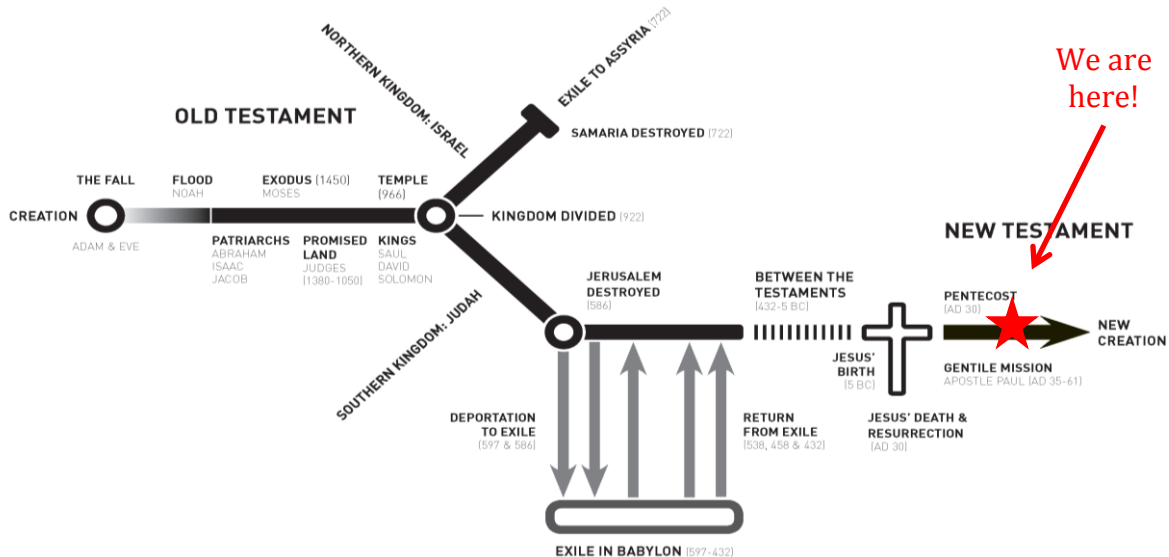


Ephesians

The Big story – where are we?

The book of Ephesians is a letter written during the early years of the establishment of the Church after Jesus resurrection.



Author

Ephesians 1:1 attributes the letter to Paul, an early leader and teacher in the church. Paul travelled to many different cities and towns to share the good news of Jesus and establish churches. He would often then write letters with further encouragement and instruction as well as revisit churches when he could.

Whilst some scholars have suggested alternative authors, Christian leaders and writers from the 1st and 2nd century such as Irenaeus, Origen, Polycarp and Clement believed the letter to be Pauline and the letter was quickly accepted into the Canon of Scripture.

Recipients

Although called the letter to the Ephesians, the phrase "in Ephesus" that appears in Ephesians 1:1 is actually missing from some early manuscripts. The letter is also missing personal greetings or local instructions that are more usually found in Paul's letters. This has led to a belief that the letter was not just intended for one specific church in the city of Ephesus but was to be passed around many congregations in the city and surrounding areas.

Time and place of writing

Paul makes references to being a prisoner whilst writing this letter (3:1, 4:1, 6:20). It is generally believed that the letter was written whilst Paul was imprisoned in Rome around 61-63AD (see Acts 28:16, 30-31)

Background

Ephesus and the region

At the time of the letter, Ephesus was the Roman capital of the region of Asia Minor (now Western Turkey). It was a thriving hub of trade, finance and culture.

It was also home to the temple of Artemis (Diana). The temple had been destroyed around 350BC but was rebuilt to a size and grandeur that marked it as one of the wonders of the known world. Although many different gods were worshipped by people at the time, worship of Artemis formed part of the cultural identity of Ephesus. Large religious festivals were held in the city honouring Artemis and the city had a reputation as a centre for various magical practices.

Paul and the region

Paul visited several places in Asia Minor during his missionary journeys, first making a short stop in Ephesus towards the end of his second missionary journey (Acts 18:18-21). He returned on his third missionary journey, this time staying for 3 years. (Acts 19) During this time He taught in the synagogue before teaching in the school of Tyrannus. Many people were converted and the gospel spread throughout the whole region (Acts 19:10). But there was opposition, firstly from some of the Jews (Acts 19:9) and then from some of the follows of Artemis (Acts 19: 21-41), which led to Paul leaving the city for Macedonia and Greece

Paul returned to the region on his way back to Jerusalem this time staying in Miletus. Here he met with the elders of the church at Ephesus reminding them of his work amongst them and their responsibilities as leaders (Acts 20:17-38)

PAUL'S THIRD MISSION ACTS 18:23 - 21:17 AD 53-57

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