



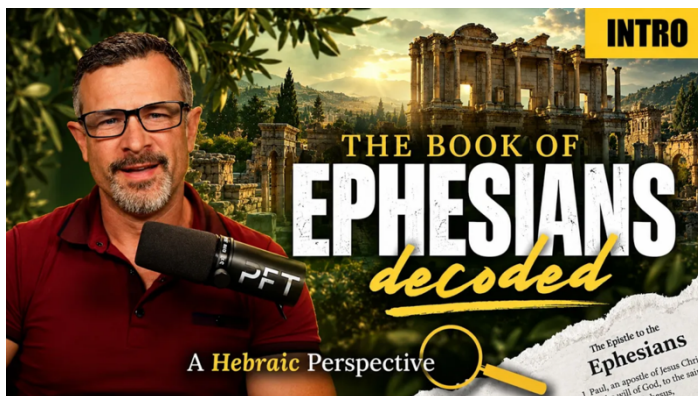
PASSIONFORTRUTH

WHERE NEW LIFE BEGINS

Decoding Ephesians: A Hebraic Perspective – Introduction

by Jim Staley

<https://youtu.be/sxUE8TzOB4Y>



The book of Ephesians wasn't written to the Ephesians? Absolutely. We're going to talk about that, and we're going to unpack all kinds of controversial things inside of this book, verse by verse. But we're going to start in this introduction and find out there is a mystery that is absolutely going to be revealed in this book. You don't want to miss it. Tune in, verse by verse, right now.

Hello, everyone. I'm Jim Staley, Passion for Truth Ministries. Welcome to this week's broadcast, where we are beginning a brand new book of the Bible. We've done Romans, Acts, we've done Hebrews, and even Colossians, and now it's time to work our way through Ephesians, verse by verse, from the original language, the original cultural expression of the Jewish people, from which the authors come. They're all Jewish. So if we don't know anything about first-century Judaism, the idiomatic expressions, the debates that are happening, what the debates are about, and what did they believe on both sides of the fence—we're going to be left filling in those gaps with a 21st-century Greco-Roman mindset, and that can lead us down a road that will lead us far from the truth, or at least a skewed version of the truth. And why is that so important? Because we do what we believe. So however we interpret these Scriptures is likely how we're going to interpret our life, and we're going to just flat out do what we believe. So at the end of the day, this channel is all about discovering the truth—have any passion for it—because at the end of the day, the truth should be exciting. The Word of God should absolutely light us up from the inside. That's what causes us to be an image bearer. The more that we know the truth, the more the truth sets us free. It's just what it does, ladies and gentlemen. So if there's anything in your life that's out of alignment, it's likely connected to a belief system. And that's what we're after here. Go past Protestantism, go way past Catholicism, even go past the

church fathers of the 3rd and 4th centuries, and end up right back in the 1st century and dive through all of that. That's what we do here.

So if that's something that you're interested in, and that sounds like something that you would love to be a part of, subscribe right now, hit like, and we'll do our best to serve you. You don't want to miss out on every piece of content that we put out here at Passion for Truth. For almost two and a half decades, we've dedicated ourselves to serving you. And it's our honor. It's our privilege. And our team is grateful that you guys partner with us to do that.

Let's begin. In this video, we're going to be introducing you to the book of Ephesians before we actually get into it, because there's so much background that we need to cover before we actually get into all of this book. In every book that Paul writes, I like to go over a very quick overview of who Paul is, what his background is, and what makes him so qualified. It's interesting to think that God would choose Paul. Now, most people think that he chose Saul and then he was converted on his road to Damascus, but the truth is Paul never converted to anything. He was a Jew through and through, never would have considered himself anything different, even when they were called Christianos, or today we would say in English, Christians. That was just simply a nickname. It was not a different religion. It was not even really anything other than a sect of Judaism of the first century called the Way. All of these authors were Jewish through and through, and when Paul had his experience on his way to Damascus, when he was blinded by the light, he simply accepted Yeshua as Messiah. He never got rid of his Jewishness, never got rid of his heritage, never for a second did he think that God's law was done away with or changed. As a matter of fact, in Romans 3:31, he was challenged on that. He said, "Look, no, man, just because Jesus came doesn't mean anything other than we are now saved; we uphold the law of God even more now." It's the very thing that he wants to do.

