
The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON II : INTRODUCTION – THE UNIQUENESS OF EPHESIANS AND OTHER GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

“God’s action of making believers alive with Christ, of raising them up and exalting them with Christ, provided a new start within the world’s history. It was more than simply a restoration of conditions before the fall; it involved, rather, the creation of a new humanity as men and women were brought to that destiny God had purposed but which before Christ had not been reached. The new creation, which in its widest sense includes the summing up of all things in Christ (cf. 1:9, 10), has already begun as a movement in history in the lives of men and women. These lives are to be characterized by good works.” — Andrew T. Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, pg 114, commenting on 2:10

The Uniqueness of Ephesians

- Chrysostom of Constantinople (late 4th century) wrote that this is a letter of Paul’s sublime thoughts and doctrines he scarcely utters elsewhere but plainly declares here.
- John Calvin considered Ephesians his favorite letter and preached a series of forty-eight sermons on the book from May 1558 to March 1559.
- John Knox’s wife read to Knox daily Calvin’s sermons on Ephesians for the final days prior to his death in Nov 24, 1572.
- “It is one of the divinest compositions of man. It embraces every doctrine of Christianity; — first, those doctrines peculiar to Christianity and then those precepts common to it with natural religion.” — Samuel Taylor Coleridge, poet and philosopher, 1830
- “The Epistle to the Ephesians embraces, in its brevity, the whole field of the Christian religion. It expounds now its doctrines, now its morals, with such conciseness and such fulness combined that it would be difficult to name any great doctrine, or any essential duty, which has not its place marked in this Epistle.” — Adolphe Monod
- “The crown of St. Paul’s writings.” — J. Armitage Robinson, 1903
- The “quintessence of Paulinism” because it “in large measure sums up the leading themes of the Pauline epistles, and at the same time the central motive of Paul’s ministry as apostle to the Gentiles.” — F. F. Bruce
- “Ephesians is among the greatest letters under the name of the apostle Paul.” — Markus Barth, 1974
- “Among the Pauline writings only ROM can match EPH as a candidate for exercising the most influence on Christian thought and spirituality.” — Raymond E. Brown, 1997
- “The Letter to the Ephesians is one of the most significant documents ever written.” — Peter O’Brien, 1999
- Schnackenburg thinks that only the Psalms, the Gospel of John, and Romans have been as significant as Ephesians in shaping the life and thought of Christians, and all these are much longer documents.
- Throughout history Ephesians has had a major influence on Christian liturgy: liturgical prayers and short readings have frequently been taken from Ephesians
- **“The Waterloo of commentators.”** ... “A great rhapsody of the Christian salvation.” ... It reads “like a commentary on the Pauline letters.” ... “A mosaic of Pauline materials.” ... “In form it is an encyclical” [def: encyclical – intended for general or wide circulation]. — E. J. Goodspeed

Note Ephesians is not without its difficulties, and after two millennia there are still unanswered questions. It is worth repeating E. J. Goodspeed’s comment just quoted: Ephesians is “the Waterloo of commentators.”

The Emphasis of Ephesians

There is universal agreement among the commentators that the letter of Ephesians was not written in a polemic fashion to address a single given problem. Asides from agreeing upon that fact however there is little agreement as to why Paul *did* write this letter. Some of the reasons given are as follows:

- ***the unity of the church, with the Gentiles needing to feel accepted within the community of faith.*** Barth sees a parallel between the parable of the Prodigal Son and Ephesians, where the son returns (the Gentiles) not only to the Father but also to the older brother (Israel).
- some believe it was written to keep the Gentile churches from departing from Jewish churches and going their own way; but the stress is upon individual Jews and Gentiles, not churches.
- some consider this a pastoral letter addressing a group of churches in Asia Minor who had been steeped in evil spiritual “powers” of the Ephesian cult Artemis. Although the new believers had given up their past magical practices,

they were tempted to bring their past magical beliefs into their new Christian faith. Hoehner summarizes this concept as useful insight into some of the “power” passages in Ephesians but there is insufficient evidence to support this as being the main purpose of the letter.

- some consider the book at a later date when there was a growing episcopacy among the Gentile churches and the purpose was to show the church as founded upon the apostles and prophets (4:11-14); this is unlikely since there is nothing else in the letter which addresses bishops or deacons.

I most agree with the one emphasized above. *It would probably be impossible after two thousand years to enter into the fullness of the race issues between the Jews and Gentiles but the more we can grasp this, I believe the better we may understand the book of Ephesians. Remember: the first major issue which brought the leaders together in Acts 15 had to do with the role of Gentiles in church.*

There are times in Ephesians we see Paul addressing the Gentiles as a group, not as individuals. Yes, they were saved but they were saved as *Gentiles*. This is especially important in the latter part of chapter two which if not understood, causes mis-interpretation of that portion of scripture. Most commentators acknowledge a shift from individual salvation to Jews / Gentiles as a group in the arguments of the first two chapters, although they disagree where that shift begins.

“In this purpose of cosmic reconciliation the Church has an essential part to play, for the Church is herself God’s masterpiece of reconciliation. Not only is it composed of men and women who have individually been reconciled to God through Christ; it is composed of men and women who have also been reconciled to one another through Christ. *In particular — and Paul never got over the wonder of this — the Church comprised both Jews and Gentiles. In this new fellowship the cleavage between these two mutually exclusive divisions of mankind had disappeared; Christ had reconciled them both ‘in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby’ (Eph 2:16), and had in Himself recreated Jews and Gentiles alike as ‘one new man, so making peace’ (Eph 2:15). Christ had broken down the barrier which kept Jew and Gentile apart, and brought them together as fellow-members of His one body. Perhaps the cleavage between Jew and Gentile does not seem so terribly important to us. It was of prime importance to a man of Paul’s birth and training.*” [Bruce, *Epistle*, p17]

Going along with the above, here are some further clarifications and emphases within Ephesians:

UNITY AMONG BELIEVERS WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY — “[T]he Book of Ephesians emphasizes that God’s purpose for the human race is its unity in Christ exhibited in the corporate life of the church.... Ephesians seems to argue that the Gentiles needed to feel accepted within the community of faith rather than the Jewish believers needed to be accepted by the Gentile Christians.... Certainly one theme on which most commentators agree is unity.” [Hoehner, 98f, 102] Support of that emphasis (gleaned mostly from Hoehner, 102ff):

- the word “unity” (ἐνότης, henotēs) is only used in Eph 4:3, 13 in the NT
- the term “one” (ὅν, hen) expresses unity and is used 14 times: “the both one,” 2:14; “one new person,” 2:15; “one body,” 2:16, 4:4; “one Spirit,” 2:18, 4:4; “one hope,” 4:4; “one Lord,” 4:5; “one faith,” 4:5; “one baptism,” 4:15; “one God and Father,” 4:6; “each one of us,” 4:7; “each individual part,” 4:16; and “each one of you,” 5:33.
- The phrases “in Christ,” “in whom,” “in the Lord,” or similar expressions occur thirty-eight times in Ephesians, indicating the means by whom or the sphere in whom unity is achieved.
- The preposition σύν (sun, meaning “with, together with”) is combined with fourteen words. Three times these compound words denote union between Christ and the believer (“made alive together with Christ,” 2:5, “raised up together with Christ,” 2:6, and “seated together with Christ in heavenly places,” 2:6). The remaining eleven times refer to the union of Jewish and Gentile believers (“joined / fitted together,” 2:21; 4:16; “being built together,” 2:22; “held together,” 4:16; “bond of peace,” 4:3; “fellow citizens,” 2:19; “fellow heirs,” 3:6; “fellow members of the body,” 3:6; “fellow participants of the promise,” 3:6. Negatively, do not be “fellow participants with unbelievers,” 5:7; “do not participate in works of darkness,” 5:11.).
- this unity is expressed in the assembly (1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32)
- this unity is described by various metaphors: biological (“body,” 1:22, 23; 2:16; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30), architectural (“the holy temple,” 2:20-22; 4:12, 16) and social (“the bride,” 5:21-23).

THE COSMIC, ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD — One of the main emphases of Ephesians is the eternal future, the “new humanity” presently being gathered together on earth. “The framework of Ephesians is, however, cosmic, extending from prior to the foundation of the world (1.4) to its consummation (1.10). God has created the framework and his primary position in relation to it is set out at the beginning (1.3). The framework contains a plan of redemption which is now being revealed through Christ (1.3-14) and which includes Gentiles as well as Jews (2.11-22; 3.1-13).” [Best, 47] Best goes on to note the eternal emphasis [pages 48f]:

- the cosmos is God’s creation (3.9), He prepared for it before it existed (1.4f) and it’s consummation lies also in His hands (1.10). It consists not only of the material universe but of human beings and supernatural powers (1.21; 2.2; 3.10; 6.12). From a physical standpoint, the cosmos exists of two parts, heaven and earth, which interact while being distinct. While believers live physically on earth, they are already seated in the heavenlies (2.6). Unbelievers however are confined to earth and under the control of supernatural powers (2.2). Believers are not under their control but also

struggle with these same powers (6.10ff).

- Believers are believers not because they have chosen to believe but because God selected them prior to the world existing (1.4).
- That God elects shows He does not act haphazardly but in accordance with a plan (1.10) which related to redemption and was once hidden but is now revealed (1.9). This plan began prior to the foundation of the world (1.4f) but was revealed to the Apostles (3.3, 5). Part of the plan was accepting the Gentiles on par with the Jewish believers (2.11-22). As every plan has a conclusion, the conclusion of God's plan is given in 1.10. This conclusion not only relates to believers but to the entire cosmos.
- The exaltation of Christ is emphasized more than His death but this is not to say Christ's death is neglected: note the atoning blood (1:7; 2:13), the cross (2:16), His "sacrifice" (5:2) and "gave Himself up" (5:25).

