

Ephesians

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Well, we are going to introduce a brand new study this morning. We are turning our attention to the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and you will find in it a wealth of information that is not found anywhere else in the Bible.

This is a book that sets forth a number of new truths that were simply unknown prior to the time the Apostle Paul was inspired of God to pen these words.

You are going to discover, as I have, some real breakthrough material in this letter to the Ephesians. There are a number of things that are easily read and passed over without very much thought given to them, often because we just don't really understand exactly what it is that's being said, but we know it is spiritual information and it's good for us, and someday maybe we'll understand that.

Well, that's not good enough, and we're not going to be willing to settle for that. So we want to invite you to participate in any and every way that you can as we move through this chapter, this first chapter of Ephesians, and we want this to be a kind of open discussion.

We want you to feel free to ask questions, inject comments that you may have, because that's contributing to the benefit of the whole study. Someone has suggested, and I think it's a pretty good suggestion, that a simple way of breaking down this letter that Paul wrote to the Ephesians is with just three words, and I think it was the Chinese believer, Watchman Nee, who came up originally with this brief outline for Ephesians, and it's simply this, sit, walk, stand.

[1 : 54] Those three words. The first two chapters of Ephesians deal with our exalted position in Christ. We are seated with Him in the heavenlies.

That is our official position insofar as God is concerned. Now, of course, practically speaking, we are seated right where we are physically right now in this restaurant, in these chairs and tables. But as far as God is concerned, we are seated already with Christ in the heavenlies. And then the walk part is devoted to the next two chapters, chapters 3 and 4, and that tells us how it is that we are to conduct our lives because of the exalted position that we enjoy.

And the thrust of it is for our actions and our attitude to measure up to our position. And that, of course, involves spiritual growth and maturity. And then the third part, the last two chapters of Ephesians, deals with the word stand.

And that has to do with being able to be fortified and strengthened to the place where we are able to stand or would stand against the onslaughts of the evil one and of this world, etc.

[3 : 13] So those three words basically can be used to reduce the outline of Ephesians to just sit, walk, stand. And chapters 2, chapters 3 and 4, and then chapters 5 and 6 deals with the whole book.

So we'll be moving on through it. And we begin now with the very first verse of chapter 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. And we need to note that an apostle.

An apostle is one who is sent by one in authority, and he has with him the authority of the sending one.

That's the main thing that distinguishes a disciple from an apostle. A disciple is simply a learner.

One who sits under the teaching of another and learns from that one.

Our Lord had thousands of disciples. But so far as Israel was concerned, they only had 12 apostles. And they are enumerated in Matthew chapter 10 and in other places as well.

[4 : 29] The unique thing about an apostle is, an apostle is a sent one who also has with him the authority of the one sending him.

And we see that dramatically played out in the apostles that Christ sent forth when we are told that he gave them, Jesus gave them authority over disease, over demons, etc.

And he enabled them to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom. And they were to go out and duplicate the ministry that Christ was performing. And there were six teams, two to each team.

And they were to go out throughout the whole land of Israel exclusively. Because remember, and here's where an important distinction is coming up. Remember to whom Christ sent the twelve originally.

He told them very pointedly. And it's amazing how many times, by how many people this is overlooked. Go not into the way of the Gentiles.

[5 : 35] Neither go to the Samaritans. Confine your ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That is very, very significant.

It sounds like a very narrow ministry. And it was. And the reason it was, is because it was to the house of Israel that God had made the promises through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that through them all nations of the earth would be blessed.

And he had put the nation of Israel in a very strategic place to be a light to all the other nations. And this kingdom of heaven come to earth is exactly what Christ is going to be preaching.

It's what John the Baptist preached. It's what the twelve are going to preach. It has to do with repent. Why? Because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The king is on the scene.

And because the king is on the scene in the person of Jesus Christ, the kingdom of heaven is right around the corner. Because he is the one who is going to bring that kingdom.

[6 : 42] But we noted that the Jews rejected the king. The nation of Israel rejected the king. Even though there were thousands of believers who accepted him as the Messiah, there were thousands more who did not.

And because they did not, that whole kingdom promise that was to be realized through Christ establishing it was put on hold. The kingdom is held in abeyance.

And it will not come into line until the nation Israel is ready to receive that. And that will happen during the tribulation period or near the end of it. So that is the kingdom program very briefly.

And we've seen that it is set aside. And we've looked at Romans 11 before, how that blindness in part has happened unto Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

This is very, very important, guys. This is all having to do with the nation of Israel and the gospel of the kingdom that was preached to them. Now we've got an entirely different situation.