And Paul is simply his Roman name. Paulos was his Roman name. He was born with Shaul, Saul, his Hebrew name. And most people of the first century of Jewish culture had two names. They would go by their Hebrew name when they were around their Jewish friends. They would go by their Roman name, Greek name, when they were around the Roman society. So that's pretty much how it worked. Paul was a rabbi of rabbis. He was sitting under the head rabbi of all of Jerusalem, the top of the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel, and Paul said he was more zealous than all of his peers. He was the top of his Ivy League school class. He was on his way to making himself out to be somebody for sure when God got a hold of him. And what's fascinating about that is, in order to even just sit under Gamaliel, you had to have, in many cases, the entire Torah, the first five books of the Bible, memorized word for word. Imagine if you had to have all the Gospels memorized word for word just to be a pastor, right? It would really cut down probably on a lot of pastors. But it would increase our understanding. And this is why God chose him. He knew the prophets. He knew the Psalms, what's called the sayings. And he knew the prophets like the back of his hand. What better person to go into the synagogues and persuasively argue and debate with the Jewish leadership of that day, showing them that Yeshua, Jesus, was the Messiah from their own Scriptures, from the Tanakh, the Old Testament, what I like to call the front of the book. And then from there, setting up the leader so that when he went to the Gentiles, they would have places to go, and he would be able to train his Jewish leadership to guide the Gentiles.

This is one of the churches that Paul is ministering to. We just finished the book of Colossae, which he didn't start, and he didn't start the church in Rome either. We're going to talk about the book of Ephesians here in just a moment, but these are churches and congregations that he is shepherding and guiding through this process. Ephesians is really kind of a big-picture book. It's like a big-picture letter, I should say. Where Romans kind of explains what salvation is all about, Galatians defends salvation from adding anything to it, like circumcision or the works of the law. And by the way, Galatians is not about Christian living; it's all about what it means to be saved, what is justification, and what does it mean for a Gentile to be saved. That's the whole debate in Acts chapter 15 as well. They really struggled with whether or not Gentiles could even be saved. It was never even in their consciousness that it was possible, until Jesus opened the door, of course, and the Messiah. Through the prophets, Paul had to show them that this was prophesied, that the Gentiles can come into Israel and be part of that commonwealth. Colossians explains who the Messiah is and the pre-eminence that the Messiah has. Ephesians here is going to explain God's eternal plan through the Messiah. It's going to unpack it. This book is much more than about individual salvation. It's really about God restoring His kingdom and reconciling all of His people back to the Messiah and bringing everything under Yeshua's authority. We're going to see that major theme roll out starting about halfway through Ephesians 1. God is gathering all things together underneath the Messiah. That's really going to be the major theme that we're going to be walking through.

So, what's the setting? Well, Paul is writing this from prison around 60 to 62 AD, the same time as the book of Colossians. The interesting thing is that in most of the earlier manuscripts, the word Ephesus is not even found. And there are some scholars, and rightfully so, who have an understanding that this was actually not written to the Ephesians, but it was written as a generic letter that would be passed around through all of the churches—both Ephesus, Colossae, Thessalonica, Corinth, all of the churches that Paul was ministering to—and that's probably actually most likely the case, in my opinion, based on evidence. But needless to say, Ephesus is one of the largest cities in the entire Roman Empire, totally famous for the Temple of Artemis, filled with idolatry, magic, occult practices, temple prostitution. Acts 19 even records that many believers publicly burned their books of magic once they came to faith. That's how spiritual and dark this place was. Everybody was involved with it. This probably explains why Ephesians emphasizes a lot of spiritual warfare language and the Messiah's authority over every single spiritual power. So you have to understand, it's not like today where you have atheism and you've got, you know, mainly Christianity and all these different denominations and a few other sects that are outside of Christianity. This is all spiritual. Virtually everyone is serving some god, and the idea of spirituality or gods and goddesses was just prevalent during this time period. This is why they would listen to Paul when he came in, because everyone is already looking to better their lives by appeasing some sort of god. Paul walks in and kind of ruins their whole mindset by saying there's only one God.