"In many respects Ephesians reads more like a sermon — in some parts more like a prayer or a mighty doxology — than a letter written to meet some special need in a church or group of churches. It is like a sermon on the greatest and widest theme possible for a Christian sermon — the eternal purpose of God, which He is fulfilling through His Son Jesus Christ, and working out in and through the Church." [Foulkes, 13] ***"Cosmic reconciliation and unity in Christ are the central message of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.*** This emerges initially from Ephesians 1:9-10, where it is proclaimed that God has made known to us the mystery of his will, the content of which is 'that he might sum up all things in Christ'. This text provides the key for unlocking the glorious riches of the letter, 'draws together into a unity' many of its major themes, and enables us to gain an integrated picture of the letter as a whole.... Syntactically and structurally, the explication of the mystery in terms of the 'summing up' is the 'high point' of the eulogy, or ... the 'pivotal statement' of the passage.... Christ is the one *in whom* God chooses to sum up the cosmos, the one in whom he restores harmony to the universe. He is the focal point — not simply the means, the instrument, or the functionary through whom all this occurs.... The emphasis is now on a universe that is centred and reunited in Christ." [O'Brien, 58f]

LOVE — The theme of love is dominant within Ephesians. ***The Greek word for love (in both the noun and verb forms) is used almost twice as much in Ephesians (per thousand words) as the rest of the Pauline letters.*** "[O]ut of the twenty occurrences of love in Ephesians, there are eight instances of God's or Christ's love for humans, eleven occurrences of the believers' love for one another, and one mention of a person's love of Christ. This frequent use of love seems to furnish the key to the purpose of the book. Apparent are both God's love for people and the believer's love for one another within the new community. Love in action within the community of believers foster unity, the other prominent theme. Unity without love is possible, but love without unity is not. Love is the central ingredient for true unity, laying the foundation for internal and external unity.... Barth thinks that ***the word 'love' may sum up the ecclesiology of Ephesians by furnishing the two pillars of the Christian life: love toward God and love toward fellow-man.***" [Hoehner, 105] ***"[A] proper concept of love is based on God's love in that he extends it to the undeserving and unloving as seen in his continuing love for the sinner and the wayward believer. Love, then, is seeking the highest good in the one loved. Ultimately, for the believer the highest good is the will of God for him or her."*** [Hoehner, 182]

The evolution of love in relation to the Ephesians is interesting and educational:

- on the return of his third missionary trip (AD 57), Paul told the Ephesian elders at Miletus how he had labored in love by preaching, teaching and giving, and also warned them of false teachers (Acts 20:18-35)
- after his imprisonment (ca. AD 62) Paul wrote to Timothy at Ephesus, stating that the goal of his instruction was 'love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith' (1 Tim 1:5). He also warns of false teachers (1 Tim 1:3-20).
- Ephesus is lastly mentioned in Rev 2:1-7 (ca. AD 95-96) where the church is complimented for their refusal to tolerate false teachers but reprimanded for their failure to maintain their first love for Christ. ***"Their doctrine of separation was the separation from the false teachers, but they forgot their separation to Christ. One can separate from the false teachers without love for Christ. However, if there is a love for Christ, there more likely will be a separation from false teaching. They had put the proverbial 'cart before the horse.'"*** [Hoehner, 106]

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS — One of the questions yet unsolved is the relationship between Ephesians and Colossians. Some argue for a dependence of Ephesians upon Colossians while there are others who argue for the reverse. Ernest Best is quoted as concluding ***there is "insufficient evidence to enable us to come down firmly in favour of the priority of either letter."***

Here is list given by one of the commentators of the similarities:

- In the occurrence in both epistles of the same words and forms of expressions.
- In passages which are identical in thought and language.
- In passages in which the thought is the same and the expression is varied.
- In others where the same topic is more fully handled in the one epistle than in the other.
- In passages in which different topics follow each other in the same order.

But while there are obvious similarities, it is often overlooked there are also definite differences:

- Colossians appears to be written to a particular congregation and refers to their peculiar circumstances, while Ephesians has none of those characteristics.
- In Ephesians the doctrinal element prevails over the practical but Colossians is just the opposite.
- The main object of Colossians is to warn against “philosophy falsely so called” while the main object of Ephesians is to unfold the glories of the plan of redemption to both Jews and Gentiles, designed to be the medium for the manifestation of the grace and wisdom of God.
- There are topics discussed in each epistle which has nothing corresponding in the other.
- The order of sequence or listing of subjects is almost entirely different in the two epistles (although there are points of similarities). [Hodge, intro p xiii f]

“All these characteristics of similarity, dissimilarity, and mutual independence, are naturally accounted for on the assumption that the two epistles were written at the same time, the one for a particular congregation, the other for a particular class of readers.”

[Hodge, intro p xiv] *“The similarities in the overall structure and thematic sequence of the two letters are not surprising, especially if both epistles were written at approximately the same time to Christians in somewhat similar circumstances (e.g., in Asia Minor).”* [O’Brien, p15] *“[D]espite borrowing exceedingly freely from Colossians, there is no indication of a rigid or mechanical copying.... It is natural for a single individual to use both similar vocabulary and / or expressions and yet incorporate different emphases for a different audience. This practice is common today. Often an article read to a scholarly society is later rewritten and presented to an audience of laypeople. Although there are changes, much of the vocabulary and expressions will remain the same.”* [Hoehner, p35]

Pauline Authorship Controversy

One of the items I wanted to stress in this opening lesson is how unique Ephesians is within the Pauline writings. How unique is Ephesians? *Paul’s writing in Ephesians is so different from his other writings that some scholars today reject that Paul even wrote the epistle!* (at least in the Western church; Pauline authorship is almost unanimously accepted within the Eastern church; it should also be noted there are other letters which are historically Pauline but are now being questioned: the letters to Timothy, Titus, 2 Thessalonians and Colossians)

Prior to looking at the controversy, let’s consider some internal evidence. First of all, the author claims to be Paul:

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God” — 1:1 NKJV

“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles” — 3:1 NKJV

Secondly, other than direct statements of ownership, there are passages which imply Pauline authorship:

“of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.” — 3:7 NKJV

“To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” — 3:8 NKJV

“for which I am an ambassador in chains” — 6:20 NKJV

“But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you” — 6:21 NKJV, cp. Col 4:7, “Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.”

WHY DO SOME QUESTION PAULINE AUTHORSHIP? — What follows is a synopsis of the reasons some reject Paul as the author of Ephesians [see appendix for more detail].

IMPERSONAL NATURE

Problem —

- ‘having heard’ of their faith and love (Eph 1:15)
- question of whether the recipients had heard of Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles (3:2)
- questions whether or not they received the instruction they were taught (4:21)
- epistle closes with brief and

Response —

- no personal greetings in other Pauline epistles, e.g., 2 Cor, Gal, 1/2 Thes, Phil; many references in Romans 16 may be due to Paul never having been there!
- it is possible the letter was intended to be a circular letter
- Ephesus was a city of approx. 250,000 people, they were surely not all jammed into one single mega-church
- Ephesus was a major thoroughfare; many would have heard Paul and then traveled to distant localities
- it had been 5-6 years since Paul had been there

impersonal farewell

- no greetings to individuals

● 3:2 could be rendered “*since you have heard*”

- there are some indications of familiarity: Paul prays for them (1:16), asks for prayer from them (6:19-20), they knew of his suffering and imprisonment (3:1, 13; 4:1; 6:20)
- any imitator would have avoided such difficulties

LITERARY RELATIONSHIPS

Problem —

- Ephesians has a far greater parallels with Paul’s other letters
- the relationship between Colossians and Ephesians

Response —

- the number of parallels between Ephesians and Paul’s other books are not as great as some would suggest; even scholars who do not believe Paul wrote Ephesians admit this
- it has been generally accepted the parallels between Col / Eph is because Paul wrote the two letters at about the same time for different purposes
- an imitator would not have altered the themes from Colossians to Ephesians (e.g., the mystery in Col 1:26 refers to Christ in us, yet in Eph 3:6 it refers to the Gentiles being partakers of the one body in Christ). ***“When a writer borrows from himself he does what he likes with his own material. He cannot help revising and modifying in every sentence. It is only the unwarranted imitator who feels that he must stick closely to his copy lest he betray himself.”*** [Hendriksen, 27f]

LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Problem —

- many scholars think Ephesians has too many unique words to be Pauline
- too many unique phrases to be Pauline
- the number of lengthy sentences

Response —

- other scholars think the number of unique words are not out of proportion when compared with Paul’s other writings
- unique expressions are due to mood and content of the letter
- Paul uses long sentences in doxologies and prayers, and Ephesians is a very liturgical book
- in contrast, Galatians contains a high number of brief, abrupt statements yet no one questions the Pauline authorship of Gal.
- ***“Which is more likely — that an imitator of Paul in the first century composed a writing ninety or ninety-five per cent in accordance with Paul’s style or that Paul himself wrote a letter diverging five or ten per cent from his usual style?’ Normally, the imitator of a great writer betrays himself by his inferiority. Therefore, if not written by Paul, it must have been done by someone equal or superior to him. It is unlikely that a superlative writer of this caliber would have been unknown to the first century church.”*** [Hoehner, 29]

HOW CAN SOME JUSTIFY SUCH AN OBVIOUS FORGERY? — If Paul did not write Ephesians yet the letter is written as if from the pen of Paul, how can such an act be justified? Those who deny Pauline authorship does so on the basis of what they call “**pseudonymity**.” Ernest Best [see appendix for more detail] distinguishes this from (a) anonymous authorship; (b) the use of a pen-name, and (c) plagiarism. He also makes a point to NOT refer to such an act as a “*forgery*” due to the negative connotations. As Best states it, “*Pseudonymous writing takes place when authors choose to write under the names of people whom their readers already know and respect, and who, normally, are dead.*” Those who deny Paul wrote this (or other books) quickly point out that evidence has been found that this was not an uncommon practice in the ancient world and that “we should not force our modern morals upon their culture.”

