

Episode #10-01 Ephesians Introduction: The Book of God's Present Purpose

I. The purpose of the letter of Paul to the Ephesians is to tell us what God's present purpose is in all His work today. This includes His work in the world, as well as His work in the individual believer. Ephesians is the book of God's present purpose.

II. One of the most glorious truths of Scripture is the truth of being "in Christ."

- A. In the past, God's people enjoyed the privilege of being "in Israel," but that came about by the accident of birth.
- B. Now, all who believe in Who the Lord Jesus is (the Christ, the Anointed Savior of the world, and the Son of God, God manifested in human form,) and what He did (died on the cross for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead,) are identified with and placed into Christ. All believers are now "in Christ," a most special, glorious, and even unbelievable position.
- C. The greatest revelation of what is true of us in Christ is found in the book of Ephesians. Ephesians is the book of being "in Christ."

III. God's grace is one of His most glorious aspects.

- A. The Greek word for "grace" is *charis*.
- B. To show grace is to show love and favor to those who do not deserve it. Whenever God gives generously to men totally apart from any merit or worth on their part, and without any reference to what they are or what they have done, this is God's grace.
- C. Nowhere else in Scripture is God's grace shown forth plainer than it is in the book of Ephesians. Ephesians is the book of God's grace.

IV. Paul's books can divide into early epistles (Acts period,) prison epistles, and post-prison personal letters. This book is one of his prison epistles, written during his two years in his own hired house of Acts 28:30.

V. Ephesians was written to new believers, Jews and Gentiles alike, who have come to God from believing the salvation-bringing message that had been made freely available to all nations. The gospel itself is now apostled, and Paul tells them the glorious things that are true of them for believing, and how they should respond.

VI. Ephesians 1:1 speaks of being "in Christ," one of the glorious themes of Ephesians.

- A. Paul was an apostle, which means "a commissioned one." Paul was commissioned by Christ Jesus to write this book, so this book is inspired by God.
- B. The will of God = *thelema*, means God's wish or desire. God desired Paul to be this.
- C. Saints = *hagios* or holy ones. Means those who are set apart to God.
- D. Ephesians may not belong in the text.
 - 1. Some ancient manuscripts do not have this word.
 - 2. In verse 15, Paul has never met these people! But he knew the Ephesians well.
 - 3. The original text may have been to "the ones being and believing in Christ Jesus." That would make this written to all who are "in Christ!" This book is written directly to all believers of today & tells us what God wants us to know. Not just to those who happen to be faithful, but all who are believing!

VII. Conclusion: Ephesians is the book of God's present purpose. It tells us about being "in Christ," and shows forth the riches of God's grace to us. It was written to new believers, both Jews and Gentiles, who had come to God from believing the gospel message. Paul was writing it to all who are being in Christ and believing in Christ. This book is very important because it tells us God's purpose for us today. Let all who believe hear and believe His word to us in Ephesians!