One of the things that you're going to see inside the book of Ephesians is this concept of a mystery. There are quite a few mysteries that Paul is talking about. I think it's kind of apropos to talk about what a mystery actually is. What is a mystery? A mystery is something that is unknown. It's stated that something's going to happen, but it's completely unknown how it's going to happen. For instance, God is going to divorce, and divorced, the northern kingdom of Israel, as I've mentioned multiple times, but at the same time says that He's going to remarry her, and that is

impossible according to His own law. Once He divorces a wife and she pollutes herself, she can never come back. She's always going to be an adulteress. And that's called a mystery. How is God going to get around His own law? And the New Testament unpacks what that mystery looks like. And of course, the teaching that I have called Identity Crisis, which I highly recommend that you watch here—the new versions especially that are coming out will absolutely explain all of that and make the whole Bible come alive. But these are the types of mysteries that Paul is going to be explaining.

Now, I've been asked on more than one occasion, why does God operate inside of mystery? And I think actually the best explanation I can give is that Satan is not all-knowing. The enemy is not all-knowing. Very, very smart and brilliant, but he's not all-knowing. I truly believe that God didn't write everything out and make it super clear, and it's not just for us to keep us in the dark. I think it's to keep the enemy in the dark. Because if He would have laid it all out in the prophets that when the Messiah comes, He's going to die, He's going to rise from the dead, I don't think Satan would have killed Him at all, because I think Satan wanted to play the long game. He's always playing the long game. He wants to win in the end, but he knew that something was going on, but he didn't know exactly how it was going to happen either. It was a mystery, and by the time he figured it out, it was already too late. Yeshua wins. God won everything. And so, I think at the end of the day, this is why it says to study to show yourselves approved. It accomplishes a couple of things. One, it keeps the enemy truly in the dark where he belongs and guessing and not exactly sure what God's about to do. And two, it allows God to know who really is seeking after Him with all of their heart. Because to read something and make it clear is one thing, but to read it and not be clear and to keep pursuing it by faith—it shows a level of maturity and a depth of love that someone has for their Creator to be able to do that. I think that's exactly what's going on.

In the book of Ephesians, we're going to walk through some of this incredible mystery of the divorce of the Northern Kingdom and the remarriage and how that happens. How did God get around His own law, or did He get around His own law? We're going to be talking a little bit about that. It's definitely going to be exciting as we walk through there in the first few chapters alone. Here's the short of it: God did not replace Israel. He fulfilled His promises to restore Israel while bringing believing Gentiles into the same promises through Israel's Messiah. We're going to walk through all of this verse by verse, but we're going to spend a little bit of time on this "one new man" and the mystery, because Ephesians is packed full of Old Testament quotes from the front of the book, as I like to call it, that is going to really tell us what this mystery is all about. By the way, as we do talk about the one new man, over 40 different books in Christianity have been written about this concept, and what is it? Well, we're going to solve it, and we're going to let the Bible define what the one new man actually is. No hyperbole, no guessing. It's just going to be right in front of us, and I'll tell you right now, he's drawing from Ezekiel chapter 37. So, if you're familiar with that chapter, that is going to be really the pretext to the context of Ephesians chapter 2. Israel was divided into two houses, Judah and the house of Israel. God promised to reunite the two sticks into one, and that's where we're going to go. So, we'll leave that alone until we get there, but that's something we're definitely going to be talking quite a bit about.

