

Use this space for any question you may have concerning the lesson.

THE CHURCH IN EPHESIANS

A Correspondence Course in Nine Lessons by Paul K. Williams

Lesson 1: INTRODUCTION

The Theme of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

The beautiful letter from Paul the apostle “to the saints who are at Ephesus” has as its main theme, “**The church of Christ.**” Paul does not talk about problems in the church at Ephesus; instead he writes a general letter full of glory – the glory of the church, the body of Christ, of which Jesus is the head. He tells about the spiritual blessings which the saints have in Christ (chapter 1), how all men, both Jews and Gentiles, are saved by grace in Christ Jesus (2:1-10), and how this salvation was accomplished by the cross and is realised in the one body (2:11-22). He tells us how God delivered the mystery of the gospel to the world and demonstrated His great wisdom in the church (3:1-13). In chapter 4 he gives us so many wonderful things that we could use an entire correspondence course just for this chapter. He teaches us how to walk so as to preserve the unity of the Spirit (4:1-3). Then he gives the seven things upon which God's people must be united (4:4-6). After that he tells how Jesus gave gifts to the church, the gifts being apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, and shows that when we work together with these men the church will grow in love (4:7-16).

Several passages talk about the life the members of the church must lead. These passages will be combined to form one lesson. They are: 4:17-32; 5:1-14; 6:1-20. Then we will study what Paul says about singing to one another (5:15-21) and about the bride of Christ 5:22-33).

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main theme of the book of Ephesians? _____

Student Name _____

Postal Address _____

2. Chapter 1 tells of the _____ which the saints have in _____.
3. Chapter 4:1-3 teaches us how to walk so as to _____ the _____ of the _____.
4. Chapter 4:7-16 tells about the gifts Christ gave the church, who are the _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.
5. Which verses talk about the bride of Christ? _____

A Precious Book About the Church

I think you can see that a study of the book of Ephesians will give us much information about the church of Christ. To all those who love Jesus and His church this is a precious book. If the student will carefully read the book of Ephesians and study the things in this correspondence course, he or she will gain a clear understanding of the church of Christ and will develop a passionate love for it. We hope you will study prayerfully and diligently because we know you will gain great blessings if you will.

Paul and the Church at Ephesus

In this letter Paul is writing to close and beloved friends. It appears from Acts 18:19 that he preached in the synagogue before anyone else had preached the gospel in the city. However he did not stay because he was on his way to Jerusalem at the close of his second great preaching journey. Instead he left Aquilla and Priscilla, with whom he had lived and laboured for 18 months in Corinth. They were later joined by a preacher named Apollos and the church at Ephesus had its beginning from their labours. (Acts 18:24-28).

When Paul arrived on his third preaching journey, he found a small church in a large, important city. It was located on the coast of what was called "Asia" in that time but which is called "Turkey" today.

"With an artificial harbor accessible to the largest ships, and rivaling the harbor at Miletus, standing at the entrance of the valley which reaches far into the

Lord is, to become a faithful member of it, and to love that church which is the bride of Christ.

QUESTIONS:

18. There are three purposes of this correspondence course. They are to help the student to: a) _____
 b) _____, and
 c) _____

A Word to the Student

You will get out of this course what you put in. We urge you to read the book of Ephesians over and over. It will be a temptation to try to answer the questions in the course without doing much careful study of the book of Ephesians. Perhaps you will succeed in answering the questions, but you will not succeed in truly understanding what God wants you to understand. You must read carefully, many times, what the book actually says. Then you will be able to use what the lessons say to understand what you have read.

I will be quoting the New American Standard Bible translation in the lessons because it is both an accurate translation and easy to understand. You may use whatever translation you have, though I do not recommend the Living Bible because it is a paraphrase, not a translation. I do recommend the King James Version of the Bible. It is the old standard, though it is not as easy to understand as some of the newer translations.

Before you start reading Ephesians, read the passages in Acts which I have referred to (Acts 18:18-20:1 and Acts 20:15-38). Then start reading Ephesians in preparation to understand and appreciate the church of Jesus Christ. May God bless you greatly in this study.

Written From Prison

In Ephesians 3:1 Paul writes, “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles.”

When Paul reached Jerusalem after saying farewell to the elders of the Ephesian church, some Jews charged that he had defiled the temple. Paul would have been killed in the riot which followed if the Roman guard had not rescued him. However the Roman governor kept him in prison because the Jews made so many charges against him and the governor wanted to please the Jews.

After two years of imprisonment in Caesarea of Judea, Paul used his right as a Roman citizen to appeal his case to Caesar’s court in Rome. He endured a very dangerous journey to Rome and he waited as a prisoner for two years before he was tried (and released). It was during his imprisonment in Rome that he wrote several letters including the one we are studying. Paul does not complain about the fact that he is a prisoner, but because he knows they are concerned about him he writes, “But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts” (6:21,22).

QUESTIONS:

13. What false charge did some Jews make against Paul at Jerusalem? _____

14. How long was Paul in prison in Judea? _____
15. To whom did Paul appeal his case? _____
16. How long was he a prisoner in Rome awaiting trial? _____
17. Whom did Paul send to Ephesus to tell them about himself? _____

The Emphasis of This Correspondence Course

This correspondence course is what the title says, a study of the church in the book of Ephesians. Though we will cover most of the things said in the book, we will be studying very carefully those things which concern the church. The purpose of this course is to help the student to understand what the church of the

interior of Asia Minor, and connected by highways with the chief cities of the province, Ephesus was the most easily accessible city in Asia, both by land and sea. Its location, therefore, favoured its religious, political and commercial development, and presented a most advantageous field for the missionary labours of Paul. The city stood upon the sloping sides and at the base of two hills, Prion and Coressus, commanding a beautiful view; its climate was exceptionally fine, and the soil of the valley was unusually fertile.” (The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, p.961)

The religion which dominated the city was the worship of the goddess Diana (Artemis). There was a great temple at Ephesus which included a statue of Diana which was supposed to have dropped down from heaven. Paul’s preaching, which continued for more than two years in the city, turned so many people away from the worship of this goddess that the men who made their money from making and selling small statues of Diana stirred up a riot against Paul in which his life was in great danger. He was forced to leave the city at that time (Acts 19:1-20:1).

Later as he was returning to Jerusalem on the same preaching journey Paul spoke to the elders of the church at Ephesus in which he described how he had preached in the city and in which he warned the elders against false teachers (Acts 20:17-38). The tearful farewell they gave Paul showed the great love these fellow-soldiers of the cross had for one another.

QUESTIONS:

6. What two people did Paul leave at Ephesus when he first visited the city?
_____ and _____
7. What preacher joined them at Ephesus (Acts 18:24) _____
8. Was Ephesus on the coast or was it inland? _____
9. In what province was Ephesus? _____
10. What goddess was worshipped there? _____
11. Why was Paul forced to leave Ephesus? _____

12. Give one thing Paul told the elders to do in Acts 20:28. _____

