

# The Summation of All Things in Christ

## Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

### LESSON III : PROLOGUE: BACKGROUND AND DESTINATION OF THE LETTER (1:1-2)

#### **Housecleaning: Books and “Following Men”**

*Who has ever discussed biblical matters with Pastor? Who comes to church and listens to his sermons? Would anyone here hesitate to talk to Pastor if they had a bible or theology question? After having answered each of the previous questions with the answers I assume we would have, allow me to ask this question: Does anyone here believe they are merely following a man? Of course none here would believe they are following a man so let us take this one step further: what if Pastor took the series he is currently going through and placed it into print. Would there be any difference between listening to his sermons and reading his sermons?*

I would like to repeat a point that I tend to bring out every time I begin a series: **books and commentaries are nothing but tools. There is no difference between reading and studying a man’s commentary than asking Pastor a biblical or theological question.** No one here accepts Pastor’s comments without question (nor would Pastor or any other teacher in this church expect anyone to do so); everyone attending this church hears the sermons and compares it to the Word of God. We attend here because we believe Pastor to be preaching correctly what we believe the Word of God teaches. So I repeat: **there is no difference between asking Pastor a question and “asking” a book. Neither should be accepted without thinking, praying, and comparing what is said to the Word of God.** “The things you have heard me say ... entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” (2 Timothy 2:2 NIV) That being true, I would like to encourage all to continue to build their own library of great Christian thinkers to “ask” when you have a question.

#### **History of the City of Ephesus**

The city of Ephesus had its beginnings as far back at tenth century BC. It is located on the western coast of Turkey near the modern city of Selcuk (Seljuk) in the area known as Anatolia, about four miles inland from the Aegean Sea. It was artificially embanked and connected with the sea by a broad channel which ran into the river Caÿster between the city and the shore. In ancient times prior to the build up of sediment, the sea washed the buildings of the city, but long before apostolic times the process of silting had begun to choke the channel and ultimately cut the waterway off completely from the sea. Even in Paul’s day it was difficult to sail into the Sacred Port and may have been the reason why Paul met the Ephesian elders at Miletus when he visited them in 57 AD (Acts 20:17).

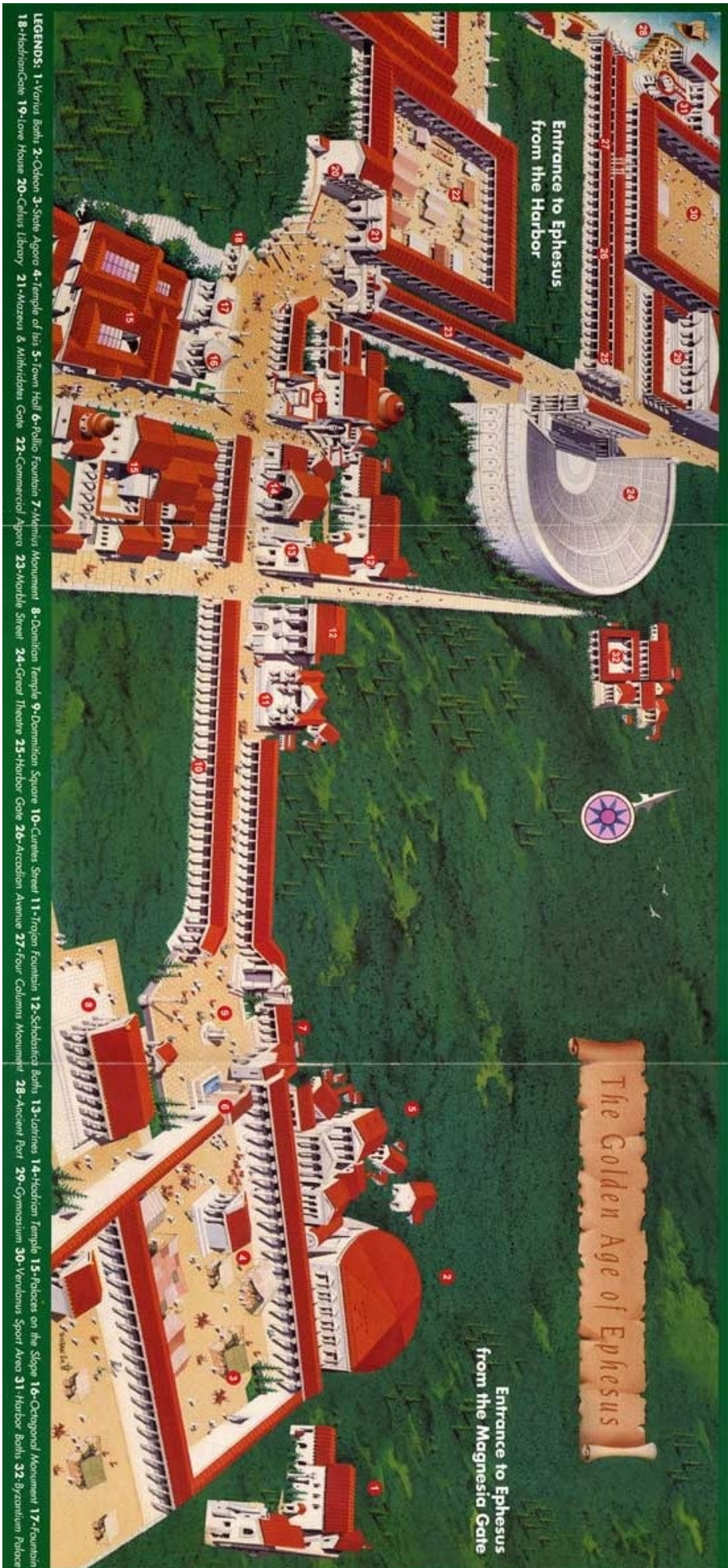
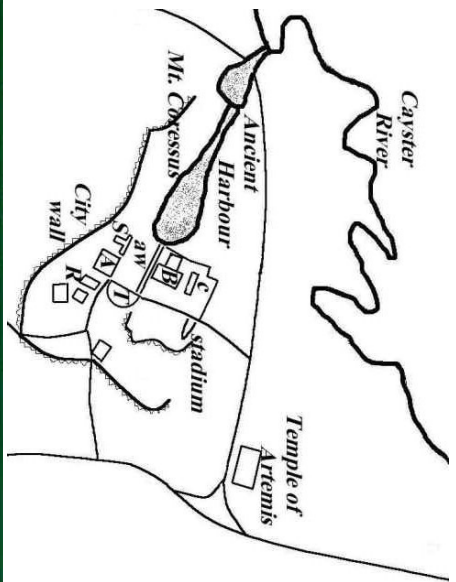


At the time of Paul Ephesus was one of the greatest cities of the Roman Empire, surpassed only by Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. On inscriptions Ephesus is often referred to as “the first and greatest metropolis of Asia.” It became the capital of the Province of Asia Minor in 27 AD and had an estimated population of

250,000 (by comparison, Dayton OH’s population in 2011 was 142,000 and Cincinnati’s was 296,000). Its large and sheltered harbor became a major communication hub prior to the effects of the silting. **“Ephesus was a very influential city in Paul’s day. Its influence both as a secular and religious center emanated to the other parts of the Roman Empire. It seems that Paul**



**selected strategic cities from which the influence of the gospel would spread to the surrounding areas. Many cities such as Ephesus were places where the cross-pollination of idea was present. For Paul the gospel was not secondary to any other religion or philosophy and, consequently, needed to be heard and considered. He states in Rom 1:16 that he is not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God to everyone who believes, whether they be Jews or Greeks. In Ephesus he proclaimed the gospel forcefully. Moreover, he remained there for two and a half years and, as he mentioned to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, was able to present ‘the whole counsel of God’ (Acts 20:27).” [Hoehner, 89]**



