

EPHESIANS

Name:

Year:

Monday (Read Ephesians 1)

The book begins by St Paul's address and salutation to the believers in Ephesus. He then goes on to talk of the spiritual blessings that God has bestowed upon the believers by redeeming them 'through His blood'. He concludes the chapter with a prayer on behalf of the Ephesians that God may open their eyes to see the riches he has bestowed upon them. He also prays that God might enlighten their understanding so that they may see His power and glory and thus put their hope in Him.



Introduction

- **Themes:** 1) Redemption through Christ and 2) The struggle for Christ
- **Purpose:** The purpose of the Epistle was to bring the Ephesians to a new state of appreciation for the redemption that Christ offered them through His death. St Paul also highlights in his epistle the importance of unity amongst believers and the importance of striving together to imitate the image of Christ. The final message is to be prepared for warfare with the devil. In order to be ready for the 'darts of the wicked one', he instructs them to: gird their waist with truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness, shod their feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace, put on the helmet of salvation and take with them the sword of the Spirit. Only then he states, will they be able to 'stand against the wiles of the devil.'
- **Date of writing:** 60-62 AD
- The book is addressed to the church of Ephesus.
- The book contains 6 chapters, which were probably written during St Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.
- **Structure:** The book of Ephesians can be divided into 2 parts thematically:

A) WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US (chapters 1-3) = The first part takes a doctrinal (or theological) approach and focuses on the position of the Christian having gained redemption through Christ's sacrifice.

1. God's blessing to believers (1:1-14)
2. Redemption and salvation through Christ (1:15-3:21)

B) WHAT WE MUST DO TO FOLLOW GOD (chapters 4-6) = The second part takes a practical approach and focuses on the practises of the Christian and how they are to conduct themselves in order to follow Christ in truth.

1. Walk in unity (Eph 4:1-16)
2. Walk in holiness (4:17-6:9)
3. Walk in battle (6:10-24)

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them"

We are his creation. This means that it is from Him that we live, breathe, understand and are able to believe, because He is the One who made us. And note carefully that He did not say "we are His fashioning and molding" but "we are His creation." Molding starts with the mud of the earth, but creation from the outset is "according to the image and likeness of God." - Jerome

Do we, who are created in the image of God, follow in His righteous footsteps? Or do we spend our time chasing after the passions of the flesh and fulfilling its insatiable desires?

Tuesday (Read Ephesians 2)

St Paul begins the chapter with the contrasting images of death and life to emphasise the transformation that Christ accomplished for us through His death. He compares our previous fallen nature which chased after the 'lusts' and 'desires' of the flesh to our current nature which is worthy of sitting in 'heavenly places'. St Paul then goes on to say that this is nothing we should boast of, since this was accomplished through divine power and not our own human power. St Paul speaks of how without God, all hope was just about lost but we who were far away from God were brought close again by the blood of Christ. Christ overcame sin and taught us to do likewise. He overcame the lusts of the world and taught us to do likewise. Finally, St. Paul uses the analogy of our 'citizenship' to show how we have been once again accepted and incorporated into the household of God, having been 'strangers' and 'foreigners' previously.



On humility...



For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

{Ephesians 2:8}

Nothing we have is our own, God has granted to us all things, thus we cannot boast. In Ephesians chapter 2, St Paul says that even if we have faith it is not ours but rather it is given to us by the generosity of God. This can be taken further, for not only is faith given to us by God but indeed everything we have, whether it be wisdom, knowledge, riches or talent. It has all been given to us from above. If nothing we have is ours and if God is the author of all things then there is no need to boast, rather we must give glory to God and remain humble in our own eyes. Part of being humble is knowing when to speak and when to remain silent and acknowledging when we are unsure or don't know something. The following short story from the life of the Great Abba Anthony is very interesting and provides insight into how we are to conduct ourselves in these matters:

One day some old men came to see Abba Anthony. In the midst of them was Abba Joseph. Wanting to test them, the old man suggested a text from the Scriptures, and, beginning with the youngest, he asked them what it meant. Each gave his opinion as he was able. But to each one the old man said, "You have not understood it." Last of all he said to Abba Joseph, "How would you explain this saying?" And he replied, "I do not know." Then Abba Anthony said, "Indeed, Abba Joseph has found the way, for he has said: 'I do not know.'"



Did You Know?

ANSWER: Jesus Christ, he donated His blood for the salvation of mankind on the Holy wood of the cross.

This sacrifice of blood is what St Paul speaks of in Ephesians 1:7: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the richness of his grace."