I did read the arguments for and against Paul being the author of Ephesians and admit for a while I was not sure of the validity of their arguments. But for me the deciding factor was Paul’s own words: “*Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.*” (2 Thes 2:1,2 NKJV) It is generally accepted that Paul’s first letter (chronologically) was the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. After writing his first letter to the church at Thessalonica, someone had evidently written to them in Paul’s name spreading heresy. Paul responded immediately with what we refer to as Second Thessalonians. It is also generally acknowledged that Paul did not “write” his letters but dictated them to amanuensis (possible exception: Galatians), but after someone wrote in Paul’s name, Paul took up the practice of signing his letters for authentication: “*The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.*” (2 Thes 3:17)

a·man·u·en·sis — noun: a person employed to write what another dictates

The early church fathers also rejected the pseudonymity theory since one of the criteria for a book being accepted into the Canon

was that it was written by an apostle or one in the apostolic circles. “In post-NT times many works bore the names of the apostles, for example, the *Gospel of Thomas*, *Gospel of Peter*, and *Apocalypse of Peter*. However, these works were never seriously considered by the early church as genuine (or canonical). The church from its earliest days critically examined many writings with apostolic claims but rejected them either because they were heretical or because they were pseudonymous. Any person who falsely claimed that his work was apostolic or was from within the apostolic circle was rejected. [Thomas D.] Lea asserts, **‘Pseudonymous authorship seems not to have been an acceptable option for the early church.’ In fact, in one of his earliest letters Paul cautions his readers not to be troubled or anxious by a letter purported to have come from him (2 Thess 2:2). He affirms this at the end of this same epistle by stating that the greeting is by his own hand (3:17). Clearly, Paul was opposed to pseudonymous writings. This view toward pseudonymous works continued after the first century.**” [Hoehner, 43ff]

Suggested Resources

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APPENDIX A: Comparison of Ephesians and Colossians

The following chart may be found in several good commentaries with very little differences between the charts. The chart is constructed of two major columns: the left column has the entire text of Ephesians; the right column has the equivalent Colossian passage beside the Ephesian text with key words underlined. A German scholar by the name of Josef Schmid is credited with the original chart.

<i>COL</i>	<i>Unique to Colossians</i>	<i>Parallel Material</i>	<i>Unique to Ephesians</i>	<i>EPH</i>
1:1-2		Prologue		1:1-2
			Eulogy	1:3-14
1:3-14		Thanksgiving and intercession		1:15-23
1:15-20	Supremacy of Christ in creation and reconciliation			
			Believer's redemption	2:1-10
1:21-23		From alienation to reconciliation to God	(also reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles into one body)	2:11-22
1:24-2:3		Paul's suffering and his ministry of the mystery		3:1-13
2:4-3:4	Warning against false teaching and reminder of true teaching			
			Prayer for strengthened love and doxology	3:14-21
		(head-body of Christ; Col 2:19 = Eph 4:15-16)	Exhortation to unity	4:1-16
3:5-11		Rejection of old life and reception of new life		4:17-32
3:12-15		Exhortation to love		5:1-6
			Exhortation to holiness	5:7-14
3:16-17		Exhortation to a wise walk		5:15-21
3:18-4:1		Household code	(Christ and the church, 5:23-32)	5:22-6:9
			Spiritual warfare	6:10-17
4:2-4		Exhortation to prayer and proclamation of the mystery		6:18-20
4:5-6	Conduct towards outsiders			
4:7-9		Commendation of Tychicus		6:21-22
4:10-17	Salutations			
4:18	(autograph)	Benediction	(peace and love)	6:23-24

APPENDIX B: Pauline Authorship and the Pseudonymity Question

“PAUL DID NOT WRITE EPHESIANS” — “There is a final initial problem: if AE [the ‘author of Ephesians’] is not Paul, why does he write in Paul’s name? Is this not dishonest? It is impossible to enter fully into this question on which much has been written. Pseudonymity undoubtedly existed in the ancient world; it needs to be distinguished from: (1) anonymous authorship (it should be recognised that books which we regard as anonymous may originally have had a name attached to them which has not survived); (2) the use of a pen-name, i.e. the adoption by authors of names other than their own under which to write; (3) plagiarism, where authors take something written by someone else and apply their own names to it. Pseudonymous writing takes place when authors choose to write under the names of people whom their readers already know and respect, and who, normally, are dead. The term ‘forgery’ is to be avoided in discussing pseudonymous authorship since the word carries an emotive and negative overtone though, once a writing has been examined, it may be correct to use the term. In so far as scripture is concerned we cannot avoid discussion by asserting that its writings are canonical, therefore inspired, therefore wholly accurate in all their statements, in particular statements relating to authorship. To do so would be simply to accept one possible conclusion before examining the evidence. Though for centuries Hebrews was assumed to be by Paul, the realisation that it was not did not lessen the respect for it; what is important is the content. Were Ephesians not by Paul its content might still be true and helpful to believers.

“It cannot be denied that pseudonymous writing existed in the ancient world: the disciples of Pythagoras wrote much which they attributed to him; plays were written in the names of the earlier great Greek dramatists; it is widely held that Plato did not pen all the letters attributed to him, though it is not agreed which are genuine.... In the century after Christ Christians created pseudonymous literature. The *Kerygma Petri*, of which only fragments remain, was intended to be an account of Peter’s preaching and for a time some believers accepted it. The last few verses of the *Gospel of Peter* attribute that writing to him. Col 4:16 led to the composition of a letter allegedly by Paul to Laodicea. The *Protevangelium of James* is attributed to James. The *Gospel of Thomas* may in its present form be much later than these but it has clearly evolved from an earlier form. Apart from compiling writings of their own Christians sometimes interpolated Jewish books, e.g. the *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah*, and they inserted at least some clauses into the *Testimonium Flavianum* in Josephus Ant 18.63f. Long after the second century Christians continued producing pseudonymous literature....

“To return to our initial question: is a pseudonymous writing by a first-century Christian be judged as dishonest? This question may be acute since AE stresses truthfulness (4:15, 25; 6:14). The need for truthfulness is absolute but the perception of what is truth varies from age to age and from culture to culture; it is wrong then to judge the first century by our standards of truth.... We cannot expect a standard of honesty from NT writers other than what was normal in their Jewish Christian culture. If we accept what AE wrote in respect to slavery, in particular that he did not condemn it, and do not seek to eliminate it from Ephesians because it does not meet our ideas of freedom, must we not also accept the standards of honesty in respect to authorship of his time?

“If AE, or other first-century Christian pseudonymous authors, had been asked to justify what they did, they might have replied that they were doing nothing other than what their contemporaries did and that they wrote to help other believers with no personal gain for themselves. AE in particular might also have defended himself on the grounds that at times when Paul was unable to visit his churches he sent someone from the circle of his assistants to represent him; AE might even have been at one time a member of that circle and gone on missions with Paul. Moreover AE does not write with the intention to deceive, but only to instruct Christians in the new situations in which they were finding themselves in the way Paul would have done had he still been alive. That AE’s teaching diverges at times from Paul’s does not invalidate such a conclusion, for all the writings of the NT differ in points from one another. Had Tertullian been told that Ephesians had been written by a disciple of Paul he would have had no difficulty in accepting it, for he accepted the Gospels of Mark and Luke because they were written by the disciples, respectively, of Peter and Paul, saying that the works which disciples publish belong to their masters (adv Marc II 5.3-4).

“It is true that by the third century various pseudonymous writings are condemned because they were not written by those whose names they bore or because they were unorthodox in theology. Yet this was some time later. The author of Jude apparently accepted *I Enoch* as written by Enoch; later Tertullian accepts it, though Origen has his doubts. If for the moment we assume that AE was not Paul, why was it that the non-Pauline authorship of Ephesians was not detected and the letter rejected as 3 Corinthians and the Epistle to Laodicea were? ...

“Up to now we have only dealt in generalities and suggested that it was possible for first-century Christians to have written pseudonymously. This does not prove that any particular book was pseudonymous. But given that possibility the NT books have to be examined individually to see whether the external and internal evidence in respect of each does, or does not, imply that it was not written by the person who is named as author.” [Best, 10ff]

“PAUL DID WRITE EPHESIANS” — One scholar writes, “[A]lthough there was widespread use of pseudepigraphy by the Greeks and the Romans, none were accepted as genuine if it were known not to have been written by the author it claimed.... No one ever seems to have accepted a document as religiously and philosophically prescriptive which was known to be forged. I do not know a single example.” [Donelson, Pseudepigraphy; q.v. Hoehner, 41]

Jewish pseudonymity: “Certainly there were many pseudepigraphical works in Judaism, such as *The Book of Enoch* and *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, but they were composed centuries after the lives of those named in their works and were never accepted as canonical by the Jews whereas it is proposed that Ephesians was written within a few years after Paul’s death and yet had no difficulty being accepted as canonical. To the contrary, it is difficult to imagine that those who knew Paul would

have accepted this as Paul's work so shortly after his death if it were not his work." [Hoehner, 43]

Christian era: "In post-NT times many works bore the names of the apostles, for example, the *Gospel of Thomas*, *Gospel of Peter*, and *Apocalypse of Peter*. However, these works were never seriously considered by the early church as genuine (or canonical). The church from its earliest days critically examined many writings with apostolic claims but rejected them either because they were heretical or because they were pseudonymous. Any person who falsely claimed that his work was apostolic or was from within the apostolic circle was rejected. [Thomas D.] Lea asserts, '**Pseudonymous authorship seems not to have been an acceptable option for the early church.**' **In fact, in one of his earliest letters Paul cautions his readers not to be troubled or anxious by a letter purported to have come from him (2 Thess 2:2). He affirms this at the end of this same epistle by stating that the greeting is by his own hand (3:17). Clearly, Paul was opposed to pseudonymous writings. This view toward pseudonymous works continued after the first century.**

"Of all the works in epistolary form that claim apostolic authorship, two come to the forefront. The first is the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*. The temptation to fabricate such a work no doubt arose from Col 4:16 where the Colossians were to share their letter from Paul with the Laodiceans and also to read the letter from Paul had sent to the Laodiceans (a letter that has been lost). The *Epistle to the Laodiceans* is a feeble compilation of Pauline passages and phrases mainly from Philippians. As early as the Muratorian Canon (ca. A.D. 170-200) the letter to the Laodiceans was considered forged in Paul's name in support of Marcion's heresy. Jerome (A.D. 345-419) certainly regarded the Laodicean letter as a forgery and stated that it was rejected by all. It was finally rejected as 'a forged Epistle to the Laodiceans' by the Second Council of Nicea (A.D. 787).