There's also this concept of the dividing wall that Ephesians 2 is talking about. What is this dividing wall? Well, we'll be totally unpacking what that is all about. The dividing wall is not the standard of God's Word. The dividing wall was a religious man-made doctrine and a real wall that

was in the temple. So, I don't want to go any further than that because I don't want to give it away, but we're definitely going to be walking through those Scriptures very carefully and exegeting the Scriptures—meaning we're going to pull from the Scriptures what the Scriptures intended, using the Scriptures rather than exegetically reading into the Scriptures something that we already believe.

All right, another topic that we're going to be talking about is grace, along with this new walk, okay, that people were not used to. They're totally used to paganism, and they're totally used to, on the Jewish side, walking in the Jewish law, which included all of the what was called the Oral Law, which was the traditions and doctrines of the elders. Some of the traditions were fantastic. Some of them absolutely were choking the word of God out. Most of them were causing like bricks to be on—a yoke to be on—the neck of the disciples. And they were recreating a new definition of salvation. And this works-based salvation had to go. And Paul, James, they all talk about that. Not that the works had to go, but that the salvation had to be in the right order. You could not put the cart before the horse. The horses had to be faith, grace and faith. Those are the two horses pulling the cart. And if you put them out of order, it just is not going to work. The one that's doing the heavy lifting is the two horses of faith and grace that we're going to be calling. Okay. And we'll talk more about that.

We're also going to be really diving into the body of Messiah. It's one of the major themes of Ephesians—is unity. It's the ecclesia in Greek, or the congregation, the kahal in Hebrew as it's called. And today we say church, but I will tell you as a Bible teacher, especially with a first-century expertise bent, I do not like the word church in English. It brings a connotation that is separate from the biblical language. There is no word of church in the Bible. And so, the moment that we say the word church, we instantly start thinking Christian church, and there was no Christian church in the New Testament. It was an ecclesia, it was an assembly. 99% of these were home churches. Almost all of them were going to synagogue early in the afternoon on Saturday, and then Saturday night they were coming to someone's home, the Messianic believers were coming to a home. They were redoing church themselves, talking about the Torah portion that was given in the synagogue that afternoon by the rabbi, and then they were giving it a Yeshua bent. They were talking about it in the light of Christ. This is the idea where Paul was going around and that one night he was preaching until midnight and Eutychus fell out of the window. That was on the first day of the week. And the first day of the week starts Saturday night. And so that gives you an explanation, a little bit more context and culture of how the early believers were operating. Again, Saturday morning or afternoon, all day they were there at synagogue, and then they would come to someone's home Saturday night. That's when the first day of the week began. Midnight on the first day of the week can only be Saturday night. That's how we know they were meeting Saturday evening, which makes sense. Saturday was the day of rest. It was the Sabbath. It was the Shabbat. It was commanded and all of the early believers kept the Sabbath. It's only us today that don't do that, based on the Roman church changing it to Sunday. And so at the end of the day, we're trying to learn and replicate what the early believers did, because the power was definitely there.

All right, number nine on our top ten list of things that we're going to be talking about is spiritual warfare. This begins in chapter one, not chapter six, like a lot of people think. Paul repeatedly says the Messiah is seated above every ruler, authority, power, and dominion. That means spiritual

warfare starts right away in the book of Ephesians. If the Messiah is seated in the heavenly realms immediately, that's telling us there is such a thing as a heavenly realm, and He is over all the principalities and powers thereof. And so, when we talk about the armor of God, which we'll get into, that comes from Isaiah's picture of the divine warrior. The divine warrior and the armor of God is filled with the components that are needed in the spiritual realm. And so not only are they characteristics, but they are major components like salvation and faith that have everything to do with the success or failure of that warrior in both the natural and the spiritual realm. In our life as believers in Messiah, we are operating in two realms simultaneously. Everything that happens in the physical realm, there is a spiritual realm that is paralleling that. Whatever happens in the spiritual realm will manifest in the physical realm and vice versa. And so that's why no matter what you do, every thought creates an action or a reaction that then trickles down like dominoes that begin to fall. That's why the Bible tells us to take even every thought captive, because it is manifesting in the spiritual realm. You can do something—it could be in private—but it will literally ripple through the spiritual realm, and it will come back in the physical realm, and you won't know it, or you won't connect it, I should say. But that's why there's nobody that gets away with anything in the spiritual realm. God knows all things, and it's not just an omniscience that we're talking about. We're talking about the fact that it is God-science that every single thing that we do and even think, there is a frequency that is reverberating all the way through the universe with every single act and deed and spoken word that we have. How do we know this? Well, not only could I go into an hour's worth of this, but Genesis tells us that from the very beginning, God spoke the universe into existence. That vibration and frequency that came from His mouth caused things to come alive. And this is the very same thing that happens today. This is why we speak life. Life and death come from the power of the tongue, so speak life.