[7 : 54] Now we have to shift gears because something new is being added that was never even imagined before. And it is called the mystery.

The mystery has to do with the plan and program of God being directed no longer to the nation of Israel specifically, but now to everybody.

Everybody! Which was an unthinkable concept for the Jew. Now this man, Saul of Tarsus, is raised up. And in chapter 9, where his conversion is recorded, it is made clear that God is raising up Saul of Tarsus to be a special apostle, different entirely from the previous twelve.

And this man is not only to minister to the Jew, which he will do, but also to the Gentiles and to kings and princes and royalty.

In other words, the Apostle Paul's ministry, in contradistinction to the twelve, is supposed to be to the whole world.

[9 : 12] Everybody! He's got a universal message to everybody. And it isn't predicated upon the law of Moses, which the gospel of the kingdom was.

It is predicated solely upon the grace of God and the dispensation of the grace of God. That term, we'll see it surface in Ephesians more than once.

It's a very good word. And the dispensation of the grace of God simply means the dispensing, the doling out, the handing out, the issuing forth of the grace of God.

And when Paul comes on the scene, he begins preaching a message that is one of pure grace where salvation is obtained by faith in Jesus Christ plus nothing.

It is all of grace. This was a bombshell. Man had always been saved by grace from the time you go back to Noah who found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

[10 : 19] But the dispensation of grace means that the whole world, because the whole world has been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, now this grace of God is available everywhere, to everyone.

And Paul is commissioned as the first one because this stuff was never preached before. He is commissioned as the trailblazer to dispense the grace of God everywhere.

And I want you to think in terms of this because this was very helpful to me. And I'm satisfied that it is absolutely accurate. Everybody knows how intricately connected Moses was to the law.

And I'm not talking about just the Ten Commandments. I'm talking about beginning in Exodus 20 where the law was given. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, all of that is associated with the man Moses.

So much so that there are times in the New Testament when our Lord even used the name of the man Moses when referring to the law.

[11 : 45] That's how intricately connected Moses was with the law. He alone was the one to whom God revealed his law and Moses passed it on to others.

No dispute about that. What I want you to keep in mind because this is really critical is that what Moses was to the nation of Israel and the law the apostle Paul was to the church which is the body of Christ and the grace of God.

In other words, Paul is an update of Moses and grace is an update of the law.

For the law came by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John's Gospel chapter 1. If we can keep that fixed in mind it will enable you to appreciate the ministry of the apostle Paul a lot more.

He is introducing a completely new concept and it is going to hit like a bombshell and understandably there is going to be a lot of rejection of Paul's message.

[13 : 02] Well, there still is. and for a very basic simple reason main reason that there was so much rejection and that Paul's message was met with so much opposition is because the Jew was so firmly steeped in the law of Moses and the main accusation that they leveled against Paul was he teaches against the law.

Well, he never did really teach against the law but he did teach that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the law to everyone who believes and that was something that the Jew of Paul's day had great difficulty entertaining and one reason is this and stop and think about this the Jew considered the law of Moses permanent eternal it will always be in force could not entertain the thought that the time might come when the law would be set aside and something else would take the place of it and the reason that they thought that way was because who gave the law God gave the law what do you know about God well God is eternal God is omnipotent omniscient and omnipresent and God is unchangeable it is unthinkable that the law that God gave could ever be supplanted by anything else it's permanent it's fixed it's eternal no it isn't and it was never intended to be matter of fact we won't turn to it but if you will consider Jeremiah 31 there the prophet Jeremiah makes it very very clear that God is going to replace the law of Moses with a new law and in Jeremiah 31 he says for the days are coming saith the Lord now remember Jeremiah wrote maybe 500 years before Christ ever came on the scene and Jeremiah wrote that the day is coming when I the Lord will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah and he mentions both of those because when Jeremiah wrote that Israel was a divided kingdom between the northern tribes and the southern tribes they were split and Jeremiah is saying that I'm going to make a new covenant with the house of Judah and the house of Israel which is another way of saying with the whole nation of Israel everybody who is a Jew and then he goes on and says not like the covenant I made with them before which they broke and he's talking about the law of Moses he's talking about the first covenant and the new covenant is going to be ushered in through the finished work of Jesus Christ and this is what he meant when the Savior on the night he was betrayed took that bread and broke it and took the cup and he made this very significant statement and

