

Ephesians

Ephesians is related to Colossians like Romans is related to Galatians, "a fuller treatment of the same general theme in a more detached and impersonal manner" (Robertson, IV, 514).

With Philippians

Colossians

and Philemon

Ephesians completes the group of
Prison Epistles.

Destination: The earliest copies of the epistle do not have the words "πρὸς Εφεσούς" in 1:1. The reason it came to be called the Ephesian epistle was because most MSS we have are copies from the one in Ephesus, and so it became known as "The Epistle to the Ephesians".

The reference in Col. 4:16 to "the epistle from Laodicea" has led to the conjecture that this is Paul's reference to the Ephesian letter and that it was actually a circular letter to all of the churches in the Roman province of Asia much like John's book of The Revelation.

So there are actually three views, that it is:

(1) An epistle to Ephesians.

(2) " " " the Laodiceans.

(3) a circular letter to all of the Asian churches.

most support is given to the latter view.

Writer: There have likewise been problems regarding the authorship of the book, but it is generally accepted that Paul wrote it.

If Colossians were written by Paul, then

Ephesians certainly was too.

Date and Place of writing: From Rome, c. 63 A.D. See his references to being a prisoner in 3:1; 4:1; 6:20.

(See Lightfoot's essay on "The Order of the Epistles of the Captivity" in his comm. on Philippians.)

The mention of Tychicus in Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; ~~This~~ would ^{seem to} place all three of these epistles together (ICC, pp. xxix, xxx).

Occasion: As the book of Romans was written to give a complete statement of the doctrine of justification by faith, so the book of Ephesians was written to give a complete statement of God's revelation to Paul concerning the church, the body of Christ.

Quite evidently there is, in the background of Paul's mind, the familiar conflict between Jews and Gentiles within the church. It seems to have been written especially for the Gentiles (3:1; 4:17). Paul's main practical emphasis is for unity (4:1-6).

How different those churches were only a few years later! Cf. Rev. 2:1-7; 3:14-19.

General Outline:

I. Doctrinal (1-3). Robertson (IV, 515)

refers to Stalker who said that these three chapters were the most profound words ever written.

II. Practical (4-6).

Ephesians - Outline

- I. Salutation (1:1, 2).
II. Praise to God for all the blessings of salvation (1:3-3:21).
* salvation (1:3-14). Salvation is viewed from its origination to its culmination with the enumeration of some of its blessings. This is from the divine point of view. By the transfer from "we" to "ye" in vv. 12, 13 the Apostle gets to one of the main points of this epistle, i.e., that the Gentiles now share equally with the Jews in all of the blessings of salvation.
- III. B. Prayer (1:15-23); Thanksgiving and intercession. The glory of our salvation can only be comprehended by revelation, and this in answer to prayer. Paul's prayer deals with the knowledge of our destiny, God's inheritance (i.e., what comes to Him from salvation), and our resources (power - κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν - which is the actual exercise of the power, ICC, p. 31) in Him.
- C. The whole scope of salvation is now viewed from the ~~the~~ human point-of-view (2:1-22), as 1:3-14 was from God's point-of-view.
1. The three tenses of salvation, with a summation of the whole doctrine (2:1-10).
a. Man's need for salvation as evident in what he did "in times past" (2:1-3).
b. The past and present intermingled together (2:4, 5).
c. The present & future (2:7).
d. The summation (2:8-10).
- notes & de
nition of
the church
is 1. v. 2, 3.