



GALATIANS & EPHESIANS

MARCH 2018

Read on your own or with others,
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of these books. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to them than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

INTRODUCTION

These letters were written by Paul, an apostle of Jesus, to the churches in Galatia and Ephesus. He was seeking to encourage the believers in their faith and address any issues of concern. Paul knew these churches well and was instrumental in their formation.

GALATIANS

Galatia was a region that is now part of modern day Turkey. Paul and Barnabas visited this area on their first missionary journey (Acts 13-14).

Soon afterwards false teachers infiltrated the churches in Galatia. These teachers claimed that if you wanted to be a true Christian you needed more than faith in the Lord Jesus, you also needed to follow Jewish traditions.

In the book of Galatians Paul refutes this teaching.

GALATIANS 1-2 : GETTING THEIR ATTENTION

Why should the churches listen to Paul? His message was received directly from God (Galatians 1:11-24). He was recognized by the other apostles (Galatians 2:1-10). He even rebuked Peter when he made the same error (Galatians 2:11-21). This 'boasting' shows the importance of this letter.

GALATIANS 3-4 : GRACE & THE LAW

These chapters contain the core theological argument of the book. How can somebody be right with God? The answer is, through faith in Jesus, not by keeping the law (Galatians 3:26-29).

GALATIANS 5-6 : FREEDOM TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT

If we don't have to 'do' anything to be right with God does that mean we can 'do' anything we want? No. The last two chapters of this letter show how we should use the freedom we now have as those freely saved by grace. We should serve one another (Galatians 5:13), live by the Spirit (6:16) and do good to all (Galatians 6:10).

EPHESIANS

Ephesus was a city in the west of modern day Turkey. Paul went through Ephesus on his second missionary journey and made a lengthier stop on his third journey. He spent two years there teaching them the truths about Jesus (Acts 19).

The letter is a letter of encouragement to the believers that they would grow in their faith.

EPHESIANS 1-3 : PRIVILEGES AND BLESSINGS

These chapters focus us on the enormous privileges that belong to the Christian in Jesus. Chapter 1 lays out some of the heavenly blessings that are true for every Christian and ends with a prayer that we may know the truth of these more and more.

Chapter 2 delves into the reality of what happens when we become a Christian. We were dead, and now by grace God has made us alive. This is something that is true for all who come to Christ no matter their background. Therefore, we stand as one in Christ.

Chapter 3 takes this further and explains that it is the church – saved people, Jews and Gentiles – that display the riches of God’s grace in this world and beyond.

EPHESIANS 4-6 : WALKING WORTHY

These chapters are a call to walk worthy of the privileges God has given us as his people. They show the effect that the Gospel should have on our priorities in the church – unity and maturity (Ephesians 4:1-16) – as well as on every day behavior in our lives (Ephesians 4:17-5:20).

The fact that we are in Christ should also affect our relationships, in our families and beyond (Ephesians 5:21-6:9). Just a note, while our work situations are not the same as that of a slave and master in the first century, there are principles that we can apply today.

The book ends with a reminder that as we seek to live as God’s people we are constantly fighting against an enemy. We need to rely on God’s power if we are to walk worthy and give him the glory.

ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK

What does this book teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What does this book teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of this book make in your life (Matthew 7:24-27)