Last but not least, the big message of Ephesians is this: God has always only had one redemptive plan, and Messiah is bringing all of it together under His authority. This is all about authority. It's all about going after those who are far off—that northern ten tribes of Israel that were divorced and sent and became the Gentiles. He's going after His bride. And those Gentiles who are far away out of covenant, He's bringing them near. He's going to make them part of the covenants of promise, bringing them into the commonwealth of Israel. This is the major theme of Ephesians: Jew and Gentiles reconciled in one covenant community. Not two, with two different laws. That's absolutely illogical. It wouldn't even work inside of a single family, much less a single church. Can you imagine that? Jews came in, and they have to keep these laws, and the Gentiles into this church, they keep these laws. It would be complete chaos, division, and racism. God has incredible wisdom of how to bring the two together, and He really, really unpacks this a little bit in Ephesians that we're going to dive into in just a second.

Overall, the book of Ephesians really is divided into two halves. In the first half, in the first three chapters, it really explains our identity, who we are. You know, Rick Warren wrote a book called *The Purpose Driven Life* a long time ago, and it's sold like 50 million copies today, which is absolutely incredible, but it goes to show you that most people, they just don't know their purpose. And it's really sad that we have to buy a book to learn our purpose, because the 66 books that God already gave us apparently is not enough. But it just goes to show you that everyone wants to know what God has for them. Identity is everything. And I'm here to tell you that once you know your identity, you learn your purpose. And once you know your purpose, the fulfillment of that purpose just becomes automatic and natural. And then you have the last three

chapters, which explains how we live in light of that identity. That's how, this is why we're going through the book of Ephesians right now. It is so critical to know our identity and then how to live in the light of that identity. Once you know that, life begins to just, like dominoes, it just begins to work. Everything seems to be in its place. So that's where we're going to be here in the book of Ephesians.

And if I could put all of this kind of in one sentence of what the book of Ephesians is all about, I would say this: Ephesians reveals God's eternal plan to restore His covenant people through the Messiah, reunite what was divided, bring believing Gentiles into promises made to Israel, and ultimately place all things under the authority of King Yeshua. Now, I know that's probably a run-on sentence, and I did get a lot of points off when I was in high school for run-on sentences in my language class. I kind of write how I talk, so forgive me for that. But at the end of the day, Ephesians is going to teach us that not only is King Yeshua actually King, but it's going to teach us what His motivation is, what His goal is, and then how do we live our life in alignment with that goal.

All right, my friends, well, that's enough for now. We are totally set up for chapter one. I'm excited. I can't wait to get to it. And if you haven't watched any of our other verse-by-verse commentaries, I encourage you to do that as you find time in your journey. For now, I'm Jim Staley with Passion for Truth Ministries. Thank you guys so much for spending the time with us. Thank you for partnering with us. You can do more at passionfortruth.com. If you don't have a local congregation, we would certainly love to be part of your ability to witness to the nations and to reach them through us. We're doing the best that we can to do that for you and with you. In the meantime, thank you for sharing this. Thank you for commenting. Thank you for being a part of our blessing to bless you. I'm Jim Staley with Passion for Truth Ministries, and I'll see you in the next video.

Passion For Truth Ministries

P.O. Box 365 ❖ 5323 Highway N

Cottleville, MO 63338-9998

Email: info@passionfortruth.com

❖ www.passionfortruth.com ❖