

Paul's Prayers for the Christians in Ephesus

Ephesians 1:15-20, 3:14-21

Background

- Paul first travels to Ephesus in Acts 18:18-21, then again in Acts 19 (c. 53 AD).
- The apostle met with only the elders from this church a little while later, Acts 20:17-38.
- If the letter was written in Paul's first Roman imprisonment (c. 61 AD), he hasn't seen these Christians in about 10 years.

Summary of the Prayers

Ephesians 1:15-20

- **vs. 15-16** Remembrance and thanksgiving
- **vs. 17** Prayer for a spirit of wisdom and revelation
 - **SO THAT:** you would come to know God more fully.
- **vs. 18-20** Prayer for enlightened understanding
 - **SO THAT:** you would fully comprehend their hope, inheritance, and God's power for them.

Summary of the Prayers

Ephesians 3:14-21

- **vs. 14-16** Prayer for strength and power through the Spirit in the inner man
 - SO THAT: Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith (vs. 17a)
- **vs. 17b** That you would be rooted and grounded in love
 - SO THAT: You may fully comprehend Christ's love (vs. 18-19a)
 - SO THAT: You may be filled up with God (vs. 19b)

The Prayer of Ephesians 1

- **Ephesians 1:15-16 – Remembrance and thanksgiving**
 - *Without ceasing*, not sporadic or occasional
 - *With thanksgiving*
 - Do we take our faithful brethren for granted?
 - Do we give our brethren reason to be thankful (vs. 15 w. Col 1:3-8, etc.)
 - *With specific remembrance*
 - Paul remembered and prayed for these Christians specifically

The Prayer of Ephesians 1

- **Ephesians 17 – Prayer for a spirit of wisdom and revelation**
 - *Begins with praise*
 - “*spirit*” refers to the attitude, inner disposition
 - No definite article (“the”) in the original (see NASU)
 - As in Col 1:9, “spiritual understanding”
 - See also I Cor 4:21, Gal 6:1, II Tim 1:7
 - *For wisdom and revelation: that you would really understand! See Luke 8:18, Jam 1:5-8, 3:13-18.*
 - *To know God more fully – see Jer 9:23-24*

The Prayer of Ephesians 1

- **Ephesians 18-20 – Prayer for enlightened understanding**
 - *Prayer for open hearts, minds to receive truth*
 - *Hope of His calling* – i.e. hope through the gospel, the resurrection to eternal life
 - *Riches of His inheritance* – i.e. Mark 10:29-31; I Pet 1:3-5; Rev 21:1-7
 - *Greatness of His power toward us* – The immeasurable power that raised Christ from the dead is behind you!

The Prayer of Ephesians 3

- **Ephesians 3:14-16 – Prayer for strength in the inner man through the Spirit**
 - *Remember the outcome:* “So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”
 - Faith comes from hearing God’s word (Rom 10:17)
 - The word was revealed through the Spirit (see John 16:12ff; I Cor 2:9-13)
 - The context of Eph 3 focuses on the word (vs. 1-13)
- This is a prayer that Christians would grow by the word, filled with the knowledge/wisdom of the Spirit!

The Prayer of Ephesians 3

- **Ephesians 3:17-19 – Prayer that Christians live upon a solid foundation of love**
 - Isaiah 11:1-10 (a prophecy of Christ's church)
 - God desires for us to show the world His power and wisdom through the way we love!
 - And not just the world, but read Eph 3:10-11!
- I Corinthians 13:1-8a teaches about true love
- Christ's example shows us what true love does
- Read I John 4:7-12

The Prayer of Ephesians 3

- **Ephesians 3:20-21 – A final prayer of praise!**
 - “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”
- Remember these words when you become discouraged and doubtful!
- Nothing is beyond God’s power: we can’t even begin to comprehend the might of His hand!