I'm sure it wasn't appreciated or understood by the apostles who were there at that last supper but Jesus said this cup is the new covenant in my blood and as often as you eat of this bread and drink this cup you do show forth the Lord's death until he comes I'm satisfied that none of those apostles and there were 11 there Judas I think had already gone out into the night none of those 11 really understood exactly what that meant we know that the old covenant the first covenant was ratified he took the tablets of the law and he took a branch of hyssop and he dipped the hyssop in animal blood and he sprinkled the people and he sprinkled the tablets of the law and that signified the ratifying of the covenant it was a covenant that was kind of like signed in blood if you will but it was animal blood and

[17 : 43] Hebrews tells us that Jesus Christ not by the blood of animals but by his own blood he entered into the holy place once having obtained eternal redemption for us so that animal blood

was simply a figure or a type of that which was to come and it was the blood of the Son of God that would be essential not for covering sin not for atoning for sin but for taking away sin big difference under the old covenant the mosaic system priest had to go in once a year without couldn't go without blood and he had to offer sacrifice and blood for his own sins and for the sins of the nation had to do that every year over and over and over again but when Christ made that supreme sacrifice it was once for all and all the animal testament could do was cover over the sins just cover it over sweep it under the rug if you will cover it over next year he'd have to go back cover it over again but when

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming down that road he cried out behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world huge difference animal blood over and over and over and over again the blood of Christ once and for all he has obtained eternal redemption for us tremendous difference and it is Paul the apostle who begins picking up on this on the basis of the revelations that God gives to him about content that is completely new and think of this for a moment who is going to reveal the concept of the rapture of the church 1st Corinthians 15 and 1st Thessalonians chapter 4 where do you find that in the Old Testament well it isn't in the Old Testament it isn't even hinted at in the Old Testament and this doesn't mean the Old Testament is deficient it simply means the Old Testament was intended to convey certain truths and certain other truths were deliberately omitted but now things not revealed before from Paul or from I'm sorry from Moses or from any of the other prophets is going to be made available and known through the apostle Paul and it is altogether new stuff and people are going to be saying things like where does this come from where does he get that and you'll search in vain in the Old Testament to find it because it isn't there and it isn't there because it isn't supposed to be there it is what it is what the apostle

Paul will be calling mystery a mystery is something that could never be known understood or figured out unless it is directly revealed and then you can say oh wow I get it you know but you had never thought of it in a thousand years and Paul will tell us in Ephesians 3 that these truths have been hidden hidden in God from time past and never before revealed unto men so here is a big big item what I was getting at from what I mentioned about ten minutes ago is why they have such difficulty accepting what Paul is going to be saying is because they were so steeped in the law of Moses they could not entertain the possibility of it ever being supplanted by something else and here's the problem in order to embrace the teachings the new revelation given by Paul you have to be willing to unlearn the old and most of the Jews were not willing to do that fellas it's a lot harder to unlearn something than it is to learn something new unlearning something old because it has been replaced by something new is tough because we develop attachments to it we may even develop an emotional attachment to it and that makes relinquishing it so very difficult and we're going to see how that plays out here in Ephesians and in other Paul's writings because when he arrives on the scene teaching this new material it is going to be explosive and someone said everywhere Paul went he either had a riot or a revival and sometimes he had both and the reason is because this new content was not going over well they were not accepting of it and the reason they weren't is because they were so steeped in what it

[23 : 09] I'm sure that the phrase that was probably heard time and believed but this is what we've always been taught man that is so hard to let go of listen I speak from personal experience because I've been there done that I know how tough it is to unlearn some things in order to make room for something you know what the Bible calls that the Bible calls that Romans 12 renewing your mind renewing your mind how do you renew your mind you receive content you weigh it and evaluate it and you see if you can establish the truthfulness of it and if you can how does that comport with what you believed before and if it is different and yet you are convinced that it is true and by the way you shouldn't buy anything that's new you shouldn't buy anything that's new unless you are absolutely convinced of the truthfulness of it that in and of itself provides the rationale for believing something is it true now if you can't establish whether it's true or not then you keep searching and keep studying and you keep praying about it but once once you become convinced that it is true you have to go with it you have to go where the truth leads you otherwise your spirit shuts down and God does not reveal more truth until we are obedient to the truth we have that's a very important principle so what we're going to be learning here in Ephesians is going to challenge each and every one of us because I have personally gone through the pain of having to change my mind about a number of things but I've been convinced of this Marv if you see something that is true and you turn

your back on it because of tradition because of prejudice because of pressure because of whatever if you're convinced that it's true and you don't go with it God help your miserable soul most dangerous thing you can do is turn your back on what you understand to be true and sometimes it's very difficult to do so the apostle Paul had to face this constantly Pat I can only speak for me but being a former Catholic I had to unlearn a lot of things case in point yeah exactly

