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## Epistle to the Ephesians: A Preview

- Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church
- Pastor Paul Goh

### Sources:

*Bible Survey* by William Hendriksen

*Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*

*A Harmony of the Life of St. Paul*, Frank J. Goodwin

*Paul Missionary Theologian*, Robert Reymond

### Overall View of the Book

1. Theme: The Mystery of the Church of Christ
  - a. Key words: "Church" - 9 times; "Mystery" - 6 times; "walk" - 6 times
  - b. Key themes: sovereign purpose of God in establishing the church; mystery of the church
2. The apostle's visit to Ephesus (3 years)
  - a. During his Second Missionary Journey
    - i. From Cenchræa (Corinth), he came to Ephesus
    - ii. He entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews and went his way to Jerusalem to keep the feast (Acts 18.18-21)
    - iii. He expresses his desire to return, if God wills
  - b. During his Third Missionary Journey
    - i. *Conflict #1 : Inadequate knowledge of the gospel: Apollos* (Acts 19.1-7)
      - (1) Apollos a Jew from Alexandria, eloquent, learned and mighty in the Scriptures only knew the baptism of John the Baptist
      - (2) When he arrived in Ephesus he was more fully instructed by Aquila and Priscilla.
    - ii. *Conflict #2: In the synagogue* (Acts 19.8-10)
      - (1) As his custom was, he spoke boldly with the Jews for 3 months arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God but the Jews could not tolerate his witness
      - (2) He left the synagogue and set up headquarters in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, daily discussing and preaching Jesus to them so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord (19.10)
      - (3) He summarised his labours in his address to the Ephesian elders, "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (20.20 - 21)

- (4) "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (20.26-27).
- iii. *Conflict #3: With the prevailing practice of pagan magic* (19.11-20)
  - (1) The Jewish exorcists were using the name of Jesus to address demons
  - (2) Acts 19.15, "And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?"
  - (3) The evil spirit leap upon the exorcists and they fled and after this, the name of the Lord was greatly magnified.
- iv. *Conflict #4: With the commercialised state religion of Ephesus* (19.23-41)
  - (1) The whole city was in uproar when a mob was aroused when the silversmiths lost their trade in tourists visiting the fabulous temple of Diana and the making of replicas of Diana
  - (2) The mob was appeased by the town clerk

### 3. Characteristics

- a. A cyclical letter like Colossians meant to be read in the churches
  - i. This epistle was dictated by the apostle Paul and recorded by Tychicus the messenger (Eph. 6.21; Col. 4.7-9)
  - ii. Written about 60 or 61 A..D.
  - iii. Written during his first imprisonment at Rome
- b. The church at Ephesus was mainly Gentiles with the Jews in the minority
- c. No indication of problems in the church nor any purpose or reason for the letter
- d. Thus, we have in this epistle, the apostle's exposition about the church without addressing any pastoral issues

### 4. Significance & Benefit

- a. Classic texts for your particular edification
  - i. The doctrine of election (ch. 1.3-5)
  - ii. The doctrine of Total depravity (ch 2.1-7)
  - iii. The doctrine of Salvation by Grace alone (ch. 2.8-10)
  - iv. The foundation of the Church (ch. 2.20-22)
  - v. For God's gifts to the church (ch. 4.9-14)
  - vi. Instruction for the calling of husbands to each other and its reflection of Christ (ch. 5.21-33)
  - vii. Calling of children to father, fathers to their children and maids to their employers (ch. 6.1-9)
  - viii. Fighting the enemy (ch. 6.10-18)
- b. Our benefit
  - i. A new appreciation for the church
  - ii. That we actively serve God in the church