"The second writing in epistolary form is *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*. Thecla of Iconium was a female convert, companion, and colleague of Paul who faithfully endured persecutions and whom Paul had commissioned to teach the Word of God. Although this work was popular from the fourth to the sixth centuries, comparatively few church fathers refer to it. Tertullian rejected it as a spurious work in his treatise on baptism written around A.D. 185-195. It is sometimes argued that Tertullian rejected it because it authorized women to teach and baptize, a posture quite different from Paul's view of the role of women in ministry. However; when one examines the text of Tertullian there is no indication that he rejected this work due to heretical teaching but rather because the author was convicted of passing off this work under Paul's name and thus using Paul's reputation for his own purpose. The author of the work protested that he had done it in good faith and that he had done it out of love for Paul. Nevertheless, because of his deception he was removed from his office as presbyter. [J. I.] Packer summarizes it well by stating that '**frauds are still fraudulent, even when perpetrated from noble motives.**' Hence, not only Paul but also the church as early as the second century rejected pseudonymous writings.

"**There is a tendency to minimize the fraudulence of pseudonymity.** For instance, Baur asserts that present-day ethics should not be applied to early church practices and that pseudonymous writings should not be labeled as 'deception or wilful forgery.' Along the same lines Jülicher asserts that it was common for Christians to use materials from others without indicating their sources and to ascribe them to an apostle's name with clear conscience and without any hint of deception. In more recent times, Mitton states, 'If the writer deliberately derived what he wrote from the epistles which Paul had written, and did so that he might the more faithfully represent Paul to a subsequent generation, it might well have been less honest in his case to pass the result off under his own name than to acknowledge it as Paul's.' Meade concurs by stating that the 'pseudepigrapher really felt that he was a spokesman for the apostle.' Aland goes so far as to state, 'When the pseudonymous writings of the New Testament claimed the authorship of the most prominent apostles only, this was not a skillful trick of the so-called fakers, in order to guarantee the highest possible reputation and the widest possible circulation for their work, but the logical conclusion of the presupposition that the Spirit himself was the author.' Yet, Guthrie correctly points out that the works which are accepted as 'genuine are undoubtedly manifestation of the work of the Spirit and yet Paul appends his name.' In fact, as Balz observes, following Aland's logic would mean that Paul's ascription of his own name was less directed by the Spirit than the pseudepigraphers of later generations. Guthrie also states, '**The idea that the Spirit would lead some to write in their own names and forbid others to do so is inconceivable.**' Furthermore, if the pseudonymous writers really felt that the Spirit was the author, why would they use an apostle's name rather than designating the Holy Spirit as the author? It is clear that there were writers who used the apostle's name to deceive the recipients of their writings. Nonetheless, whatever the possible reasons were for pseudepigraphy, none should be considered valid. Indeed, all attempts to minimize this practice are fallacious rationalizations. Paul, in the middle of the first century, was aware of such a practice, spoke against it (2 Thess 2:2-3), and warned of the danger of its use to propound false doctrine. Furthermore, there is no evidence that there was a shift in thinking between Paul in the middle of the first century (2 Thess 2:2; 3:17) and Tertullian at the end of the second century as Meade suggests. In short, whether or not it was practiced by those outside or within Christianity, pseudepigraphy must be seen as that which was designed to deceive.

"Many propose that the idea of 'intellectual property' in the current 'discussion of legitimate claims to authorship, plagiarism, and copyright laws, played little or no role in ancient literature production' and such is a modern invention. However, such a proposal cannot be maintained in the light of the evidence from classical times and the early church. As mentioned above, in the Greco-Roman world no pseudepigraphical writing identified as such was ever considered to have prescriptive or proscriptive authority and was thus rejected. The concept of literary property was already acknowledged in the fifth century B.C. when Herodotus (484-425 B.C.) questioned Homer's authorship of *Epigoni* and *Cypria*. Also, the writer of 2 Maccabees informs his readers that his work was a condensation of the five-volume work of Jason of Cyren (2 Macc 2:23). Likewise, in Paul's day some used Paul's name to further their purposes (2 Thess 2:2; 3:17) but their writings were not to be heeded because they were false. Similarly, in the early church a pseudepigraphical work was to be rejected as a forgery and worthless. As mentioned above, the *Epistle to the Laodiceans* was rejected from the Muratorian Canon as a letter forged in Paul's name to support Marcion's heresy. Eusebius

clearly states that it was a practice of the church to reject pseudepigraphical writings as forgeries put forward by heretics. **Hence, there is uniform testimony in the first four centuries of the church that any pseudepigraphical work was to be rejected as forgery. This perspective is not different from the contemporary view of literary proprietorship.**

“Furthermore, Meade’s idea that *‘the discovery of pseudonymous origins or anonymous redaction in no way prejudices either the inspiration or the canonicity of the work’* will not bear the weight of the evidence. For example, Serapion, bishop of Antioch (ca. A.D. 190-211) at first allowed the *Gospel of Peter* to be read. Later when he heard that some were appealing to it for the support of Docetism, he examined it, found it unorthodox, and consequently rejected it as a forgery. A forgery was considered not inspired and thus not canonical. If the opposite were true, one would think that there would be many clear-cut cases in the early church. Hence, the early church fathers were interested in authorship and as Gempf notes, ‘we have no record of their congratulating a pseudonymous author or consciously accepting a single pseudonymous work. We must conclude that if pseudonymous works got into the canon, the church fathers were *fooled* by a transparent literary device that was originally intended *not* to fool anyone.’

“Finally, if the letter to the Ephesians were written by a pseudonymous author, then the passage regarding information about the author’s circumstances (Eph 6:21-22) is pointless. What would Tychicus say about the author? Why would the congregation want to know of Paul’s situation when he was already dead? Were they to pray for the dead? It is incongruous for a pseudonymous author to ask the Ephesian believers to pray for Paul when he knew he was no longer living. It is even more preposterous to think that Tychicus would report about Paul’s situation if the letter were not by Paul himself. It would mean that Tychicus would be part of the fraud. If the author were pseudonymous, then the Ephesians would not have known who he was, and if they had known who he was, the letter would not be pseudonymous! Also, as O’Brien correctly observes, the strong emphasis on the need for truthfulness (4:15, 24, 25; 5:19; 6:14) would render the author hypocritical when he condemns deceit in 4:25: ‘having laid aside falsehood, each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor.’

“In conclusion, therefore, it is more reasonable to accept the fact that Ephesians was authored by Paul as stated in Eph 1:1 and 3:1. This, after all, has been the accepted view throughout church history until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The arguments for pseudonymity are less than convincing.” [Hoehner, 43ff]

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND — “The first doubt of Pauline authorship was introduced in 1792 by the English clergyman [Edward] Evanson who felt that it was inconsistent for the writer of Ephesians to claim that he had heard of their faith (1:15-16) when according to Acts Paul had spent more than two years at Ephesus. Some thirty years later Usteri cast doubt on its authenticity because it was so similar to Colossians, which he felt was a genuine letter of Paul. Shortly thereafter de Wette, at first uncertain, later decided it was not a Pauline work because of its many parenthetical and secondary clauses, its verbosity, and its lack of new thoughts. He proposed that it was a clumsy imitation of Paul’s letter to the Colossians. This concept was adopted by Baur who thought that Ephesians was to be identified with the postapostolic era and that it was composed early in the second century.” [Hoehner, 6f] Harold W. Hoehner quotes one scholar as stating, **“A fair estimate might be that at the present moment about 80 percent of critical scholarship holds that Paul did no write Ephesians.”** [Hoehner, 7] Hoehner then gives a ten-page chart listing leading scholars who gave their opinion whether or not Paul wrote Ephesians. Listed below are some of the major names that one might recognize:

Pro–Pauline authorship: Desiderius Erasmus, 1519; Martin Luther, 1530-1545; John Calvin, 1548; J. A. Bengel, 1742; Henry Alford, 1856; Charles Hodge, 1856; H. G. C. Moule, 1886; F. Godet, 1887, 1893; J. B. Lightfoot, 1893; F. J. A. Hort, 1895; T. K. Abbott, 1897; J. A. Robinson, 1903; S. D. F. Salmond, 1903; R. J. Knowling, 1905; Brooke Foss Wescott, 1906; C. H. Dodd, 1929, 1933; R. C. H. Lenski, 1937; E. Percy, 1946; William Barclay, 1956; J. N. Sanders, 1956; F. F. Bruce, 1961, 1984; Donald Gunthrie, 1961; G. R. Beasley-Murray, 1963; Francis Foulke, 1963; William Hendriksen, 1967; John R. Stott, 1979; Harold W. Hoehner, 1983; D. A. Carson, 1992; Douglas Moo, 1992; E. Earl Ellis, 1992, 1999; Gordon D. Fee, 1994; Leon Morris, 1994; Peter T. O’Brien, 1999

Anti–Pauline authorship: Edward Evanson, 1792; Leonhard Usteri, 1824; Ferdinand C. Baur, 1845; Friedrich Schleiermacher, 1845; James Moffatt, 1911; Edgar J. Goodspeed, 1927, 1930, 1933, 1937, 1951; Wildred L. Knox, 1932, 1939; Paul Schubert, 1939; C. L. Mitton, 1948, 1949, 1951, 1956, 1976; P. N. Harrison, 1950, 1964; Richard Heard, 1950; Francis W. Beare, 1953; Ernest Best, 1979, 1987, 1993, 1997, 1998; Raymond E. Brown, 1959, 1984, 1997; James D. G. Dunn, 1997, 1998; Andrew T. Lincoln, 1983, 1990, 1993