I can appreciate that and you know somebody else who had to unlearn a ton of things Paul the apostle I mean this man this man was traumatized when he was sitting in the house of this man who had given him hospitality when he was led into Damascus blind led by the hand by others and he was seated there in the house of this man and I can see in my mind's eye I can see the apostle Paul sitting there at a table with his head in his hands and his elbows on the table shaking his head and contemplating what he had seen and heard on that road to Damascus the risen Christ that blinding flashing light that blinded him and the identification

I am Jesus why are you persecuting me and he just was beside himself he was traumatized he was shocked he couldn't believe that you mean all of these people that I persecuted and rounded up and put in jail and ostracized and punished and the stoning of Stephen you mean to tell me all those people were right and I was wrong I can't believe it how can this be how could I have been so wrong I can't believe no wonder the guy didn't eat or drink for three days and three nights he was in absolute emotional spiritual psychological shock going going going over and over this and asking himself was that real or was I dreaming was this was I hallucinating did I really no no and the man is he's beside himself and now he is being called to take this same message that he had persecuted that he is now going to preach the faith he once sought to destroy are you kidding me what a 180 this is so dramatic it is just going to be a bitter pill for a lot of people to swallow and this is exactly what we are facing in

Ephesians when Paul comes across with these truths that had never been offered before and people are going to say things like well we've never believed that well that's never been part of our doctrine and fellas what you need to keep in mind this is so important is what the apostle Paul is going to be sharing is not a contradiction to what Moses and the prophets shared before it is not a contradiction it is an update everybody is familiar with updates it's when the old is set aside in favor of the new there is a later revelation and that's the burden of this whole thing and not only that but keep this in mind as you move through the old testament you've got a revelation God revealing to mankind on certain levels certain places and times lots of miracles because the Jews require a sign lots of miracles you come into the gospels you get the same thing and when

[29 : 28] Christ leaves the charge he gives to his apostles is that all power is given unto me you are therefore to go into all the world preaching the gospel to every creature teaching them to observe everything that I commanded you and lo I am with you always and so on that is the final word that Christ gave while he was on earth to the apostles the twelve apostles and they were to take that message and they did and this is what the book of Acts is all about and it is by most believers it is by most believers assumed to be the last words the last parting words the marching orders that Christ gave to the twelve while he was on earth and that's true but it was not the last words that Christ gave to his apostle after his ascension there is where the update comes in and the apostle

Paul will call these the abundance of revelations that were given unto me by the risen Christ and that's what constitutes the update and it's going to have to do with the content that we've got here in Ephesians and in others too Don everything you've said so far has been the Jews opposed to Paul how much flack would you have if you had gotten as the Jews were not in place how much flack would come from the Gentiles not much at all not much at all the apostle makes it clear what he says to the Jewish audience on a couple of different occasions that he had preached the gospel unto these Jews and principally the gospel to the Jews had to do with the fact that Jesus Christ is the Messiah he's he's the one whom you crucified this is Peter's message in Acts 2 and 3 he is the one whom you crucify and

God has presented Jesus as your Messiah as your Savior but and then and he says but seeing as how you regard yourselves unworthy of eternal life talking to the Jews now he says lo lo I turn to the Gentiles and they will hear it and the Gentiles were glad for this message because they never had an apostle and they never had a message like this and now Paul is giving this gospel of the grace of God which is God sent his own son to be the savior of the world and you can come to God through the way that Jesus Christ has provided for you if you put your faith and trust in him and you don't

have to be a Jew and you don't have to be circumcised none of those add on it is by grace through faith plus nothing and the Gentiles believed many of them did and this was the origin of what is going to be known as the body of

Christ the spiritual body of Christ as opposed to the nation of Israel so what I'm saying is this the church is not a continuation of Israel as many suppose and even take the position that the church has replaced Israel the church is not a continuation of Israel the church which is the body of Christ is the injection of an entirely new thing never before thought of or imagined or anticipated and never before prophesied you find all kinds of prophecies in the Old Testament but you will not find one that prophesies a thing is coming called the church and it will be the body of Christ and it will be made up of Jew and Gentile because God is going to take the two and make the two into one new man and will be

Jew and Gentile in that one body where there is no supremacy and no deficiency and no inferiority there will be complete equality in that body of Christ and there is neither Jew nor Gentile bond nor free male nor female you are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus Pat when Paul went to Ephesus and all those places to preach what gods was he preaching against what did they believe at the time well most of them were steeped in paganism and idolatry the vast majority in fact the main thing the main thing that separated the Jew from the Gentile is that the Jew was monotheistic believed there was one God the Gentiles they had scads of gods there were the Roman gods and there were the Greek gods and you'll recall when the apostle Paul went into the town of Athens and preached on Mars Hill and he addressed the philosophers there and these were guys who were intelligent in fact we would call these the intellectual elites and

