

13.1a Discussion: Ephesians

1) How can we come up with a purpose statement (or a theme statement) of a book if we have no historical specifics regarding the occasion of writing?

a) We can focus the purpose of Paul in general in His writing to the churches

For example, Jesus commissioned His apostles to bear witness to His resurrection and teach His commandments. In Ephesians itself, Paul speaks of his foundation-laying role such that when they read they can perceive (**When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ 2.4**). He is a minister of the gospel (3.7) and his work in explaining the gospel is for building up the body of Christ in unity in the knowledge of Christ (**And he gave the apostles... for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 4.11-13**).

b) We can focus on the major units of thought within the book in relation to the broad apostolic purpose. Then we can formulate a purpose statement for the book. The large units of the book are:

The plan of redemption: union with Christ, election, and predestination (1.3-5, 11)

Prayer for enlightenment (1.15-3.21)

Exhortations (4.1-6.20)

2) What then is the purpose of the book?

The purpose is to teach Christians the gospel of the kingdom and how live for Christ by that gospel.

The purpose it to ground the Lord's people in good understanding of God's plan of redemption and the mystery of Christ so that they may walk worthy of God's call, putting off sin and putting on righteousness to be fully armed for spiritual warfare.

3) What is important *for us* about the fact that the book is a non-occasional writing?

The historical detachment gives the book a special relevance to all the Lord's people throughout the centuries beyond the apostolic foundation-laying time.