**LEGENDS:** 1-Vanur Baths 2-Ochre 3-Stein Agere 4-Temple of Isis 5-Ivory Hall 6-Folio Fountain 7-Memius Monument 8-Domitian Temple 9-Domitian Square 10-Curtes Street 11-Trajan Fountain 12-Scholastica Baths 13-Latrine 14-Hadrian Temple 15-Palace on the Slope 16-Octagonal Monument 17-Fountain 18-Fishfront Gate 19-Love House 20-Celcus Library 21-Mozzasa & Minthridias Gate 22-Commercial Agere 23-Mordle Street 24-Great Theatre 25-Harbor Gate 26-Arcadian Avenue 27-Four Column Monument 28-Ancient Fort 29-Gymnasium 30-Venianus Sport Area 31-Harbor Baths 32-Byzantium Palace

Two other items worth mentioning. First, long before the coming of the Romans, Ephesus was the celebrated center of worship of the goddess Artemis (the Greeks called her Artemis, the Romans called her Diana). Artemis herself was an ancient goddess of fertility, worshiped in Asia Minor long before the Greek and Roman ascendancy. Her temple is mentioned in Acts 19:27, 28 and was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, facing eastward outside of the city walls. The Ephesian Theatre is also mentioned in Acts 19:29-41. Secondly, Ephesus was also known as the center of magical practices. Occultic practitioners were prolific throughout the city and was confronted by Paul as recorded in Acts 19:13-19.



Statue of goddess Artemis of Ephesus



Remains of Temple of Artemis at Ephesus

## The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus



Artist's rendering of the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World



Theatre at Ephesus (cp Acts 19:29-41)

### ***Chronology of the Life of Paul***

“Combining the evidence in Acts with indications in the letters of Paul enables us to establish a relative chronology of the life of Paul. But since neither Luke nor Paul furnishes us with any absolute dates in the career of Paul, the determination of absolute dates depends on the correlation of events mentioned in Acts and Paul with externally verifiable dates. The most important such event is Paul’s appearance before the Roman proconsul of Achaia, Gallio, while he was in Corinth on the second missionary journey. Inscriptions enable us to determine that Gallio was proconsul of Achaia from July 51 to July 52.” From that central date historians can work backwards and forwards to arrive at a suggested chronology of the life of Paul. The quote and the basis for the following chart is taken from “An Introduction to the New Testament” (Carson, D.A.; Moo, Douglas J.; Morris, Leon, An Introduction to the New Testament [Zondervan, Grand Rapids MI] 1992)

A note about the dating: ***none of what follows is cast in stone.*** While some events are known and can be correlated to secular history, most of the events in the NT are virtually impossible to date with absolute certainty and are debated among Bible students. This is not to deny the authenticity of any of these events, merely the date it may have occurred. ***What that tells me is that our “charts” and “graphs” are not nearly as important to the Lord as they are to us or He would have made sure we had the information necessary to create accurate time-tables.*** So please take the following as one possible arrangements of dates, realizing there are others who may disagree.

#### ***PAUL’S BIRTH IN TARSUS***

The Apostle Paul was born as Saul in Tarsus (Acts 22:3) to an Israelite family of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil 3:5). He has at least one sister (Acts 23:16). The City of Tarsus was located in the Roman province of Cilicia, now part of modern Turkey. It was the capital of the Roman province Syria-Cilicia (see Gal 1:21). Tarsus was a city that combined both the Roman and Greek worlds in that its politics was Roman and its culture was Greek, a place of education and commerce.

#### ***A CITIZEN OF ROME***

Not only was Paul a citizen of Tarsus but he was also a Roman citizen. Only a small percentage of people in the Roman Empire possess citizenship. Paul inherited his citizenship from his family, perhaps because of some service to Rome by his father or grandfather. However achieved, this was providentially used in his missionary journeys in the Roman Empire. It enabled him to escape being held in prison (Acts 16:37-39), to avoid punishment (Acts 22:23-29), and to plead his case before the Emperor’s court in Rome (Acts 25:10-12).

**TRAINED AS A  
TENTMAKER?**

A local product of Tarsus was cilicium and was used to make tents, possibly leading to Paul's vocation as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3). This was used by Paul at times to not be a burden on the churches (e.g., 1 Thes 2:9).

**PAUL'S  
UPBRINGING**

While not without debate, Paul was probably brought up in Jerusalem (Acts 26:4; depending upon how punctuates Acts 22:3, some say Paul was "brought up" in Tarsus but trained under Gamaliel; those in our circles punctuate it to mean he was brought up in Jerusalem under the teaching of Gamaliel). Regardless of how long Paul was in Tarsus and later in Jerusalem, he declared himself to be a "Hebrews of the Hebrews" (Phil 3:5; 2 Cor 11:22) apparently meaning he and his family were, linguistically and culturally, Jewish in their orientation. His home spoke Aramaic and the traditional Palestinian Jewish customs were observed.

**RELIGIOUS  
TRAINING IN  
JERUSALEM  
UNDER  
GAMALIEL**

Among his teachers, young Saul had the privilege to be trained by Gamaliel, the most outstanding rabbi teacher of that time (Acts 22:3). Gamaliel was one of the most honorable and reputable Jewish rabbis during the days of the Apostles (Acts 5:34). He was the grandson of Hillel, the founder of the most influential rabbinical school of Judaism; Gamaliel was also the president of the Sanhedrin in succession of his father. It was in this environment that Saul received his education in the religion of Judaism and became well versed in its dogma and apologetics.

**A PHARISEE**

As he never tired of emphasizing, Paul was by conviction a serious and zealous follower of Judaism, a member of its strictest sect, a Pharisee. His zeal for the law and temple was evident in his fierce persecution of the early Christians (Acts 23:6; 26:5; Gal 1:14; Phil 3:5,6)

**PAUL'S  
CONVERSION**

**AD 34-35 (possibly  
earlier)**

After obtaining letters from the Sanhedrin, Paul departed for Damascus to capture and bring back Christians for persecution. While on the road, Christ revealed Himself to Paul, causing temporary blindness. Paul is led to Damascus where he is received by Ananias, his sight is restored and he identifies himself with Christ and other Christians by baptism (Acts 9:3-6; 22:6-11; 26:12-15; Gal 1:15,16)

**PAUL IN  
DAMASCUS AND  
ARABIA**

**AD 35-37**

After his conversion Paul stayed in Damascus (Acts 9:19b) and then was led to Arabia (Gal 1:17) for three years. After this Paul returned to Damascus for a short time (Gal 1:17; Acts 9:20-22?) where his ministry was cut short by the Jewish leaders threatening to kill him. Paul escaped by being lowered down outside the walls in a basket (Acts 9:25; 2 Cor 11:33). Note: some place Paul's escape down the Damascus wall prior to his stay in Arabia.

**PAUL'S FIRST  
VISIT TO THE  
APOSTLES IN  
JERUSALEM**

**AD 37**

Although the believers in Jerusalem were suspicious of Paul at first, Barnabas was used by the Lord to receive Paul (Acts 9:26,27). Paul spent fifteen days with Peter but did not meet with any of the other church leaders with the exception of James, the Lord's half-brother (Gal 1:18,19).

**THREATENED,  
PAUL RETURNS  
TO TARSUS VIA  
CAESAREA AND  
REGIONS OF  
SYRIA**

Paul's preaching infuriates "certain Grecian Jews" to the point where they seek to kill him (Acts 9:28-30). When the brethren learn about the threat they escort him to Caesarea. Upon Paul's departure from Caesarea, Luke tells us in Acts 9:30 that he was sent forth to Tarsus. It would be logical to conclude on the basis of his route that on his way back home to Tarsus this is when he stopped by different cities and visited brethren in the Roman province of Syria. Paul referred to this in Galatians. The reference to Cilicia (Gal 1:21) without doubt corresponds to Luke's reference to Tarsus (Acts 9:30).

