

THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIAN
SAINTS

By Frank Jamerson

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Lesson 1

Introduction to the Epistle

A. The city of Ephesus:

1. The city was in the Roman province of Asia on the West end of what is now Turkey, about, three miles from the coast, near the mouth of the Cayster River.
2. “The greatest landmark of ancient Ephesus was the temple of Diana. In Roman mythology, Diana was the daughter of Jupiter, the king of the gods. She resembled Artemis, the daughter of Zeus, in Greek mythology. Diana and Apollo were twins. Diana was the moon goddess and she became the deity of womanly chastity, modesty, and childbirth. Artists picture her in hunting clothing carrying a bow and quiver of arrows. The image of Diana was a grotesque, squatted, black, many-breasted figure contained within the temple” (**Truth Commentary on Ephesians**, by Colly Caldwell, p. x).
3. The temple of Diana was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. “It was 425 feet in length and 220 feet wide. It was surrounded by 120 columns each standing sixty feet high. The temple was a center of immorality because the right of asylum was granted to any who entered.... It has been said that this so-called ‘house of worship’ served as the home of hundreds of ‘sacred’ prostitutes who were ironically identified as priestesses to Diana... (who was) purported to be a virgin who demanded virginity of her attendants” (Caldwell).

B. Establishment of the church in Ephesus:

1. Paul made a brief visit at the end of his second journey, Acts 18:19-22; c. 53 A.D.
 2. On the third journey, he stayed about three years, Acts 19:1-10; 20:31.
 3. He found about twelve disciples who had been baptized with John’s baptism, Acts 19:1-7.
 - a. John did not teach about the Holy Spirit, John 7:39; 16:7; Matthew 28:18-20.
 - b. “Upon their baptism, some Christians received the Spirit through the laying on of apostolic hands (Acts 8:13ff), and Paul was asking whether this had been the case with these men. In fact, when they were later baptized into the name of Christ, they did receive the
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Spirit through the laying on of Paul's hands, verses 5, 6" (**Truth Commentary on Acts**, by Johnny Stringer, p. 390).

4. God performed unusual miracles through Paul, Acts 19:11-20.
 - a. "Handkerchiefs" is "from *sudor* (sweat), and was used to refer to a cloth used to wipe sweat or to tie around the head as a sweatband. *Simikinthion* (aprons) was used to denote the protective apron that a workman would tie around his waist. These were items Paul would have used as he worked at his trade making tents" (Stringer, p. 395).
 - b. Seven itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to imitate Paul's miracles and failed.
 - c. Many magic-workers burned their books and the word of the Lord grew among them.
5. Demetrius (who made silver shrines to Diana) stirred up the people against Paul, and he left Ephesus, Acts 19:23-20:1.
6. The book of First Corinthians was probably written during his stay in Ephesus, 1 Corinthians 16:8, 19.

C. Date and occasion of writing:

1. Paul had been arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27), then taken to Caesarea (Acts 23:23), where he remained for two years, v. 27.
2. After making his appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:11), he was taken to Rome, Acts 26:32-28:31. He probably wrote this epistle during the latter part of his first imprisonment (c. 62-64 A.D.). (Three other epistles were written during this time: Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.)
3. In Colossians, Paul presents Christ as the fullness of the Godhead bodily, 2:9. In Ephesians, he presents the church as the fullness of Christ. He sets forth God's eternal plan to redeem all men in Christ and make them members of one body, the church, Ephesians 1:3; 2:16.
4. The theme is seen in the fact that the words *church* and *body* are each found nine times in the epistle.

NOTES OR QUESTIONS...

The Fullness of Christ

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Where was Ephesus located?
2. For what was Ephesus famous?
3. What kind of reception did Paul receive on his first visit to Ephesus?
4. On his second visit, who did he find?
5. What was the difference between John's baptism and baptism in the name of Christ?
6. What application can you make of this to those who believe they are saved before they are baptized?
7. What was unusual about miracles Paul performed there?

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8. What did some Jewish exorcists try to do?

9. Why did Paul have to leave Ephesus?

10. What book was probably written from Ephesus?

11. Why did Paul go to Rome?

12. What books were written during his first imprisonment?

13. What is the theme of the book of Ephesians?

14. What does it set forth about the relation between Jews and Gentiles?