

Ephesians: More Resources

The topics below provide more information that will help you with your individual or small group study. The expanded topics follow below

- When was Ephesians written and how does it fit into the chronology of New Testament books?
- How is it that Paul could travel so freely and so extensively in the ancient world?
- Here is a chart showing the major events of Paul's life from the book of Acts, along with the dates they happened and the letters he wrote.
- Paul warned the church in Ephesus and beyond to "hold to the truth in love." What kind of false teaching threatened the churches?
- Paul's imagery for the armor of God in Ephesians 6 has direct ties to the book of Isaiah.
- When Paul first arrived in Ephesus, he lectured in the hall of Tyrannus, a public place where people came to study and debate. How did this come about?

Dates for When the Books of the New Testament Were Written

Even though the book of James appears near the end of the New Testament, it was one of the earliest written. Here is a chart showing when the books of the New Testament were probably written.

Written around the year 50

James

Mark

50/51 – 53/54

Galatians

1 and 2 Thessalonians

53/54 – 57/58

1 and 2 Corinthians

Romans

60/61 – 63

Colossians

Philemon

Ephesians

Philippians

63-67

1 and 1 Peter

Matthew

Luke

Acts

1 Timothy

Titus

2 Timothy

Jude

67-96

Hebrews

Gospel of John

1, 2, and 3 John

Revelation

Ten Reasons Why Paul Was Able to Take the Good News of Jesus to So Many Places

In three missionary journeys and one long trip to Rome, Paul covered thousands of miles across the land and over the seas from the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea to Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), Greece, and Italy.

External Reasons

First, there were some external reasons why Paul was able to travel so freely and effectively throughout the Roman Empire

1. There was a one-world government.
2. There was world peace (*pax Romana*).
3. There was a world language (Greek).
4. The famous Roman road system linked many parts of the known world (all roads really did lead to Rome).
5. In most places of the world people were getting tired of pagan deities.
6. The Jews were dispersed (due to persecution) among the nations of the world< bringing their monotheistic religion with them.
7. The Old Testament was translated into the world language (Greek)

Internal Reasons

In addition to the external reasons, we can look to three internal reasons why Paul was so effective.

8. God chose Paul even before he was born to carry His message to the nations (Galatians 1:15-17; Romans 1:1).

9. Paul was filled with love for the Lord.

10. Paul considered it an awesome privilege to preach the Good News message about Jesus (Ephesians 3:7-9).

A Chronology of Paul's Life From the Book of Acts

Book of Acts	Activity	Date	Letter Written
9:1-9	Conversion	34-35	
9:26-29	Visit to Jerusalem	37-38	
11:27-30	Second visit to Jerusalem	48-50	
13-14 (Cyprus and Galatia)	First Missionary Journey	50	Galatians
15	Jerusalem Council	51-53	
16:1-18:22	Second Missionary Journey (Galatia, Macedonia, Greece)	51-53	1, 2 Thessalonians
18:23-21:4	Third Missionary Journey (Ephesus, Macedonia, Greece)	54-57	1, 2 Corinthians Romans
21:15-26:32	Arrest in Jerusalem, trials and imprisonment in Caesarea	58-60	
27-28	Voyage to Rome; Roman imprisonment	61-63	Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians
	Release from prison, further work, final imprisonment, and death.	64	1, 2 Timothy Titus

False Teaching That Threatened the First Century Church

Paul addressed his letter to those who were like children, forever changing their minds about what they believed “because someone has told us something different or because someone has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth” (Ephesians 4:14). In the excellent *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, Dr. Clint Arnold describes four “false teachings” that threatened to turn believers from the truth of Jesus. As you read each one, think of a parallel threat that exists today.

- Judaizing Influences – A group of Jewish Christians told the Galatians they needed to be circumcised and obey certain features of the Jewish law to be saved.
- Syncretistic Teachings – There was a faction in the Colossian church that mixed Christianity with other beliefs.
- Docetism – After Paul left Ephesus, a group within the church began to teach that Jesus did not really come in the flesh.
- Gnosticism – Late in the first century and throughout the second century, this false teaching taught that there are two worlds: the world of spirit, where God is, and the world of matter, where we are. Since God is holy and matter is evil, then he can have nothing to do with our world. Our only hope for salvation is to escape this evil world and find true fulfillment in the spiritual world.

The Armor of God and the Book of Isaiah

Did you know that the imagery of the armor of God comes from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah? Here are the referenced:

Image	Reference in Isaiah	Spiritual Weapon
Belt	Isaiah 11:5	Truth
Breastplate	Isaiah 59:17	Righteousness
Feet fitted	Isaiah 52:7	Gospel of peace
Shield	Isaiah 21:5	Faith
Helmet	Isaiah 59:17	Salvation
Sword	Isaiah 49:2	Word of God

Paul the Entrepreneur

When Paul first arrived in Ephesus, he lectured in the hall of Tyrannus, a public place where people came to study and debate. How did this come about? Was this a free venue, kind of like a modern day public square, or was there more to it than that? The *Eerdman's Bible Handbook* reports that “*hired*” the hall so he could lecture there. That means he raised the money and paid to rent the hall so he could preach the Gospel.

This would not be unlike putting on a conference in a public venue today. Paul knew how to put his money where his mouth was!