**PAUL ASSISTS  
BARNABAS IN  
THE MINISTRY  
AT ANTIOCH**

While Paul was living in Tarsus, Barnabas was asked by the leaders of the Jerusalem church to investigate the reports of Greeks becoming Christians in Antioch (the Antioch referred to here was in the Roman Province of Syria and not the one located in Asia Minor). Barnabas went to Paul to ask if he would join in the work (Acts 11:25,26). Since Luke reports they stayed a year in Antioch (Acts 11:26b), and since during this year Paul's visit to Jerusalem for the famine-relief took place (Acts 11:27-30), Paul's arrival in Antioch must have been 12-13 years after his conversion. That means Paul spent possibly close to a decade in Tarsus and perhaps during those years some of the things took place narrated in 2 Cor 11:22-27 but are not mentioned in Acts.

**FAMINE RELIEF  
VISIT**

**AD 45,46 OR 47**

The prophet Agabus travels from Jerusalem to Antioch. In Antioch he prophesies that a three-year famine will soon occur (Acts 11:27-28). This dearth took place during the days of Claudius Caesar who reigned between AD 41-54. In response to the prophecy the disciples plant and prepare food and relief to send to the believers in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29). Food and relief are sent to Jerusalem by the hands of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 11:30). After delivering relief the pair, along with John Mark, return to Antioch (Acts 12:25) where the Holy Spirit speaks to the church and they separate Paul and Barnabas to the work of the ministry (Acts 13:1,2).

**FIRST  
MISSIONARY  
JOURNEY**

**AD 46-47 or 47-48**

Chronology of Paul's missionary journeys is sketchy since we are almost entirely dependent upon Acts and Luke is "notoriously vague" about length of time (note his frequent use of "a long time", "after some days", "about this time", etc.). We can assume however that Paul's first missionary journey took place very close to the end of his year in Antioch with Barnabas.

From the city of Antioch, Syria, Paul and Barnabas with John Mark, launched their first missionary journey. They departed to Seleucia, Syria, a seaport on the Mediterranean coast and sailed to the island of Cyprus (where Barnabas was born and raised, Acts 4:36). They then went to many places in Asia Minor before returning to Antioch in Syria (Salamis / Paphos / Perga in Pamphylia [where Mark departed from them] / Antioch in Pisidia / Iconium / Lystra / Derbe [both cities of Lycaonia] / Lystra / Iconium / Antioch / Perga / Attalia / Antioch. The missionary journey was approximately 1400 miles. Estimates of how long the first missionary journey took ranges from 1-5 years, with 18 months being used by Carson / Moo / Morris, although they admit there is no way to know for sure).

Galatians ~ 48

**JERUSALEM  
COUNCIL**

**AD 48 or 49**

After the first journey Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch for "a long time" (Acts 14:28; cf. Gal 2:11-14). Pharisaic Judaizers come down to Antioch (Acts 15:1,5) and teach that circumcision is necessary for salvation. Paul, Barnabas, Titus and certain others (Gal 2:1-2) are sent to Jerusalem to confer with other apostles, elders and brethren concerning the relationship between circumcision and salvation. Paul and Barnabas have a private meeting with the apostles James, Peter, and John (Gal 2:4-10) and they agree circumcision is not required for salvation. The conference has Judas (Barsabas) and Silas travel with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch to deliver a letter written by James summarizing what was decided in Jerusalem. They return to Antioch (Acts 15:30-33) where Paul and Barnabas dispute over John-Mark and go separate ways with Paul starting his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-41).

**SECOND  
MISSIONARY  
JOURNEY**

**AD 48 or 49-51**

Paul's second missionary journey took him to southern Galatia, quickly through Asia Minor, and on to Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea) and Achaia (including Athens, Corinth). (Syria / Cilicia / Derbe / Lystra [Timothy joins Paul and Silas] / Phrygia / the region of Galatia / Mysia / Troas / Samothrace / Neapolis / Philippi / Amphipolis / Apollonia / Thessalonica / Berea / Athens / Corinth / Cenchrea / Ephesus / Caesarea / Jerusalem / Antioch). The missionary journey was approximately 2800 miles. Luke provides no timing details until Corinth where he stayed for eighteen months (Acts 18:11). Total estimated time is hard to estimate but indications are Paul did not spend much time in the cities other than Corinth so two years is a good estimate.

1 & 2 Thessalonians  
from Corinth ~ 51

**THIRD  
MISSIONARY  
JOURNEY**

**AD 52-57**

Third Missionary Journey: Paul returns to Ephesus (Acts 19:1; see 1 Cor 16:8) going through the region of Galatia and Phrygia by land route (Acts 18:23). Paul later says he spent "three years" in Ephesus (Acts 20:31) but this could be a rounding off (counting inclusively) of the 2-years 3-months Luke mentions in Acts 19:8-10. It is also possible Luke may not have intended the "2-years 3-months" to summarize the entire time Paul remained at Ephesus. Upon leaving Ephesus Paul goes north to Macedonia, met Titus returning from Corinth (Acts 20:1; 2 Cor 2:12,13) then probably wintered at Corinth himself (Acts 20:2,3). Paul then re-traces his steps to Caesarea and Jerusalem (Acts 20:3-21:16) (the region of Galatia / Phrygia / Ephesus / Macedonia / Greece / Troas / Philippi / Assos / Mitylene / Chios / Samos / Trogyllium / Miletus / Cos / Rhodes / Patara / Tyre / Ptolemais / Caesarea / Jerusalem). The missionary journey was approximately 2700 miles. Total estimated time is again hard to estimate but it had to be a minimum of three and a half years and probably four or five years.

1 Corinthians from Ephesus ~ 55  
2 Corinthians from Macedonia ~ 56  
Romans from Corinth ~ 57

**ARRESTED IN  
JERUSALEM**

Paul is imprisoned in Jerusalem by the Roman authorities under suspicion of fomenting a riot in the temple (Acts 21:27-36). After learning of a plot to kill Paul, the Roman Tribune Claudius Lysia had Paul transferred to Caesarea under protective guard.

**CAESAREA  
IMPRISONMENT**

**AD 57-59**

Paul defends himself in Caesarea before Felix who finds him to have done nothing worthy of prison yet keeps Paul hoping for a bribe. Festus replaces Felix after two years and as a favor to the Jews recommends Paul be sent back to Jerusalem. Paul refuses and appeals to have his case heard in Caesar's court. Festus agrees to send him to Rome. During this time Paul also testifies before King Agrippa who wanted to see Paul out of curiosity (Acts 25:13-26:32).

**VOYAGE TO ROME**

**AD 59-60**

Paul is transferred to Rome on a sea-voyage which began in the fall (the “Fast” in Acts 27:9 is almost certainly the Day of Atonement) and ended in the spring, having spent three months shipwrecked on the island of Malta (Acts 28:11).

**FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT**

**AD 60-62**

Acts closes with Paul under house arrest in Rome for two years (Acts 28:30-31). Some believe Paul was killed during this imprisonment but most in our circles do not accept that because first, reliable early church accounts associates Paul’s death with Nero’s persecution in AD 64-65 and it is unlikely Paul remained in house arrest in Rome for that long a period. Secondly evidence in the Pastoral Epistles points to further ministry in the eastern Mediterranean after Paul’s release from his first Roman imprisonment.

Philippians from Ephesus or Corinth ~ late 50's / early 60's AD  
Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon from prison ~ early 60's AD

**MINISTRY IN THE EAST**

**AD 62-64**

Some believe Paul ministered to Spain as he expressed his desire in Rom 15:28. Others believe his ministry in east Mediterranean does not allow time for a Spain visit.

