

Lecture 25 – Ephesians: Occasion, Purpose, Author & Addressees

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” *Ephesians 1:1-2*

Key Terms

Paul’s imprisonment, epistle, indicative, imperative

Objectives

- *Identify the occasion, purpose, author and addressees of the letter to the Ephesians.
- *Describe when and in what situation Paul wrote this letter.
- *Explain and illustrate the indicative in this letter.
- *Explain and illustrate the imperative in this letter.
- *Reproduce an outline of Ephesians.

Ephesians: Occasion, Purpose, Author & Addressees

I. Introduction

- A. Ephesians was probably written from Caesarea (AD 57-59) or Rome (AD 60-62). Both times Paul was in prison.
- B. References to Paul’s imprisonment
 1. Ephesians 3:1
 2. Ephesians 4:1
 3. Acts 23:11
 4. Ephesians 6:20
- C. Chronology
 1. Paul in Ephesus: AD _____
 2. Paul in Rome: AD _____

II. Occasion and Purpose

- A. Written to the Ephesians and other churches
- B. Purpose: _____
- C. Literary genre: Epistle, not letter
Arguments: _____
- D. Paul’s goal is encouragement and giving them a goal, not solving problems.
- E. Statement on _____ in the literary form of _____.
- F. Tychichus and Onesimus probably deliver the letter (Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7-9).

III. Author of Ephesians

- A. Some say it was written in a post-apostolic time, because:
 1. Different style in Greek
But: Other letters have particularities in style and their authorship is not questioned.
 2. Church structure appears more established
But: Already the earliest church had structure (Acts 6).
 3. Too similar to Colossians
But: They have distinct major themes.
- B. Tübingen school says that it is a late 1st century attempt to bring the church together.
But: If you look at the book with care, the argument does not hold as well as it first seems.

IV. Addressees of Ephesians

- A. Written to ‘the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus’
- B. Ephesians 1:15-16: ‘For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.’

1. Not a distant formula
2. Might be a sign that letter was written from Rome and not from Caesarea, since it does not sound like Paul has recently spent time there
3. Ephesus was probably a highly mobile congregation. Paul probably did not know many people any more, but he knows about their situation and is now re-establishing ties with that church (after some six years).
4. Can also be explained by the fact that although Paul was in Ephesus for over two years, he was there with interruptions, using Ephesus as his home base. (*this point is not on the CD lecture*)

V. The Content of Ephesians

A. Indicative/imperative structure

B. The beginning of Ephesians focuses on the indicatives. Eph. 1:3-3:21

C. Indicative: Identity in Christ; chapters 1-3

1:3-14—Introduction

Looks back to the design of God before all time

Looks at the present

Looks to the future

Prayer and thanksgiving

2:1-10—Then and now

See how God has transferred you from where you were to where you are now.

2:11-22—Unity of the church

Unity in the body of Christ is the single most important challenge.

3:1-13—Apostolic foundation of the church

D. Imperative: Walk in Christ, chapters 4-6

4:1-16 Gifts

4:17-24 Then and now

4:25-32 Life in community

5:1-21 Walk in the light

5:22-6:9 Household order

6:10-20 God's armor