Many names have not been given, and there were many more in the anti-Pauline authorship column that I did not list merely because most of them were German scholars who are unknown to me. The dates after the names are the dates of the writing in which Hoehner references. After the chart, Hoehner does some calculations from his listings and summarizes as follows: **“It is evident that Brown’s estimate that 80 percent of critical scholarship does not think that Paul wrote Ephesians is simply not true....** In fact, ... historically, right up to 1960 more scholars favored the Pauline authorship of Ephesians than denied it and there were actually only two periods, 1971-2001 (51%) and 1981-2001 (51%), where more scholars denied Pauline authorship than accepted it. Furthermore ... the only times that more scholars denied than accepted Pauline authorship of Ephesians were the decades beginning with 1971 and 1981 with never more than 58 percent. **Hence, acceptance of the Pauline authorship of Ephesians has had a long tradition.**” [Hoehner, 19f]

ATTESTATION OF PAULINE AUTHORSHIP OF EPHESIANS — “Ephesians has the earliest attestation of any NT book.” [Hoehner, 2] Here are early references to Ephesians:

- Clement of Rome (first century or early second century) may have referred to Eph 4:4-6 when he wrote of “one God and one Christ and one Spirit.” Further, Clement’s prayer that God would “open the eyes of our heart that we might know [God]” most likely refers to Eph 1:17,18. He also uses the expressions “the senseless and darkened heart” (Eph 4:18) and “let each be subject to his neighbor” (Eph 5:21).
- Ignatius (35-107/8), bishop of Antioch, speaks of the Ephesians as imitators of God by their demonstration of love to him, alluding possibly to Eph 5:1,2. Ignatius shows familiarity with the armor of God (Eph 6:11-17) in a letter to Polycarp.
- The “Epistle of Barnabas” (written between AD 70-135) has several quotes which speak of a new creation (Eph 2:10; 4:22-24), three times it mentions Christ dwelling in us (Eph 3:17), and that the community of believers is the temple of the Lord (Eph 2:21-22).
- The “Shepherd of Hermas” (possibly AD 140-150) mentions the grieving of the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30) and refers to “one Spirit and one body ... one faith ... [one] love” and “one body, ... one faith, one love” (Eph 4:2-5)
- Polycarp (69-135), bishop of Smyrna, wrote, “As it is expressed in these Scriptures, ‘Be angry and sin not,’ and ‘Let not the sun go down on your wrath.’” Polycarp quotes from Ps 4:5 and Eph 4:26 and called them both scripture. “In other words, he places Ephesians on the same level as the Psalms, making Ephesians the first NT book to be called Scripture by the early church fathers.” [Hoehner, 3] Other Ephesians references: Polycarp wrote “knowing that ‘by grace you are saved, not by works, but by the will of God through Jesus Christ’” (Eph 2:5, 8-9) and mentioned “the armor of righteousness” (Eph 6:11-17).
- Marcion (“Marcion the heretic”; died 160) in Rome considered Ephesians to be a genuine letter of Paul, even though he renamed it the “Epistle to the Laodiceans.”
- Irenaeus (130-200), bishop of Lyons, remarked “as blessed Paul declares in his epistle to the Ephesians, that ‘we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.’” (Eph 5:30) Irenaeus also stated, “In which you also, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in which also believing you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.” (Eph 1:13-14a) Irenaeus again noted “the apostle says to the Ephesians, ‘In whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins’ [1:7]; and additionally in the same treatise he says, ‘You who formerly were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ’ [2:13]; and ‘Abolishing in his flesh, the law of commandments in ordinances.’ [2:15]” Irenaeus also speaks of “the devil as one of those angels who are placed over the spirit of the air, as the apostle Paul declared in the letter to the Ephesians” (Eph 2:2). Ernest Best notes that *while others earlier may refer to Ephesians, it is Irenaeus that first identifies Paul as the author.*
- Clement of Alexandria (150-215) quotes Eph 5:21-29 and 4:13-15 as the words of the apostle, and although he does not mention Paul, there is no reason to think this was someone other than Paul.
- In the Muratorian Canon (many believe came from Rome in the last of the second century) Ephesians is listed as one of the Pauline letters.
- Tertullian of Carthage (160-220) mentions that the apostle (Paul) had written to the Ephesians regarding Christ’s headship of all things when citing Eph 1:9-10. Tertullian also lists Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Rome as places where there were established apostolic churches that received authentic letters from the apostle. In another place he mentions those places plus Galatia as churches who read Paul’s letters. When arguing against Marcion, Tertullian cited Eph 2:12 and stated it is Paul’s letter to the Ephesians although Marcion claims it to be a letter to the Laodiceans. Tertullian goes on to cite over forty references to Ephesians in his proof against Marcion.
- In the Gnostic writing “Exegesis on the Soul” (AD 200?), Eph 6:12 is cited as Paul’s words.
- In the Gnostic writing “Hypostasis of the Archons” (2nd or 3rd century) Eph 6:12 is again quoted as being from “the great apostle.”
- Origen (AD 210-250) quotes several Ephesian passages in his work titled “*On Principles*”, assigning them to “the apostle” or to “*Paul himself*.” In his apologetic work “*Against Celcus*” he writes, “The apostle Paul declares,” and then quotes Eph 2:3.
- Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*) wrote the following after making a thorough study of the sources within his reach: “But clearly evident and plain are the fourteen (letters) of Paul; yet it is not right to ignore that some dispute the (letter) to the Hebrews.”

Hoehner quotes Mitton (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, pg 15-16; note Mitton denies that Paul wrote Ephesians) as follows: “***The external evidence is wholly on the side of those who maintain Pauline authorship. Among all the early writers of the Christian Church there is never the slightest hint that questions it. Moreover, the epistle seems to be known and quoted as Paul’s as early as any of the other Pauline epistles. One of the most difficult tasks for those who reject the tradition of Pauline authorship is to find a satisfactory explanation of this acknowledged fact.***” [Hoehner, 58]

Point / Counter-Point

IMPERSONAL NATURE: Problem — “According to 1:1 this letter is addressed to the Ephesians. Paul had first arrive in Ephesus at the end of his second missionary journey in the autumn of A.D. 52 and ministered in the synagogue for a short period of time after which he left for Jerusalem, leaving Priscilla and Aquilla there (Acts 18:18-21). He returned in the autumn of 53 on his third missionary journey and remained in Ephesus for a period of two and a half years, leaving in the spring of 56 (Acts 19:1-20:1). In the spring of 57 he visited the elders of Ephesus at Miletus on his way to Jerusalem from Corinth (Acts 20:16-38). Some contend that since Paul had spend considerable time with the Ephesians, it seems remarkable that he speaks of ‘having heard’ of their faith and love (Eph 1:15) and further that he closes the epistle with such a brief and impersonal farewell. In addition, Paul questions whether or not they had heard of the administration of the grace of God given to him to minister to Gentiles, including those at Ephesus (3:2) and also questions their reception of the instruction they received (4:21). Curiously, there are no greetings to individuals in the church at Ephesus. Yet, in letters such as the one addressed to Rome, a place he had never visited, there are extended greetings from him in the last two chapters of the book.” [Hoehner, 21]

● **Response** —

■ Paul does not give personal greetings in other letters such as 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philippians. Paul had even stayed in Corinth for eighteen months (Acts 18:11) and was in Galatia a few months before he wrote the epistle. First Thessalonians is void of greetings even though it was written a few weeks after Paul had left Thessalonica. Romans does have a tremendous amount of greetings but the reasons for that further supports this argument. Paul had never been to Rome yet was in hopes of establishing it as a base of operations as he traveled westward to Spain (Rom 15:24). One of his purposes of writing Romans therefore was to clarify his position doctrinally as well as socially by noting those he knew in Rome. “Perhaps one of the reasons for greetings was to strengthen his credibility. If this is the case, greetings would be most necessary in cities where he had never been. Conversely, it would be least needed in letters to cities where the recipients knew him well.” [Hoehner, 23]

■ Although the letter is addressed to Ephesus, it may well have been intended for other churches in the area as well. This was certainly true of Colossians which was to be read by those in Laodicea (Col 4:16) as well as the Colossians were to read the letter to the Laodiceans (Col 4:16). This is further supported by the fact that Ephesus was a political and commercial center in western Asia Minor, which without doubt is one of the reasons why Paul made it his base during his missionary journeys. Those to whom Paul ministered were undoubtedly from the entire area around Ephesus. “It is probable that many other churches within the city and in the immediate vicinity were established by him during his long stay at Ephesus or by his disciples after he departed from there. Hence, it is reasonable to think that this letter would go to the many satellite churches in a wide geographical area and thus lack the personal touch.” [Hoehner, 23] ***“One needs to bear in mind that at this stage the population of Ephesus was probably at least a quarter of a million people; we need not suppose (since the text does not demand it) that all the Christians in the city were ‘jammed’ into one megachurch! ... The possibility of the letter being read by a wide range of Christians in western Asia Minor, centered in Ephesus, makes sense of his question about their hearing of God’s grace given to him to minister to Gentiles (3:2; cf. 4:21).”*** [O’Brien, 48]

■ It had been five or six years since Paul had visited Ephesus, therefore many new believers would be in the area of which he would have no acquaintance.