1 Timothy, Titus ~ early 60's

**SECOND ROMAN IMPRISONMENT AND MARTYRDOM**

**AD 64-65**

Historically it is understood Paul was captured during the Nero Persecution of Christians and executed shortly thereafter. Being a Roman citizen exempted Paul from a tortuous death; the most accepted tradition states he was beheaded.

2 Timothy from Roman prison just before martyrdom

***Paul’s Travels in Acts with special attention given to Ephesus***

<i>First Missionary Journey</i>	
Acts 13:13	Perga (John Mark departs)
Acts 13:14-50	Antioch
Acts 13:51-14:5	Iconium
Acts 14:6-19	Lystra (Paul stoned, left as dead)
Acts 14:20	Derbe
Acts 14:21-23	reverses course: Lystra – Iconium – Antioch
Acts 14:24-25	Perga
(Acts 15)	(“Jerusalem Council” – Paul and Barnabas separate)
<i>Second Missionary Journey</i>	
Acts 16:1-5	Derbe – Lystra (finds Timothy)
Acts 16:6-7	Galatia – Bithynia territories
Acts 16:8-10	Troas
(Acts 16:11-18:18)	(“Macedonian Call” – European ministry)
Acts 18:19-21	Ephesus for first contact with Aquila and Priscilla, whom Paul stayed with in Corinth because they were also tentmakers. They ask him to stay but he desired to keep the “feast” in Jerusalem and departs. He states he will return if the Lord wills. Paul leaves Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus.
(Acts 18:24-28)	Apollos who was born in Alexandria, “an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures” comes to Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla hear him and take him aside to explain “the way of God more accurately.” Apollos later leaves for Achaia.
<i>Third Missionary Journey</i>	

Acts 19	Paul returns to Ephesus: the Holy Spirit comes upon disciples; the sick are healed; many who practiced witchcraft burned their books; Demetrius the Silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis arouses the people to a near-riot; the riot is settled in the Ephesian secular ecclesia (town hall gathering).
Acts 20:1	Paul departs Ephesus, never to return. Paul later states his length of stay in Ephesus was three years (Acts 20:31) and that he had preached unto them the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).
(Acts 20:2-14)	(other travels)
Acts 20:15-38	Paul returns to Miletus and calls for a meeting with the Ephesian elders.

“The foundation of the Ephesian church was laid by the apostle Paul on his return from the second missionary journey. On his route from Greece to Syria, the apostle paid a visit to Ephesus, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila, whom he left behind in the city (Acts 18:18-21). It was only a brief stopover, for he was hurrying on to Jerusalem. He found time, however, to engage in dialogue with the Jewish leaders in the local synagogue. He so impressed them that they begged him to remain. He was unable to change his plans, though he promised to return if that was God’s will for him.

“Clearly this proved to be so, for he included Ephesus in his itinerary on his next missionary tour and actually extended his stay to a period of more than three years, probably from A.D. 54 to 57 (Acts 20:3). Evidently the apostle realized the strategic potential of the metropolis, which had been sited so as to command the main highway between east and west. Ephesus was surrounded by 230 independent communities within the Roman province of Asia. If the Christian faith were firmly established in the capital city, it could be spread from the hub to the rim.

“When he got back to Ephesus, Paul found that Apollos had been active in his absence (Acts 18:27, 28). By now Apollos had moved on to Corinth and Paul was free to consolidate the work. For three months he resumed his previous confrontation with the Jews and soon aroused opposition. He took his converts with him and transferred to the lecture hall of Tyrannus, where he held daily conferences over a period of two years (Acts 19:9). The result is significant for its bearing on the destination of the Ephesian letter. ***We are told that all the residents of provincial Asia, Jews and Greeks alike, heard the word of the Lord (Acts 19:10).***

“The impact of Paul’s mission was felt far beyond the boundary of Ephesus itself. The entire area was affected and there were converts everywhere. Those who came into the capital on business or for pleasure could not fail to hear of what was happening. Some apparently became Christians and then went back to their own towns to communicate the gospel. It seems that evangelists, like Epaphras, were sent out from Ephesus to the outlying districts. ***It is important to realize that Paul’s Ephesian mission was by no means limited to the city itself but influenced the whole province. The places in proconsular Asia explicitly named in the NT include the seven churches referred to in Revelation 2 and 3, together with Troas, Assos, Adramyttium, Miletus, Trogyllium, and Hierapolis.***

“This remarkable expansion led to and was temporarily halted by the disturbance described in Acts 19:23-41 when Demetrius the silversmith rallied his fellow trade-unionists. Paul was already on the point of departure, and this was the signal for his withdrawal as he headed for Rome (Acts 19:23, 24). On his last voyage to Syria, he landed at Miletus and there took leave of the Ephesian presbyters, committing the oversight of the flock to them in a solemn and moving charge (Acts 20:18-35). Paul was never to visit Ephesus again. Yet it is altogether credible that he would wish to write, not simply to the church in Ephesus itself, but to all the Christian communities established during the Ephesian mission.” [Wood, *Ephesians*]

### ***When was Ephesians Written?***

“***[E]phesians was written by the apostle Paul during his imprisonment in Rome, around AD 61-62.*** The connections between this letter and Colossians, notably the personal details concerning Paul’s coworker, Tychicus, suggests that Ephesians was written from the same place as Colossians. It is just possible that both epistles were written from an imprisonment in Ephesus itself, which would date the letter about AD 55, or from Caesarea in about AD 58. But an imprisonment in Rome, around AD 61-62, is more likely [see appendix A] .... The apostle wrote the Letter to Philemon on the occasion of his returning Onesimus to his Christian master. Onesimus was entrusted to the care of Tychicus, Paul’s coworker (Col. 4:7-9), who took both the personal letter and the epistle which Paul wrote to the whole church at Colossae, warning the congregation of the false teaching that was on the horizon... [Possibly] on their journey Tychicus and Onesimus would have sailed to Ephesus and then struck east along the main Roman road to the Euphrates in order to reach Colossae in the Lycus valley. Tychicus may well have taken Ephesians with him, either as a circular letter for the churches in the whole Roman province of Asia (including the seven mentioned in Rev. 1-3), or ... it was written for the churches along or near the road Tychicus would have taken from Ephesus to Colosse, including Magnesia, Tralles, Hierapolis and Laodicea.” [O’Brien, pg 57f] ***“[T]he traditional Roman imprisonment has the best biblical support (Acts 25:6-28:31) and continues to be the view of most students of the NT.... In accepting a Roman imprisonment, Ephesians would have been written after his imprisonment in Caesarea (57-59), hence, in the years 60-62.”*** [Hoehner, 96] The date of Ephesians is tied up with the question of its place of origin, and, of course, its authorship. Some who deny Pauline authorship state the latest date possible for Ephesians to be written to be 95 AD because a portion of Ephesians is believed to be quoted by Clement of Rome in his letter to the Corinthians. Others, suggesting the “quote” by Clement to be a mere coincidence or common terminology among the early Christians, place the date as late as mid-second century. Most who place the date of the writing that late also tend to see more Gnostic overtones to the letter as a whole since Gnosticism was still in its infancy at the time of the Apostles.



