians.

We will be discovering the great riches that we have as we look into the details of it. Tonight we are going to try to grasp a little bit of the whole, the forest and then look at each tree, or detail in the coming months.

We will do our study tonight introducing the letter and delve into the first verse as we introduce it. We will look at the great themes that are interwoven throughout the epistle. There are tremendous truths packed in this small book. We, as Christians must know these truths.

Our greatest need is to know these truths. What we need, primarily is not an experience, but to realize what we are, and who we are, and what God has done in Christ and the way He has blessed us. M.L. Jones

We finished the book of Romans in November and as we resume our studies in the Winter sessions we study a letter written by Paul from Rome as he was in prison there.

1. THEMES OF EPHESIANS

A. GOD THE FATHER---THE OVERIDING THEME

This is where it all starts, with God. It seems too simple, but where does man always want to start at? He always seems to start with himself. Man is so subjective and Christians are the same way, too often.

The theme of all themes is God. It is all about Him.

The supremacy, majesty, and glory of God

Our thinking always has to start with God, not with ourselves.

1:5, 9, 11

The whole Bible is about God, not about ourselves. We need to see how great He is and then how we relate to Him.

This book is about His awesome glory and how indescribable it is. We want to lose ourselves in this study and get a view of the glory and majesty of God.

We are in the very presence of God and we stand on holy ground as we peer

into this very Word of God.

B. SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

How much is the church today is speaking about the high holiness of God, His glory, His greatness, His majesty, and His sovereignty?

God *predestinated* us

It is God's *purpose* that we be saved. It is *according to His will*.

Our *salvation* starts with the sovereignty of God, not us.

God determines *the time* for everything to happen.

The Reformers, Puritans, Covenanters, all spent time just meditating on this attribute of God.

Paul was not an apostle because that is just what he wanted. God called him.

That was God's sovereign purpose. It was His will, not Paul's. Paul did not

look to be an apostle. It all started with God. It is the counsel of His own will.

God reigns supremely and this is to be most understood as we read any book of the Bible.

C. THE MYSTERY OF GOD

This is mentioned 6 times in the epistle. It deals with the mystery of God's ways in relation to us, the mystery of His will. Great is the mystery of godliness.

Is there anything more valuable and glorious to us in thinking of the great mysteries of God?

As we think about these themes we should be in awe. We know very little, but we think we have heard it all. There are always much much more to learn. Oh the riches of God. How small our minds are to swallow all of His truths.

Three categories God discloses His truth

1. Truths He reveals to no one---Deut 29:29

2. Truths God reveals to special people Ps 25:14, Prov 3:32 Amos 3:7

3. Truths that were kept secret, that are now revealed

Mysterion—once hidden but now revealed truths

Eph 1:9 Matthew 13:34-35, 11, 11:25, 1 Cor 2:14

Colossians 1:26-27—indwelling Christ

Colossians 2:2-3—the incarnation of Christ

Romans 11:25—Israel's unbelief and rejection of Messiah

2 Thess 2:7—the mystery of iniquity

Rev 17—mystery of Babylon

Eph 3:3-6—unity of believers

Eph 5:24-32—church as Christ's bride

1 Cor 15:51-52—rapture

D. THE GRACE OF GOD

The supreme object of this epistle. This theme is developed in this epistle like no other. Its about God's amazing grace to sinful man. The riches of His grace, we are given a glimpse into how abundant they are.

Eph 1:2-3

E. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Everything that God has purposed and carried out for salvation

He has done in Christ. All throughout the first chapter, Paul keeps repeating

Jesus Christ. He could not mention Him enough. The whole Bible is all about

Him. The gospel is about Him. The only reason we are forgiven is that Christ

was sent to earth to pay our debt that we owed. It is not because I had great

faith or I repented, but what Christ accomplished at the cross. In this epistle

we are forced to look at Him and what He did for us and is doing now.

F. GOD'S GREAT PURPOSE

Eph 1:10

Man's fall lost relationship to God. God had a plan before this and He announced it to man and put it into practice.

God had a called out people, He separated to Himself.. Through them We see His purpose of redemption. There was a barrier between the Jews an Gentiles but God had the remedy of this problem. It was Christ who broke down the barrier. Then came the new creation, the church. All were united in Christ and made one in Him.

G. THE CHURCH

All nations in Christ were brought together

This is the body of Christ on earth. Wec are part of a living organism.

2. THE SAINTS-----Eph 1:1

These great truths were not just made for a certain group of great people wo are called saints causeftheir great works. They are meant for each one of us.

Hagios—set apart, separate, unique—someone who is cleansed and set apart

The church is a meeting of saints.

Saints are to be different from the world and they are cleansed of their guilt. You can't be a Christian without being a saint.

3. FAITHFUL-----Eph 1:1

Can be relied upon, dependable because we know the faith, because we believe it

4. IN CHRIST JESUS Eph 1:1

Eph 4:15-16, Rom 6:5-6, Eph 2: 6