■ “An argument in this direction [that Ephesians was written by an imitator] has been drawn from the words ‘If ye have heard’ (iii. 2), which, it is alleged, could not have been naturally written by St. Paul. But an able imitator would instinctively avoid just such a verbal difficulty.” [Moule, 23] It is also interesting to note this verse may not be as conditional as first supposed. “In 3:2 it is not altogether clear whether the Greek justifies a conditional rendering of the clause. So NEB has ‘surely you have heard,’ which obviates the difficulty.” [Wood, *Ephesians*]

■ The fact that Paul prays for them (1:16) and asks for prayer from them (6:19-20) indicates some familiarity with those at Ephesus. Those to whom he wrote knew of his personal suffering and imprisonment (3:1, 13; 4:1; 6:20). Paul also assumes the readers have a natural interest in him by letting them know Tychicus will give details concerning the apostle while he is there (6:21-22). Thus this cannot be considered totally impersonal.

LITERARY RELATIONSHIPS

● **Problem** — When one examines the parallel phrases in Ephesians to other Pauline literature, Ephesians has a far greater parallels with Paul’s other letters. Goodspeed suggests there are over 400 passages from eight of Paul’s letters which are reflected in Ephesians.

● **Response** — When examined by other scholars, the number of parallels are not as great as first imagined. Even Mitton (who rejects Pauline authorship of Ephesians) believes Goodspeed was over-zealous in his estimate of parallels and immediately rejects more than 150 of them. Barker further examines both Mitton and Goodspeed and concludes the majority of the verbatim parallels consist of no more than two or three words, many of which are relatively insignificant.

● **Problem** — More importantly is the relationship between Colossians and Ephesians. Scholars state that the closeness of these two epistles is similar to the relationship of the Synoptic Gospels or that of 2 Peter and Jude. “Without fear of contradiction it may

be said that there are more numerous and more sustained similarities between Ephesians and Colossians than between any other two New Testament Epistles.” [Foulkes, 20]

● **Response** —

■ *When the actual words are considered, there is actually very little consecutive verbal agreement between the two epistles (I will not bore the reader with statistics which are available in the major commentaries). Without question however is the relationship between the themes of each epistle. “Certainly there are thematic parallels between Ephesians and Colossians and much of the materials follow in the same sequence.... No one questions that there is a relationship between Ephesians and Colossians nor the possibility that the author of the second letter used the first letter* [note the largest verbatim parallel passage of Eph 6:21-22 = Col 4:7-8, a rather insignificant portion relating to the visit by Tychicus]. Although some would hold to the priority of Ephesians, most think Colossians was written first. In comparing Ephesians and Colossians there are parallels but there are surely also distinct materials in each epistle. Even Mitton admits that although the author of Ephesians may have been thoroughly familiar with Colossians, he did not know Colossians by heart and, despite borrowing exceedingly freely from Colossians, there is no indication of a rigid or mechanical copying.... *It is natural for a single individual to use both similar vocabulary and / or expressions and yet incorporate different emphases for a different audience. This practice is common today. Often an article read to a scholarly society is later rewritten and presented to an audience of laypeople. Although there are changes, much of the vocabulary and expressions will remain the same.*” [Hoehner, 32ff]

■ *“For a very long time it was accepted that the explanation of the features we have described was simply that Paul wrote the two letters at about the same time.* He wrote the letter to the Colossians to meet a particular situation and danger in the church at Colossae. Then with his mind still working over the theme of the greatness and glory of Christ, but moving on to consider the place of the Church in the purpose of God, he wrote Ephesians, this time without the limitation of any polemic aims. The greater measure of identity between vi. 21f and Colossians iv. 7f could be accounted for by the supposition that the apostle wrote the two conclusions together, when both letters had been written and were about to be dispatched.” [Foulkes, 22f]

■ *“Would a post-Pauline write, whether he be thought of as writing from memory or from script, have rephrased the wording of Col. 1:12 into that of Eph. 1:11, that of Col. 1:13 into that of Eph. 1:6, that of Col. 2:11 into that of Eph. 2:11, that of Col. 2:4 into that of Eph. 5:6, and that of Col. 2:22 into that of Eph. 4:14, to list but a few parallels? Would not an imitator have adhered much more rigidly to the remembered or copied text? Surely, the remark of E. F. Scott is to the point: ‘When a writer borrows from himself he does what he likes with his own material. He cannot help revising and modifying in every sentence. It is only the unwarranted imitator who feels that he must stick closely to his copy lest he betray himself.’”* [Hendriksen, 27f]

LANGUAGE AND STYLE — *“Much ink has flowed over the language and style of Ephesians in comparison with other Pauline literature.”* [Hoehner, 24] Ernest Best (who denies the Pauline authorship) has this to say about the style of writing: “The author was at home in writing Greek but his style is complex rather than simple and direct. Many of his sentences are lengthy and overloaded with subordinate clauses whose precise relationship to one another and to the whole is often difficult to determine. He rarely uses one word when two will do, often linking synonyms and ‘and’ or placing them in a genitival relationship (e.g. 1:4, 8, 11, 19).... Often when his language is complex it also sounds liturgical; he may have been accustomed to lead in worship and this may have influenced his style. His style is however not of an uneducated person.... Despite signs of stylistic good sense he does not seem to have taken sufficient care over some of the larger matters of composition; the parenthesis of 3:2-13 appears from nowhere as if it were a last moment decision to include it.” [Best, *Ephesians*, 8f]

● **Problem** — Many scholars think Ephesians has too many unique words to be Pauline. Ephesians has 2,429 words with a total vocabulary of 530 words. Of those, 41 words are only used in Ephesians and another 84 words are not found in other Pauline writings but in other places in the NT.

● **Response** — When compared with Paul’s other writings, the number of unique words are not that unusual. For example, considering Galatians which is very similar to Ephesians (in regards to length, number of words, etc) there are 31 unique words to Paul’s other writings and 80 words not used by Paul but found elsewhere in the NT. Therefore the unique vocabulary in Ephesians is very similar to Galatians even though Galatians is about 10% shorter. One scholar, P. N. Harrison, who is well known for his doubt of the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, states the unique words in Ephesians is about the same as Paul’s other epistles. Therefore the number of unique words do not prove nor disprove the Pauline authorship of Ephesians.

● **Problem** — The same reasoning has been applied to unique phrases within Ephesians.

● **Response** — Likewise, many expressions found in other Pauline epistles are unique to that epistle. “Unique expressions are due to the mood and content of the letter, the recipients of the letter, and the flexibility and ingenuity of the author.... Furthermore, if an imitator were the writer, he would have likely avoided the use of different vocabulary or phrases which would betray his hand.” [Hoehner, 26f]

● **Problem** — Besides the language, the style of Ephesians also causes difficulties for some. The first example is the number of lengthy sentences (see appendix).

● **Response** — “[W]hen compared with other Pauline literature, this is not unusual. For instance, the short letter of 2

Thessalonians has proportionally just as many or possibly more long sentences than Ephesians.... Paul chose to use long sentences in doxologies and prayers (Eph 1:3-14, 15-23; 3:14-19; Rom 8:38-39; 11:33-39; 1 Cor 1:4-8; Phil 1:3-8; 1 Thes 1:2-5; 2 Thes 1:3-10), doctrinal content (Eph 2:1-7; 3:2-13; Rom 3:21-26; 1 Cor 1:26-29; 2:6-9), and parenthetical materials (Eph 4:1-6, 11-16; 6:14-20; 1 Cor 12:8-11; Phil 1:27-2:11).... It might be counterargued, however, that the short incisive language and abrupt statements of Galatians are missing from other Pauline letters. Should one then conclude that Galatians is not from Paul? Few, if any, would agree. Rather it is the urgency of the situation that affects Paul's style in Galatians, whereas in other letters containing similar doctrinal concerns, there is a much more deliberate tone. Likewise, in Ephesians there were no pressing problems, thus Paul may have been in a more reflective mood, which allows for the use of long sentences." [Hoehner, 28]

Summary statement: One author, H. J. Cadbury, who wrote "The Dilemma of Ephesians" (quoted in Hoehner) says the following: "*Which is more likely — that an imitator of Paul in the first century composed a writing ninety or ninety-five per cent in accordance with Paul's style or that Paul himself wrote a letter diverging five or ten per cent from his usual style?* Normally, the imitator of a great writer betrays himself by his inferiority. Therefore, if not written by Paul, it must have been done by someone equal or superior to him. It is unlikely that a superlative writer of this caliber would have been unknown to the first century church." [Hoehner, 29]

Pseudonymity

The reader is directed to the above where I quoted at length both Ernest Best (denies Pauline authorship) and Harold Hoehner (accepts Pauline authorship).

- **Problem** — If not Paul then who wrote Ephesians? Answers vary: one of the Pauline school or a disciple or secretary who was familiar with Paul's thinking; a Gentile convert or Jewish Christian of some official standing; Tychicus; Onesimus; Luke; Silas. **The concept of pseudonymity is based on the claim that writing in another's name was a widely used literary practice in the Greco-Roman, Jewish and Christian cultures.**

- **Response** — After reading Best and Lincoln argue against the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, I must admit their arguments were persuasive. Admittedly whichever view is accepted is based upon a subjective decision. If "pseudonymity" was an accepted practice in the time of the apostle Paul, then a disciple of Paul writing in his name and not intending to deceive but rather to further Paul's teaching might be an understandable explanation to some of the difficulties we find in Ephesians. It should also be noted that those who hold to this teaching (at least Best and Lincoln) does not do so at the expense of verbal inspiration; rejecting Paul as the genuine author of Ephesians is nothing more to these men than questioning the Pauline authorship of Hebrews. Hebrews is still the word of God regardless of who wrote the book, and Lincoln and Best consider Ephesians in the same light.

The deciding factors in my own mind were several things. First, apparently Paul was aware of such a practice and not only did he reject it, he even took measures to prevent against fraudulent writings: "*not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.*" (2 Thes 2:2) Paul would later write that he means to protect and identify his writings by his own signature: "*I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write.*" (2 Thes 3:17) Admittedly this is not conclusive by itself; the situation appears to have been there were those who deliberately wrote to introduce error and it was those writings Paul was attacking, not "innocent" pseudonymous writings written by one of Paul's own disciples to further the cause of truth: "*Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction*" (2 Thes 2:3) But it is important to keep Paul's words here in mind as we consider the facts.