## Canonicity

Canonicity ( † ) is that part of the commentaries that discusses the history and questions relating to the book's acceptance as inspired scripture. There are no debates concerning the canonicity of Ephesians but it is for that reason I thought it worth mentioning. *"The canonicity of Ephesians has never been in dispute.... The undisputed canonicity of Ephesians carries a significant implication for the more controversial question of authorship. It forms part of the exceptionally impressive external attestation of authenticity. Had there been even the slightest hesitation in accepting it as from Paul himself, its status would have been seriously jeopardized."* [Wood, *Ephesians*]

† (*Canon* comes from a word meaning "reed" and originally meant a measuring-reed, a straight rod used as a ruler or measuring instrument; it was used of something to keep anything straight or of a testing of straightness, as a carpenter's rule; canon then came to mean something which is used to measure or determine anything, a rule, a standard, therefore the canon of the Bible refers to the group of books accepted by Christians to be the standard by which all other writings are measured)

### Prologue: Ephesians 1:1,2

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* (Eph 1:1-2 KJV)

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* (Eph 1:1-2 NIV)

*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!* (Eph 1:1-2 Young's Literal Translation)

**Paul** — Paul identifies only himself in the salutation which is not typical for Paul. The only other instances in which he only identifies himself is Romans and the Pastoral Epistles (written to individual persons rather than to churches). *"If Ephesians is a forgery of Colossians, it seems strange that the writer did not use the more characteristic inclusion of those who accompany him."* [Hoehner, 133] Note how Paul introduces himself in his other letters: *Paul and all the brethren* (Gal 1:1,2); *Paul and Sosthenes* (1 Cor 1:1); *Paul and Timothy* (2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:1; Philemon 1); *Paul, Timothy and Silas* (1 Thes 1:1; 2 Thes 1:1).

**an apostle of Jesus Christ** — used in classical Greek primarily of ships being sent out for cargo or military expeditions and is only infrequently used to refer to an individual person as an envoy or emissary. It came to mean not only a messenger, but more importantly the authorization of the messenger. *The word "apostle" comes from a verb which means "to send, to send away on a commission, to dispatch." The word could refer to anyone who is sent or by whom a message is sent; therefore an ambassador, envoy, messenger.* In later Judaism "apostles" were envoys sent out to collect tribute from the Jews in the dispersion. In the NT it takes upon itself a distinctly religious sense. *In the widest sense it could refer to anyone sent on a spiritual mission* and is thus used of the following:

- **both** Paul and Barnabas: *"Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people"* (Acts 14:14 KJV)
- Epaphroditus: *"Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants."* (Phil 2:25 KJV)
- Titus and the brethren: *"Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ."* (2 Cor 8:23 KJV)
- even Jesus Himself was called an apostle: *"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus"* (Heb 3:1 KJV)

But the word is commonly used in a much more stricter sense. It is used in such a manner 10x in the Gospels, almost 30x in Acts, more than 30x in Paul's epistles, and 8x in the rest of the NT to refer distinctly to Paul or the twelve disciples of Christ. *"In that fullest, deepest sense a man is an apostle for life and wherever he goes. He is clothed with the authority of the One who sent him, and that authority concerns both doctrine and life.* The idea, found in so much present-day religious literature, according to which an apostle has no real office, no authority, lacks scriptural support. Anyone can see this for himself by studying such passages as Matt 16:19; 18:18; 28:18,19; John 20:23; 1 Cor 5:3-5; 2 Cor 10:8; 1 Thes 2:6." [Hendriksen, *Romans*, 39] The characteristics of the apostles (the Twelve and Paul) are as follows:

- *they were chosen, called and sent forth by the Lord Jesus Himself, receiving their commission directly from him* — John 6:70; 13:18; 15:16; Gal 1:6 (possible exception: Matthias, Judas' replacement in Acts 1:26)
- *they were qualified for their tasks by Jesus, being an eye-witness to the resurrection* — Acts 1:8,21,22; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8; Gal 1:12; Eph 3:2-8; 1 John 1:1-3
- *they were endowed in a special measure with the Holy Spirit, who led them into all the truth* — Matt 10:20; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-14; 20:22; 1 Cor 10-13; 7:40; 1 Thes 4:8
- *their work was blessed by God who confirmed their witness by signs and wonders* — Matt 10:1,8; Acts 2:43; 3:2;

■ **their office was not restricted to a single local church and was a life-time appointment** — Acts 26:16-18; 2 Tim 4:7,8

“As a strict designation, the word *apostle* is confined to those men selected and commissioned by Christ himself to deliver in his name the message of salvation. It appears from Luke vi. 13, that the Saviour himself gave them this title. ‘And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.’ ... **The apostles, then, were the immediate messengers of Christ, appointed to bear testimony to what they had seen and heard. ‘Ye also shall bear witness,’ said Christ, ‘because ye have been with me from the beginning.’ John xv. 27. This was their peculiar office; hence when Judas fell, one, said Peter, who has accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, must be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. Acts i. 21. To be an apostle, therefore, it was necessary to have seen Christ after his resurrection, 1 Cor. ix. 1, and to have a knowledge of his life and doctrines derived immediately from himself. Without this no man could be a witness, he would only report what he had heard from others, he could bear no independent testimony to what he himself had seen and heard....** We accordingly find, that whenever Paul was called upon to defend his apostleship, he strenuously asserted that he was appointed not of men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ; and as to his doctrines, that he neither received them of man, neither was he taught them, but by revelation of Jesus Christ.” [Hodge, *Romans*, 15f] “‘Apostle’ has a considerable range of meaning. At one extreme it indicates a member of the Twelve, among whom there was no place for Paul; Rev 21.12-14 with its twelve gates also understands it in this way. In Luke and Acts ‘apostle’ generally designates one of the Twelve, though in Acts 14.4, 14 Paul is termed an apostle, but Barnabas is described as an apostle at the same time. At the other extreme the word simply means ‘messenger’ (Jn 13.16; Phil 2.25; 2 Cor 8.23). Between these extremes Andronicus and Junia are counted as apostles (Rom 16.7) and Paul describes himself as an apostle but places alongside himself in the same category Silvanus and Timothy (1 Th 2.6). In Rom 1.1 and Gal 1.1 he terms himself an apostle and also in 1 Cor 1.1; 2 Cor 1.1 where, though associating others with himself, he does not apply the word to them. In Phil 1.1; 1 Th 1.1; 2 Th 1.1; Philem 1 he does not use the term at all. **In what circumstances does he then use it? He may have used it in the first instance in 1 Th 2.6 because it indicated he had been sent by Christ; elsewhere he seems to use it whenever he feels his position is challenged by those who say he is inferior to other leaders, in particular inferior to the Twelve (1, 2 Corinthians, Galatians). He makes the same claim in Romans, but by the time he wrote this letter ... he was aware that there were those who challenged his position and he therefore needed to tell that he was in no way inferior to those who regularly used the term of themselves.** It appears that he found it more and more necessary to apply the term to himself, yet at no point where he does so does he issue commands or directions to those he addresses. It is arguable that if he had been asked to choose a word to describe himself he would have preferred ‘father’ or ‘parent’ (1 Cor 4.14ff; Gal 4.19; 1 Th 2.7, 11; 2 Cor 6.13; 12.14; Phil 2.22; Philem 10) or a term from the word group διακον [diakon, “servant, deacon”] (cf. Rom 15.25; 1 Cor 3.5; 2 Cor 3.6ff; 4.1; 5.18; 6.3f; 11.8, 23).” [Best, 96f]

**of Jesus Christ by the will of God** — “**He certainly regards his apostleship as derived from Christ Jesus; Paul is not someone who stands alone and whose authority lies within himself.... [P]aul viewed himself as the representative or ambassador of Christ; it was not a position to which he had appointed himself; God chose him (Gal 1.1, 12f; cf Eph 4.11). He represents Christ because it is God’s will. His authority does not rest on his claim to be equal with Peter, John and James but on God’s appointment.**” [Best, 97] The words “*by the will of God*” indicates the efficient cause or agency by which Paul received his apostleship.

