



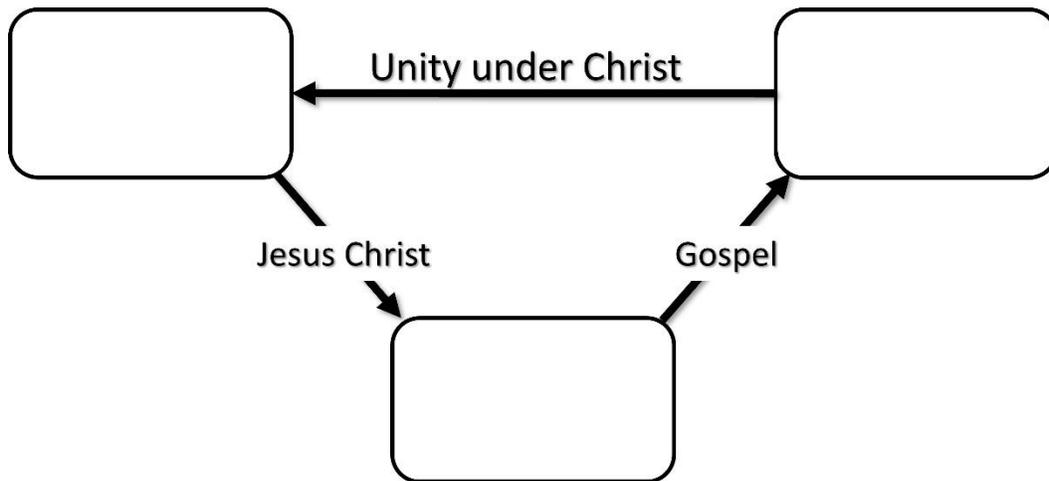
CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS



A. EPHESIANS: THE MAIN IDEA

God's ultimate plan is to bring together (reconcile), all things, either through Jesus as a Savior or Jesus as a Judge; this will happen in the fullness of the times.

Ephesians deals with the major problem of man, the problem of division, disunity, and disharmony in the world.

Key Verse: "God having made known unto us the mystery of his will that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Ephesians 1:9-10).

B. AUTHOR

Apostle Paul (Age: 65). His two-year ministry at Ephesus is covered in Acts 18:18-21; 19:2-41; 20:17-35.

C. DATE AND LOCATION

Probably written between A.D. 60-63. The letter was written while Paul was in prison (house arrest) in Rome (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20).

D. TO WHOM WRITTEN?

Uncertain. There are strong reasons why the words “to the Ephesians” may be questioned.

E. WHY WAS IT WRITTEN?

To strengthen and unify Christian believers in the Ephesian church so that it could spread the good news of Jesus Christ to a lost and divided world.

F. THE ANCIENT CITY OF EPHEBUS

At its height, Ephesus was the most important city of two hundred and thirty cities along the coast of Asia Minor. Its major religion was the worship of Artemis (AKA Diana). The worship of Artemis focused on the essential pleasure of the flesh.

G. THE CHURCH AT EPHEBUS

The church in Ephesus had a small beginning. When Paul originally visited Ephesus, he found only 12 believers in the city. It was mostly spiritually young Gentile converts but there were many Jewish Christians also (Acts 19:10, 17). They had been won to the Lord by the spiritually young, but impressive preacher named Apollos.

H. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where do you see great divisions, disunity, and disharmony in the world today? (Be specific).
2. Many churches today also face divisions while struggling to know how to reach a disinterested society, and at the same time nurture its members. How can churches deal with these two tensions?
3. What can churches do today to ensure that Christ is at its center?

I. AT THE END OF THIS SERIES YOU WILL...

- Understand God's ultimate plan is to someday bring _____ under Jesus Christ.
- Have a deeper appreciation for the need to keep Jesus Christ at the _____
- Have a better understanding of _____ within the church in taking the good news of Jesus Christ to the world.
- Have a greater _____ from knowing that the divisions, disunities, and disharmonies in the world today are only temporary.