Secondly and more persuasive in my own decision was the acceptance of pseudonymity by some as an innocent practice and not intended to deceive. If that be true, I had great difficulty with the following verses: "*To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.*" (6:18b-20) If this was written years after the death of Paul, how can one *not* say it is pure deception to ask those who receive the letter to "*pray for me as I am in prison*"? Especially in the light of the admonition of Paul given earlier in the book: "*Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*" (4:25) Those who reject the Pauline authorship accepts these and other like verses as another innocent literary device to further the perception that it was actually Paul writing. I realize I might be in error but to me, that crosses the line and if Ephesians was not written by Paul then the author intentionally meant to pass himself off as Paul. In my own heart I cannot see that as an innocent literary device.

SUMMATION by Hoehner — "*The Pauline authorship of Ephesians not only has the earliest attestation of any book of the NT but this attestation continued until the last two centuries. The early attestation is highly significant. The early church was not only closer to the situation but also they were very astute in their judgment of genuine and fraudulent compositions. This overwhelming support for the Pauline authorship of Ephesians should not be easily dismissed.... Although Ephesians differs from other Pauline literature, the differences do not sufficiently argue for the rejection of Pauline authorship of this letter. Variations can be accounted for due to differences in content and differences in the character and needs of the recipients of the letter. Furthermore, it must be accepted that a genius such as Paul is not sterile in his expressions: allowances must be made for development in his own thinking. These elements are evident even in his undisputed letters. Yet further, it is rather limiting to determine Paul's style and vocabulary based only on the writings that are canonical. If more of his writings were available, it would be easier to evaluate variances and consistency of vocabulary and style. Content, mood, and recipients affect the vocabulary and style of an author whether it be in the first or the present century. In fact, repeating the same content*

in identical or nearly identical circumstances would still produce variations in vocabulary, style, and sentence length. Authors are not machines that duplicate vocabulary and style.

“It is fitting to close with a story found at the conclusion of the Cadbury article: ‘Many years ago there was in an English school a much beloved bachelor master whom the boys called Puddles. He had, however, decided mannerisms of speech, which showed among other occasions whenever he recited a favourite poem on the prehistoric animal called Eohippus. Once in holiday-time when a large group of his old boys was gathered together at Woodbrooke College to share again his leadership, they arranged to have a little competition to see which of them could most perfectly imitate him in the recitation of his well-known selection. In order to ensure the impartiality of the judges chosen for the contest they were seated in the audience, while contestants spoke in turn from the stage, but behind the curtain. Unknown to judges and audience Puddles himself slipped in backstage as one of the contestants and when the merits of each were scored by the judges and the winners announced, it was found that Puddles was himself awarded third place in the competition.’” [Hoehner, 60f]

“Any imitator is betrayed by his inferiority, but ... this Epistle contains nothing which might not have been written by Paul, while it is everywhere marked by a grandeur and originality of thought which seem utterly beyond the reach of any mere imitator. Could an imitator have produced a work so like those of the apostle, and yet written with such freedom and originality, showing such a profound advance on Paul’s thought in Colossians? An even more relevant question is, Would a person of such spiritual genius have followed Colossians so closely?” [Foulkes, 39]

Practical Considerations

WHAT DEFINES A LIBERAL? — A thought passed through my mind while studying for these lessons: *by what criteria do we define a liberal?* We all draw our “lines in the sand” that separates orthodoxy and liberalism, and properly so. But this discussion brings forth the opportunity for us to re-evaluate where we draw our “liberal” line.

Where some draw the line:

- externals: length of hair, dress, men wearing earrings (a growing phenomenon among some Christians), women wearing pants, Christian music, et. al.
- to some “Baptist Briders” any who would accept a universal church is a liberal
- as a former KJV-Only Advocate, I can attest to the teaching that some believe Christianity in America is weak because of the modern “per-Versions”
- one who holds to a literal 6-day creation often consider those who accept the day-age theory as being liberal
- considering today’s lesson: without question there are those who upon hearing there are commentators who deny Pauline authorship of Ephesians, immediately consider such a teaching as liberal. I would have been among that group if not for the fact that I’ve been using Ernest Best and Andrew Lincoln, both of whom reject Pauline authorship! And upon studying the scriptures using these men, if I was to be asked which single commentary I would recommend for Ephesians, would probably answer Andrew Lincoln.

One of the things I can attest to being surprised with is how good the commentaries by Best and Lincoln really are even though they both deny Paul as the author. It made me question my own stand on what is a liberal.

By every definition of the word, this movement began by a bonafide liberal: Edward Evanson (1731–1805) was ordained in the Church of England but was brought before the authorities because of a sermon he preached on Easter 1773 which questioned the resurrection (the charges were later dropped due to a technicality). His disagreement with the Anglican Church continued to widen and he eventually left the church, dying as a Unitarian. In his writings he denied the incarnation, the literal resurrection, the deity of Christ, the trinity, he rejected most of the books of the NT as forgeries, and only accepted the Gospel of Luke from the four gospels.

Yet from that very apostate beginning we have scholars today who would be in agreement with some of the issues he brought forth concerning Ephesians. I have already praised both Lincoln’s and Best’s writings. How are we to explain such excellent, thorough, thought-provoking material which (at least on the authorship question) agrees with a teaching that originated with an apostate? I am not sure I have the answer to that question.

As for the question as to “who is a liberal”, perhaps it would be best to retain that term for those who reject the core doctrines: the trinity, the incarnation, the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the authority of the scripture, salvation by grace (without taking into consideration the Calvinist / Arminian issue), are just a few which immediately come to mind.

THE NATURAL DESCENT OF MAN’S HANDLING OF THE TRUTH — I think it would be valuable to consider what exactly was Evanson’s mistake. The most obvious response would be that he lacked true salvation as evidenced by his denial of key doctrines for years prior to his official departure from the Church of England, ultimately culminating with his apostasy from the Christian faith prior to his death. While I would agree with that response, is there any other historical connection we might make and from which we might be warned against in our own lives?

For almost a millenium Europe was in a time of great darkness when the word of God was mostly unknown to the common person, with the exception of small groups which functioned in the tradition of the New Testament. The leaders of what we call today the

Reformation were born at a time when paganism and Christianity were so intermingled that it was often hard to tell the difference. Rome ruled and much of what she taught was far from the teachings of the Apostles. At that time God touched the hearts and lives of such great giants as Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli to rise and fight the error of Catholicism. And of course today we are thankful for these men, but how did they do what they did? Each of these men saw the accepted norm and were uncomfortable with how the status quo fit with their understanding of the scriptures. They *questioned* the accepted truth of their days and were used of God to bring the light again to Europe. This is important to the point I want to make here and so I will repeat myself: ***they questioned the truth of their day and fought against what they perceived as error.*** Hold onto that thought, I will return to it in a few moments.

Were all their answers correct? No, they did not get everything correct. God worked great wonders throughout Europe as the Word of God was opened to the common man but not all of what the Reformers concluded agrees with what we understand about scripture. Errors came out of the Reformation as well as truth. So ***these men questioned the truth of their day and came to certain conclusions, some God-honoring and correct while other conclusions were erroneous.***

What followed the Reformation has come to be known at the age of Rationalism with Germany as the recognized leader in this new thinking. Many changes came about during this time in which higher criticism had its beginning. But as we look at the errors which came out of Rationalism, what was the problem? The errors arose because ***men questioned the truth of their day and fought against what they perceived as error*** (note the intentional parallel phrasing). Men such as Edward Evanson studied the scriptures and instead of blindly accepting without question, they took it upon themselves to see if what they were being taught was the truth. Unfortunately in their zeal to ignore the *status quo* and “think for themselves,” great errors were propagated, many of which continue to this day: the denial of Daniel as the author of the book by his name; the JEDP theory of the origin of the Pentateuch; deuterio- and trito-Isaiah; and so on ... *including the questioning of Paul as being the author of the books traditionally credited to him.*

I have struggled to tie these loose ends together and to make a practical lesson for us to glean from the mistakes of others. On the surface, the men of the Reformation and of the Rationalism Period often took the same course of action. What was the difference between them and their results? How do we avoid such pitfalls? Maybe this is too simplistic but one answer would be to ***never reject the authority of scripture.*** It is good to question, even to question the truths which have been accepted for centuries (if not for that, humanly speaking we would have never had the Reformation). But there must be a standard of truth, a line which cannot be crossed. Perhaps it is that line that marks the difference between the Reformation and the period which followed.

APPENDIX C: Ephesians, Sentence by Sentence

One item noted by all commentators is the number of long sentences used by Paul when writing Ephesians. Paul does use long sentences in his other writings but no place so frequently as here. To illustrate how Paul originally wrote this, I thought it useful to provide a chart showing the letter of Ephesians divided into sentences.