**to the saints** — “ἅγιοι [hagioi, “saints”] is a term frequently used of all Christians, especially in the addresses of letters (Rom 1.7; 1 Cor 1.2; 2 Cor 1.1; Phil 1.1; Col 1.2). It derives from the OT where God is often termed the Holy One; his people are then also holy or saints.” [Best, 101] “**When the term is used to refer to things, places, and persons, it does not in itself connote any inherent holiness, for the basic root can also refer to temple prostitutes, whether they are male (Deut 23:17; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:47; 2 Kings 23:7; Job 36:14) or female (Deut 23:17; Hos 4:14). Thus the basic idea is that which is consecrated to God or to God’s service or, in the case of temple prostitutes, who are dedicated to the service of temple gods or cultic worship....** So also in the NT [holy] can refer to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, which would reveal the unique character of their persons. Furthermore, it can also refer to things, places, angels, and human beings. In these latter categories nothing is inherently or intrinsically unique or holy. There are things and places that are not intrinsically holy, and angels who are evil. With regard to humans, when it is used [as an adjective], it describes the person as holy, such as John the Baptist (Mark 6:20), the prophets (Luke 1:70), apostles (Eph 3:5), and children (1 Cor 7:14). When it is used [as a noun], it is used of those who are called saints (1 Cor 1:2) who may have practiced unholy things (5:1). In fact, the saints of Ephesus were admonished to stop practicing the lifestyle of those who were not saints (Eph 4:25-32). **The reason that saints are to abstain from the sins of the ungodly is because their bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:15-20) and because of their position as saints (Eph 5:3), not because they are not inherently holy in themselves. The idea, then, is that they had the position of saints and thus were to act saintly. They obtained this position because they had appropriated Christ’s work to their lives rather than gained it by acting saintly. Therefore, in the context of the Bible and of the NT in particular, the term ‘saint’ does not have the cultic concept nor does the saint possess a quality that allows him or her to claim divinity. The term is applied to all believers. The believer can approach God only because he or she has obtained a righteous standing or position on the basis of Christ’s work by means of faith.**” [Hoehner, 138f]

**the faithful in Christ Jesus** — “πιστοί [pistoi, “faithful ones, believing ones”] is much less frequently as a description of Christians, appearing mainly in the later NT writings (Acts 10.45; 2 Cor 6.15; Col 1.2; 1 Tim 4.3, 10, 12; 5.16; 6.2; Tit 1.6).... Used as a noun in Eph 1.1 it will belong to the same semantic field as ‘saints’ and should be translated as ‘believers.’” [Best, 101]

*“The phrase **in Christ Jesus**, so frequently used by Paul, especially in this Epistle, sums up very much of his understanding of the gospel. It, or an equivalent, is used eleven times in verses 1-14 alone. Christians not only have faith in Him; their life is in Him. As the root in the soil, the branch in the vine (cf. Jn xv. 1ff.), the fish in the sea, the bird in the air, so the place of the Christian’s life is in Christ. Physically his life is in the world; spiritually it is lifted above the world to be in Christ (cf. Col. iii. 1-3). We have a pointed juxtaposition of two phrases as Paul addresses his readers in Colossians i. 2 as ‘in Christ’ and ‘in Colossae’. There is the implication that wherever the Christian may be, in whatever difficult environment, threatened by materialism or paganism, in danger of being engulfed by the power of the state or overwhelmed by the pressures of non-Christian life, he is **in Christ**. This is not mysticism, but is intended to express the very practical truth that the Christian, if faithful to his calling, will not try to be self-sufficient, or to move beyond the limits of the purpose and control and love of Christ, nor will he turn to the world for guidance, inspiration and strength. He finds all his satisfaction and his every need met in Him, and not in any other place nor from any other source.”* [Foulkes, 43]

**grace and peace to you** — “Χάρις [charis, “grace”] and εἰρήνη [eirēnē, “peace”], two basic concepts of Pauline theology, had been united in the earliest of Paul’s epistles (1 Th 1.1)... [Grace is] an important concept in every Pauline letter and peace appears in all except 2 Corinthians (even there it is in the initial and final blessings).” [Best, 101f] “After indicating the name of the writer and the one addressed, the normal Greek letter opens with the greeting ‘rejoice.’ This greeting was used during Jesus’ life (Matt 26:49; 27:29 [ || Mark 15:18]; 28:9; Luke 1:28), in the church decree (Acts 15:23), in an official letter (Acts 23:26), and in an epistle (Jas 1:1). No doubt, Paul knew this formula (Acts 15:23; 23:26) but he did not adopt it. Also, Paul does not use the Jewish greeting, ‘mercy and peace’ (Jude 2), though he adds ‘mercy’ in two of his greetings (1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; cf. also 2 John 3). Rather, **he uses in every letter both ‘grace’ and ‘peace,’ which apparently had become a distinctly Christian greeting.**” [Hoehner, 148f] The exact same wording is used in Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Phil 1:2; 2 Thes 1:2; Phlm 3.

**from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ** — “There are equivalent greetings in Jewish writings (2 Bar 78.2; Jub 12.29; 22.8f) but of course they lack the mention of Christ; the presence of his name makes clear that our greeting is Christian.... Christ and God the Father are here apparently put on a level (cf 6.23); normally in the NT God’s gifts come through Christ rather than directly from God. God is defined here as the Father of believers; this term became for Christians their most characteristic description of him.... That the whole of v. 2 appears so regularly in early Christian letters suggests it may have been used in worship.” [Best, 102]

**Summation** — “In summary, the prologue of this epistle covers three things: (1) the authorship of Paul who is an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God; (2) the identification of the recipients who are the saints in Ephesus, also called believers, who have been united to Christ Jesus; and (3) the expression of greetings summarizing the author’s desire that the recipients appreciate and appropriate the grace that brought salvation and its resulting peace, both of which come from God their Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” [Hoehner, 152]

## **Outline**

*from Peter O’Brien:*

I. Prescript, 1:1,2

II. The New Humanity A Divine Creation, 1:3-3:21

A. Introductory Eulogy: Praise for God’s Blessings in Christ, 1:3-14

B. Thanksgiving, Intercession, and Praise to God for Exalting Christ, 1:15-23

C. Saved by Grace: Raised and Exalted in Christ, 2:1-10

D. The Inclusion of Gentiles in the One Body, 2:11-22

E. The Divine Mystery and Paul’s Stewardship, 3:1-13

F. Paul’s Intercession for Power, Love, and Spiritual Maturity, 3:14-21

III. The New Humanity in Earthly Life, 4:1-6:20

A. Unity, Diversity, and Maturity within the Body of Christ, 4:1-16

B. Live According to the New Humanity, not the Old, 4:17-24

C. Specific Exhortations about the Old Life and the New, 4:25-5:2

D. From Darkness to Light, 5:3-14

E. Be Careful How you Live: Generally and within the Christian Household, 5:15-6:9

F. Spiritual Warfare, 6:10-20

IV. Letter Closing, 6:21-24

## **APPENDIX A: Three Theories of where Paul was in prison when he wrote Ephesians**

I found this interesting yet knew there would not be sufficient class time to adequately discuss this issue, so I thought I would at least add this as an appendix for those who are interested. What follows is an extended quote from A. Skevington Wood, *NIV Expositor's Bible Commentary: Ephesians*.

“Paul wrote Ephesians from prison (3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Since Tychicus was the bearer of this letter (6:21), as well as of Colossians (4:7) and presumably of Philemon also (cf. v. 24), it may be deduced that these three documents belong to the same time and place. Philippians was also written in prison and may be one of the group. But where was Paul imprisoned? Three possibilities present themselves and must be tested by the evidence of all four letters.