[34 : 55] Paul began his message by saying I perceive that you guys are really religious you you're really into religion because as I came into town as I came into Athens every street corner I passed had a statue of a god on it and I even came to one that said to the unknown god and the one to the unknown god was your way of saying oh my gosh we're honoring and paying obedience and offering sacrifice to all these gods oh what if we left one out he'd really be ticked so and we give him a title to the unknown god whoever you are out there we just want you to know we didn't forget you we just don't know your name so we'll call you the unknown god no offense please you know and Paul took that whole concept to task and he is going to reveal something that is of major proportions to the world at that time and this is which is his body it is the spiritual body of

Christ every believer whether Jew or Gentile who has come to faith in Jesus Christ is a member of that body and that is the body of which Christ is the spiritual head Joe Jesus even when he was on earth he talked about his second coming with angels true in revelations it's talked about Jesus second coming with the saints but he couldn't reveal that mystery back there in John because it hadn't happened yet that's right absolutely absolutely other thoughts or comments anybody Dan would you say the entire New Testament is an update well in a sense the entire New Testament is an update but think of it this way in the Old Testament we've got essentially prophecy we've got a lot of history and some poetry but we've got a lot of prophecy and that of course comes from the prophets but there's even prophecy in Genesis for that matter so we've got revelation in the Old Testament that is updated dramatically updated by the four gospels because the prophecy in the Old Testament talks a lot about the one who is to come but when you read the four gospels he has come he's here so that is really an update to the Old Testament then as you move on to Paul's epistles they constitute an update to the gospels so there's further revelation and this is a big thing to keep in mind we've got a progression of revelation as you move through the Bible and not only that fellas but while the apostle Paul and his content has given us the latest update and the latest information or the present marching orders for the church he he is going to be superseded by a yet later revelation after the church the body of

Christ is gone raptured what comes online then is a return of the nation of Israel and God's dealing with him so we've got in the general epistles Peter first second and third John Hebrews and the book of the revelation those all constitute an update from Paul so they will be the last word after the church is gone so each one of these segments represents the providing of new information that was not available before and if we don't keep that in mind we'll have an impossible situation trying to make things in the Bible fit because they won't fit because what belongs to one dispensation does not fit in another dispensation and it isn't that God changes because we know God never changes but we do know that man's circumstances change and the earth changes and the scene changes and there are a number of changes that are brought about through man and the volition that God

addresses each of those in a different way anything else yes

Larry well I don't know that that's what he's talking about right there but that's the principle absolutely that is the principle if you try to put new truth you see a wine skin fellas a wine skin was an animal hide it was an animal hide and it was used you tie off the neck and use that as a spout and you tie off the four legs so that nothing would leak out and you'd pour the liquid in that animal skin and over a period of time that animal skin would dry it dry out and as long as you had the liquid in it from the beginning it would be okay but if you take an old wine skin that has dried out and you pour new wine into that old wine skin it's not going to hold it and the reason it won't is because the new wine will ferment and expand but the wine skin won't have any more give to it it's already reached its full giving potential and it starts to crack it won't hold it so when you try to put new truth into old truth you've got a problem it won't fit and it's not supposed to fit this is why it is so important to understand that the

[41 : 00] Bible is a book of progressive revelation it is doctrine on the move and for people who say things like this and I've encountered this a lot they say well I just I'm I'm not into this dispensational stuff I just believe the whole Bible I'm not into dispensations and I say oh well you're still offering animal sacrifices huh oh well no I'm not doing that well why not that's in the Bible you see the system begins to break down with a simple illustration like that why aren't we offering animal sacrifices well because the one final ultimate sacrifice has been made and that does away with the need for animal sacrifices all of which pointed toward that one sacrifice that would be made and it's been made so we don't offer animal sacrifices anymore I've often said that anyone who doesn't offer animal sacrifices anymore is a dispensationalist whether they want to be or not you make a distinction so anything else before we close well we did get to the first word in our first verse and that was

Paul and we'll try to finish verse one next week but I really appreciate your patience and bearing with me this is really important stuff guys and I trust that you are going to find this as refreshing and as what shall I say unlocking unlocking a lot of things that are locked up as we move on through Ephesians it's been that way for me I trust it will be for YouTube and we