

Preface

I believe that the Ephesian church was the single most influential church in the first century. What Paul has to say to the Ephesians is perhaps some of the most profound insights into the rights, the reign, and the responsibility of the church ever presented. Peter the apostle says of Paul's writings-

¹⁵And remember, the Lord is waiting so that people have time to be saved. This is just as our beloved brother Paul wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him ¹⁶speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters around to mean something quite different from what he meant, just as they do the other parts of Scripture and the result is disaster for them.

2Peter 3:15

Indeed much of Ephesians is hard to understand to the uninitiated. Paul describes what he is writing about as a *mystery*. Since he is writing about it to explain the mystery, it is obviously not the kind of mystery that *cannot* be understood. In fact, if we can grasp what Paul is saying in this epistle under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we will be deeply blessed in our walk with the Lord and our understanding of who has made us and called us to be. You see in this epistle it is revealed that the Church is the most potent force on the face of the earth. What the Romans couldn't crucify, the Barbarians couldn't massacre, the Stalinists couldn't outlaw, and the Taliban can't silence, is the Church.

This commentary on Ephesians was a part of my Doctoral Programme with Cambridge Graduate School. It forms supplementary research to my major doctoral research into the

history and ministry of the apostle which has taken me over six years to research and write. This commentary is a creative commentary, which means that it is entirely original. There are no footnotes within this commentary and very little reference to other scholars. There are no lengthy explanations of Greek words, except where I am perhaps justifying a needed correction in the translation that it is based on.

While there are many good English translations available today, I personally regard the *New Living Translation* as one of the best. My major research project for my undergraduate studies, prior to commencing my Doctoral degree, was *An Examination of the History and Translation of the English Bible*. This is now available in the small book format under the title *Which Translation?* In this book I discuss the history of the Bible itself and how it came about, then how we received it into English. I also spend some time showing how the actual process of Bible translation occurs. The book concludes with an overview of nearly every major English translation of the Bible that I am aware of. Based on this research I am very confident that the *New Living Translation* of the Bible is an extremely trustworthy English version of the Bible. That is why this commentary is based solely upon the NLT (*New Living Translation*).

But since it is a relatively new translation, there is actually little extra study material associated with it. I thought some time back that I would like to write a commentary on the entire New Testament. I have already written *A New Testament Survey* which overviews every New Testament book and provides a Bible study guide for each book. But this commentary is more than a study guide. It is an examination of each verse within Ephesians attempting to draw out the original meaning and how it affects us today.

It is written in a format that is designed to be understandable to the average Christian who loves their Bible but doesn't always fully understand it. But most of all it is written with a desperation in my own heart to truly help you, the Church, to understand that you are everything the Holy Spirit says you are in the epistle to the Ephesians.



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