● **ROME** — “*The traditional view assigns the captivity Epistles to Rome. This view remained unchallenged for eighteen centuries.* We know from the narrative of Acts that Paul was in fact placed under house arrest in Rome for two years (Acts 28:30). The conditions of his free confinement allowed him scope to proclaim the gospel (Acts 28:16, 17, 23, 31; Eph 6:18-20; Philippians 1:12-18; Col 4:2-4).

“A Roman imprisonment accords well with the personal references in each of the letters involved. The mention of the palace guard and the emperor’s household in Philippians 1:13 and 4:22 favor it. The fact that Paul is conscious that he might have to face a sentence of death also confirms a location in Rome (Philippians 1:19-26; 2:17, 23). Aristarchus is associated with Paul’s greetings in Colossians 4:10, and we are told in Acts 27:2 that he accompanied Paul on the journey to Rome. The presence of Luke (Col 4:14) during the Roman imprisonment is attested by Acts 28:14, 16.

“It will have been noted that the internal corroboration of Rome as the likeliest place of origin for the captivity Epistles is drawn from Colossians and Philippians rather than from Ephesians. There is, however, nothing in Ephesians to exclude the Roman imprisonment.

● **EPHESUS** — “Following [H. Lisco, *Vincula Sanctorum*, Berlin, 1900, and A. Deissmann, *Light From the Ancient East*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910], attempts have been made of late to make out a case for Ephesus as the scene of Paul’s imprisonment and therefore the place from which some or all of the Epistles were written. Although it has only been elaborated in comparatively recent years, this possibility was mooted as far back as the second century. The Marcionite Prologue to Colossians explains: ‘Therefore the apostle already in bonds writes to them from Ephesus.’ The equivalent Prologue to Philemon, however, assigns that letter to Rome, which makes for confusion, since the internal evidence suggests a common origin.

“There is, of course, no mention in Acts of any imprisonment in Ephesus, though in 2 Corinthians 6:5 and 11:23 Paul does say that he has often been in prison. Acts records no imprisonment until Philippi (Acts 16:19-40). Where were the others? We do not know, but the most probable places are those where Paul encountered the fiercest opposition. Ephesus would certainly come into the reckoning. In 1 Corinthians 15:32 the apostle speaks about fighting wild beasts at Ephesus. That may be a proverb or merely a metaphor. But if taken literally, it could mean that Paul was actually thrown to the lions in the arena. In 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 Paul alludes to some serious trouble that overtook him in the province of Asia, and in Romans 16:3, 4 he tells us that Priscilla and Aquila risked their lives to save him. We know that the pair were with Paul in Ephesus, and this opens up the possibility that it was here that they protected him. It is further argued that Ephesus is a natural center from which letters could be distributed to the cities in the Lycus Valley. Here Epaphras would have the shortest route to reach Paul from Colosse (Col 4:12; Philem 23) and Epaphroditus from Philippi (Philippians 2:25-30). Here the apostle would be most likely to be surrounded by a substantial number of helpers (Col 4:10, 11). Paul asked Philemon to have a guest room ready for him in Colosse (Philem 22) when he was released; does this not suit nearby Ephesus better than Rome? Again, is it not more feasible that Onesimus should abscond on foot to Ephesus — the nearest big city — rather than venture by sea so far as Rome?

“Even if it were possible to concede all these debatable points, which is far from being the case, the silence of Acts remains an insuperable obstacle to the acceptance of this hypothesis.

● **CAESAREA** — “If Acts knows nothing of an Ephesian imprisonment, the record of Paul’s detention in Caesarea is unambiguous. He was held under open arrest for more than two years at the pleasure of Marcus Antonius Felix, the Roman procurator of Judaea. He was housed in Herod’s palace (Acts 24:23), and his friends were allowed free access to him. In this respect his conditions were somewhat similar to those later in Rome. This, along with other factors, had led a number of scholars to inquire whether the captivity Epistles, or at least some of them, were written from Caesarea. The theory was first advanced by the rationalist [Heinrich E. G. Paulus, *Philologische-kritischer und historischer Kommentar uber das Neue Testament*, Lubeck, 1800-1804] at the start of the nineteenth century and more recently revived by [E.H. Lohmeyer, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an Philemon*, Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1964, and L. Johnson, *The Pauline Letters from Caesarea*, 1956-1957].

“Exponents of this view contend that the runaway slave Onesimus would have been more inclined to escape from Colosse to Caesarea (some five hundred miles) than to undertake a long voyage to Rome. Ephesus would be too near but Rome too far for the fugitive. Again, if the letters were dispatched from Rome, Tychicus and Onesimus would have first reached Ephesus with three of them and we might anticipate some mention of this fact in Ephesians, together with a commendation of Onesimus in his plight (cf. Col 4:8, 9). If Ephesians was written from Caesarea, their route would have brought them to Colosse before Tychicus proceeded alone to Ephesus. But surely it would have been most discourteous had Paul commended Onesimus to the Christians in Ephesus before he had been reinstated by his master and received by the church at Colosse.

“Paul’s request to Philemon to prepare a lodging immediately implies a nearness to Colosse that suits Caesarea, so it is claimed, rather than Rome. On the other hand, did Paul really expect to be released from Caesarea at any moment? He was aware that his only resort was to appeal to the emperor and to insure that he would fulfill his God-given commission to preach the gospel in Rome (Rom 1:10-15) and even further west (Rom 15:24).

*“The arguments in favor of either Caesarea or Ephesus as the place from which Paul wrote the imprisonment letters are insufficiently conclusive to supplant the traditional view, which sees Rome as the location.”* [Wood, *Ephesians*]

## **APPENDIX B: The Question of “in Ephesus” in 1:1**

**A MODERN-DAY MYSTERY** — There is an insolvable problem concerning verse one which has to do with the words “in Ephesus” missing from certain old manuscripts. That fact combined with some of the characteristics of the letter has led some to question the original destination of the letter. Prior to continuing I would like to emphasize the fact that to this day this problem is a mystery. There are several “solutions” to this problem but none of the solutions are problem-free. *“Even Meyer, who upholds the traditional view of Pauline authorship and an Ephesian address, has to confess, ‘Nevertheless, this epistle, as an apostolical letter to the Ephesians ... remains an enigma awaiting further solution.’”* [Lincoln, 1f]

**THE TEXTUAL PROBLEM** — “The words ἐν Ἐφεσῶ [en Ephesōi, “in Ephesus”] are absent from several important witnesses (P<sup>46</sup> & B 424 1739) as well as from manuscripts mentioned by Basil [“the Great”, *Adv. Eunom.* 2.19] and the text used by Origen. Certain internal features of the letter as well as Marcion’s designation of the epistle as ‘To the Laodiceans’ and the absence in Tertullian and Ephraem of an explicit quotation of the words [‘in Ephesus’] have led many commentators to suggest that the letter was intended as an encyclical, copies being sent to various churches, of which that at Ephesus was the chief. Since the letter has been traditionally known as ‘To the Ephesians,’ and since all witnesses except those mentioned above include the words [‘in Ephesus’], the Committee [editing the UBS Greek NT] decided to retain them, but enclosed within square brackets.” [Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 532] In the preface of his commentary, Metzger lists these witnesses as being Alexandrian. Ernest Best adds the manuscript numbered “6” as another witness discovered since the writing of Metzger’s commentary.