1:1,2	Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!
1:3-14	Blessed [is] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who did bless us in every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, according as He did choose us in him before the foundation of the world, for our being holy and unblemished before Him, in love, having foreordained us to the adoption of sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He did make us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have the redemption through his blood, the remission of the trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, in which He did abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the secret of His will, according to His good pleasure, that He purposed in Himself, in regard to the dispensation of the fulness of the times, to bring into one the whole in the Christ, both the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth — in him; in whom also we did obtain an inheritance, being foreordained according to the purpose of Him who the all things is working according to the counsel of His will, for our being to the praise of His glory, [even] those who did first hope in the Christ, in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth — the good news of your salvation — in whom also having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, to the redemption of the acquired possession, to the praise of His glory.
1:15-23	Because of this I also, having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the love to all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the recognition of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, for your knowing what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us who are believing, according to the working of the power of His might, which He wrought in the Christ, having raised him out of the dead, and did set [him] at His right hand in the heavenly [places], far above all principality, and authority, and might, and lordship, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in the coming one; and all things He did put under his feet, and did give him — head over all things to the assembly, which is his body, the fulness of Him who is filling the all in all.
2:1-7	Also you — being dead in the trespasses and the sins, in which once ye did walk according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all did walk once in the desires of our flesh, doing the wishes of the flesh and of the thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath — as also the others, and God, being rich in kindness, because of His great love with which He loved us, even being dead in the trespasses, did make us to live together with the Christ, (by grace ye are having been saved,) and did raise [us] up together, and did seat [us] together in the heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus, that He might show, in the ages that are coming, the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
2:8,9	For by grace ye are having been saved, through faith, and this not of you — of God the gift, not of works, that no one may boast.
2:10	For of Him we are workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God did before prepare, that in them we may walk.
2:11,12	Wherefore, remember, that ye [were] once the nations in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands, that ye were at that time apart from Christ, having been alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope, and without God, in the world.
2:13	And now, in Christ Jesus, ye being once afar off became nigh in the blood of the Christ.
2:14-16	For he is our peace, who did make both one, and the middle wall of the enclosure did break down, the enmity in his flesh, the law of the commands in ordinances having done away, that the two he might create in himself into one new man, making peace, and might reconcile both in one body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity in it.
2:17,18	And having come, he did proclaim good news — peace to you — the far-off and the nigh, because through him we have the access — we both — in one Spirit unto the Father.

2:19-22	Then, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being chief corner-[stone], in whom all the building fitly framed together doth increase to an holy sanctuary in the Lord, in whom also ye are builded together, for a habitation of God in the Spirit.
3:1-7	For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you the nations — if, indeed, ye did hear of the dispensation of the grace of God that was given to me in regard to you, that by revelation He made known to me the secret, according as I wrote before in few [words] — in regard to which ye are able, reading [it], to understand my knowledge in the secret of the Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it was now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit — that the nations be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in the Christ, through the good news, of which I became a ministrant, according to the gift of the grace of God that was given to me, according to the working of His power.
3:8-13	To me — the less than the least of all the saints — was given this grace, among the nations to proclaim good news — the untraceable riches of the Christ, and to cause all to see what [is] the fellowship of the secret that hath been hid from the ages in God, who the all things did create by Jesus Christ, that there might be made known now to the principalities and the authorities in the heavenly [places], through the assembly, the manifold wisdom of God, according to a purpose of the ages, which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have the freedom and the access in confidence through the faith of him, wherefore, I ask [you] not to faint in my tribulations for you, which is your glory.
3:14-19	For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in the heavens and on earth is named, that He may give to you, according to the riches of His glory, with might to be strengthened through His Spirit, in regard to the inner man, that the Christ may dwell through the faith in your hearts, in love having been rooted and founded, that ye may be in strength to comprehend, with all the saints, what [is] the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, to know also the love of the Christ that is exceeding the knowledge, that ye may be filled — to all the fulness of God.
3:20,21	And to Him who is able above all things to do exceeding abundantly what we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, to Him [is] the glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus, to all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.
4:1-6	Call upon you, then, do I — the prisoner of the Lord — to walk worthily of the calling with which ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of the peace; one body and one Spirit, according as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who [is] over all, and through all, and in you all.
4:7	And to each one of you was given the grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
4:8	Wherefore, he saith, “Having gone up on high he led captive captivity, and gave gifts to men.”
4:9	And that, he went up, what is it except that he also went down first to the lower parts of the earth?
4:10	He who went down is the same also who went up far above all the heavens, that He may fill all things.
4:11-16	And He gave some [as] apostles, and some [as] prophets, and some [as] proclaimers of good news, and some [as] shepherds and teachers, unto the perfecting of the saints, for a work of ministration, for a building up of the body of the Christ, till we may all come to the unity of the faith and of the recognition of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to a measure of stature of the fulness of the Christ, that we may no more be babes, tossed and borne about by every wind of the teaching, in the sleight of men, in craftiness, unto the artifice of leading astray, and, being true in love, we may increase to Him [in] all things, who is the head — the Christ; from whom the whole body, being fitly joined together and united, through the supply of every joint, according to the working in the measure of each single part, the increase of the body doth make for the building up of itself in love.
4:17-19	This, then, I say, and I testify in the Lord; ye are no more to walk, as also the other nations walk, in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in the understanding, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart, who, having ceased to feel, themselves did give up to the lasciviousness, for the working of all uncleanness in greediness.
4:20-24	And ye did not so learn the Christ, if so be ye did hear him, and in him were taught, as truth is in Jesus; ye are to put off concerning the former behaviour the old man, that is corrupt according to the desires of the deceit, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man, which, according to God, was created in righteousness and kindness of the truth.

4:25	Wherefore, putting away the lying, speak truth each with his neighbour, because we are members one of another.
4:26,27	Be angry and do not sin; let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil.
4:28	Whoso is stealing let him no more steal, but rather let him labour, working the thing that is good with the hands, that he may have to impart to him having need.
4:29	Let no corrupt word out of your mouth go forth, but what is good unto the needful building up, that it may give grace to the hearers.
4:30	And make not sorrowful the Holy Spirit of God, in which ye were sealed to a day of redemption.
4:31	Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.
4:32	And become one to another kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, according as also God in Christ did forgive you.
5:1,2	Become, then, followers of God, as children beloved, and walk in love, as also the Christ did love us, and did give himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell.
5:3,4	And whoredom, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; also filthiness, and foolish talking, or jesting, — the things not fit — but rather thanksgiving.
5:5	For this ye know, that every whoremonger, or unclean, or covetous person, who is an idolater, hath no inheritance in the reign of the Christ and God.
5:6	Let no one deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the sons of the disobedience.
5:7-14	Become not, then, partakers with them, for ye were once darkness, and now light in the Lord; as children of light walk ye, for the fruit of the Spirit [is] in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth, proving what is well-pleasing to the Lord, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of the darkness and rather even convict, for the things in secret done by them it is a shame even to speak of, and all the things reprov'd by the light are manifested, for everything that is manifested is light; wherefore he saith, "Arouse thyself, thou who art sleeping, and arise out of the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee."
5:15,16	See, then, how exactly ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
5:17	Because of this become not fools, but — understanding what [is] the will of the Lord.
5:18-21	And be not drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the God and Father; subjecting yourselves to one another in the fear of God.
5:22,23	The wives! to your own husbands subject yourselves, as to the Lord, because the husband is head of the wife, as also the Christ [is] head of the assembly, and he is saviour of the body.
5:24	But even as the assembly is subject to Christ, so also [are] the wives to their own husbands in everything.
5:25-27	The husbands! love your own wives, as also the Christ did love the assembly, and did give himself for it, that he might sanctify it, having cleansed [it] with the bathing of the water in the saying, that he might present it to himself the assembly in glory, not having spot or wrinkle, or any of such things, but that it may be holy and unblemished.
5:28a	So ought the husbands to love their own wives as their own bodies.
5:28b-30	He who is loving his own wife — himself he doth love; for no one ever his own flesh did hate, but doth nourish and cherish it, as also the Lord — the assembly, because members we are of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.
5:31	"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they shall be — the two — for one flesh."
5:32	This secret is great, and I speak in regard to Christ and to the assembly.
5:33	But ye also, every one in particular — let each his own wife so love as himself, and the wife — that she may reverence the husband.
6:1	The children! obey your parents in the Lord, for this is righteous.

6:2,3	Honour thy father and mother, which is the first command with a promise, “That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live a long time upon the land.”
6:4	And the fathers! provoke not your children, but nourish them in the instruction and admonition of the Lord.
6:5-8	The servants! obey the masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in the simplicity of your heart, as to the Christ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as servants of the Christ, doing the will of God out of soul, with good-will serving, as to the Lord, and not to men, having known that whatever good thing each one may do, this he shall receive from the Lord, whether servant or freeman.
6:9	And the masters! the same things do ye unto them, letting threatening alone, having known that also your Master is in the heavens, and acceptance of persons is not with him.
6:10	As to the rest, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.
6:11,12	Put on the whole armour of God, for your being able to stand against the wiles of the devil, because we have not the wrestling with blood and flesh, but with the principalities, with the authorities, with the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, with the spiritual things of the evil in the heavenly places.
6:13	Because of this take ye up the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to resist in the day of the evil, and all things having done — to stand.
6:14-20	Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about in truth, and having put on the breastplate of the righteousness, and having the feet shod in the preparation of the good-news of the peace; above all, having taken up the shield of the faith, in which ye shall be able all the fiery darts of the evil one to quench, and the helmet of the salvation receive, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the saying of God, through all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the Spirit, and in regard to this same, watching in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints — and in behalf of me, that to me may be given a word in the opening of my mouth, in freedom, to make known the secret of the good news, for which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I may speak freely — as it behoveth me to speak.
6:21,22	And that ye may know — ye also — the things concerning me — what I do, all things make known to you shall Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful ministrant in the Lord, whom I did send unto you for this very thing, that ye might know the things concerning us, and that he might comfort your hearts.
6:23	Peace to the brethren, and love, with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!
6:24	The grace with all those loving our Lord Jesus Christ — undecayingly! Amen.

As I was putting this together, I was struck with the lack of uniformity among scholars regarding where Paul ends his sentences. I used Young’s Literal Translation because I thought Young would be most likely to follow Paul’s sentence structure, but I discovered even Young made his divisions differently than some obvious divisions listed by the commentators. Since the commentaries all comment on this feature of Ephesians, I began by using the list they gave; only to discover those lists differed between commentaries. I then used a couple Greek New Testaments (*The Greek NT According to the Majority Text* by Zane Hodges and Arthur Farstad [the text of the KJV line], 1985, and *The Greek NT*, third edition, published by the United Bible Societies and based upon the 25th edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek text, 1975) only to discover they too made different sentence division. In most instances these differences were minor but for lack of any other guide, the following chart is based upon the sentence division within the UBS Greek NT.