**POSSIBLE RENDERINGS** — Here are some possible translations, with and without the debated words:

- *to the saints those who are in Ephesus and believing ones ...*
- *to the saints those who are and believing ones ...*
- *to the saints who are and believing ones ...*
- As translated by Hoehner: *“to the saints who are in Ephesus, that is, believers in Christ Jesus, ...”* **Hoehner states that the lack of the article before “faithful” or “believing ones” makes the phrase “somewhat difficult to interpret” and admits the exact form is unparalleled in Pauline greetings.** [Hoehner, 141]
- Lincoln translates as follows: *“to the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus...”*. It is interesting to note that while Lincoln favors the omission of the city-name as being original, he admits the following: *“The English translation above hides the fact that the Greek syntax is extraordinarily difficult to construe. Indeed [some scholars] consider this use ... to be impossible.... Although the translation above, ‘to the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus,’ is the most obvious, ... it is doubtful whether the Greek can easily be made to have this meaning.”* [Lincoln, 2] Wood agrees this is the “most satisfactory way” of translating this if “in Ephesus” is missing but adds the following: *“Nevertheless, it presents considerable grammatical difficulties. It gives undue emphasis to ‘faithful’ and this upsets the balance of the sentence. For Paul, there were no saints who were not also faithful.”* [Wood, *Ephesians*]
- Moule gives possible renderings (if the city name is omitted) as being *“to the saints that are, and to the faithful...”* or *“to the saints that are also faithful...”*. **Moule states that while not impossible, the last rendering is at best very improbable.**
- the καί [kai] could be translated “and” which could mean two groups are being addressed: *“to the saints who were in Ephesus and to those who were faithful.”* Some accepting this interpretation understands the two groups to be Jewish Christians (the “saints”) and Gentile Christians (the “faithful”). This is unlikely since there is no reason to force that division upon the text, nor is it likely considering Paul later stresses the unity of the two groups (Eph 2:11-22). It would go against his later argument if in the salutation he considers them separate entities. More likely therefore is both words refer to the same group. “Thus, in the present context it is better to see καί [kai] used as epexegetical or explicative, indicating that **both adjectives refer to the same group and is to be translated ‘that is’ or ‘namely’ or omitted in the translation.**” [Hoehner, 142]

<p><b>ep-ex-e-ge-sis</b> — noun: additional explanation or explanatory material</p> <p><b>ex-pli-ca-tive</b> — adj: serving to explain; explanatory</p>
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**SUMMATION: “IN EPHEBUS” PART OF THE ORIGINAL** — Hoehner summarizes as follows: First, although the oldest manuscripts omit the words ἐν Ἐφεσῶ [en Ephesōi, “in Ephesus”] there are also very old evidences for the inclusion of the city. Secondly, geographically, the testimony for the omission of “in Ephesus” is very narrow (the city’s name is only omitted in Alexandrian-type manuscripts) while the inclusion is represented by all the text types. Thirdly, in what Hoehner refers to as “genealogically” (the transmission of the reading within text types) also favors the inclusion of the name of the city. While it is

true that the city name is omitted in several old Alexandrian manuscripts, there are other manuscripts of the same Alexandrian family which includes the word “in Ephesus.” On the other hand, the other text-type families agree in the inclusion of the words. “In conclusion, as to the external evidence, it seems improbable to exclude ἐν Ἐφέσῳ [en Ephesōi] from the verse on the basis of only three early manuscripts. Furthermore, when one examines the three early Alexandrian texts, along with all other manuscripts, they all have the superscript ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ [pros ephesious, “to the Ephesians”]. Thus, very very early this letter was known as the Ephesian letter.” [Hoehner, 146]

Hoehner continues to defend the inclusion of the words “in Ephesus” by noting how textual critics handle Ephesians 1:1. If there are differences within texts of a bible passage, the critics normally prefer the more difficult and shorter reading. This is because if it is unknown which reading is the original, it is more likely that a scribe copying the text would add certain words to make the reading more clear than it is that a scribe would intentionally make the reading more difficult. Certainly leaving out the words “in Ephesus” fits both those criteria: the reading becomes more difficult and it is shorter. Hoehner makes the following observation however: “However, Griesbach [who agreed that a more difficult and shorter reading is typically the correct reading] was careful to point out that if the shorter reading utterly lacks sense and is out of keeping with the style of the author, the longer reading is to be preferred. This is certainly true if the omission is accepted [according to Hoehner, ‘it creates an impossible grammatical construction’]. Those who opt for the exclusion find it difficult to offer a viable explanation for its omission.” [Hoehner, 147]

## ***APPENDIX C: Who were the Original Recipients of the Letter?***

**EVIDENCE RELATING TO THE RECIPIENTS** — Here are some things we know about the original recipients:

- there is nothing in the letter directed to an identifiable heresy or persecution which might help locate the recipients.
- the author wrote specifically to believers but not all believers, for he places emphasis upon the Gentiles (second-person plural forms of address in 2:1f; 3:1; 4:17) while excluding those who have been converted through Paul’s preaching (1:15; 3:2). This is not to say there were not Jewish believers among the recipients. “It is doubtful if [the author of Ephesians] was thinking of a precise group of people, other than Gentile Christians.” [Best, 96]
- they were most likely baptized members of a church (4:5)
- they had already received some instruction in the Christian faith (4:21) and expected to accept the OT as an authoritative guide for conduct at least in some areas of life (5:31; 6:2f). In addition to explicit quotes, the author also alludes to OT passages (e.g., Isa 57:19 in 2:12-17) so the author had reason to believe the readers had some knowledge of the OT scriptures.

**THEORIES AS TO RECIPIENTS** —

- ***THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN TO THE CITY OF EPHESUS SPECIFICALLY*** — according to Ernest Best, the inclusion of all the words present in the texts creates two groups: “to the saints at Ephesus and the believers who are in Christ Jesus.” This produces a division not present elsewhere in the NT, while also creating problems since the rest of the letter is non-specific in nature. This is true even if we accept Marcion’s suggestion that the letter was written to Laodicea. Note not every commentator agrees with his understanding of “creating two groups”; see Hoehner’s comments above.
- ***THE LETTER ORIGINALLY HAD THE CITY NAME BUT IT WAS ELIMINATED*** — Ernest Best gives this possibility promoted by some but notes that if that were the case, we would have expected the scribe to also remove the words “who are.”
- ***THE LETTER DID NOT HAVE THE CITY INCLUDED AND “WHO ARE” IN UNUSUAL SENSES*** — Ernest Best says one possible solution is to take the words “who are” either as redundant “officialese” and not translate it at all: “To the saints and believing ones ...”. Or it might have the sense of “local”: “To the local saints and believing ones ...”. Either of these solutions would be in light with the general nature of the letter. One problem with such a solution is the question: if the original never had the words “in Ephesus,” why was Ephesus chosen when it was decided a name was necessary? If the epistle originally never had any connection with Ephesus, what scribe would have chosen a city in which Paul spent three years to be the destination of such an impersonal epistle? Andrew Lincoln adds his comments to this solution: “The main attempts to interpret the text as it stands [without the city name] have not been convincing. This applies particularly to Origen’s early attempt which takes τοῖς οὖσιν [tois ousin, “the ones who are”] to refer to those called out of non-existence into real existence through participation in the one who is Being itself.” [Lincoln, 2] “Elsewhere in his letters the same or a similar expression always prefaces a specific location (Rom 1:7; 1Cor 1:2; 2Cor 1:1; Philippians 1:1). Why should Ephesians 1:1 be an exception to this?” [Wood, *Ephesians*]
- ***THE LETTER WAS A CIRCULAR LETTER WITH A GAP FOR THE NAME OF WHATEVER CITY THE BEARER WAS READING*** — This might account for the difficult Greek reading as well as the copy in Marcion’s possession which states it was to Laodicea. Per Ernest Best however, ***there are no examples of any epistle having such a gap in the ancient world.*** Besides, if that was the case, the scribe would have written “To the saints who are in \_\_\_\_\_ and to the faithful...” instead of “To the saints who are \_\_\_\_\_, and to the faithful...”. Hoehner agrees, adding that ***Paul had never done this with any of his other letters, even though several of those were to be read in multiple churches. There has also never been any manuscript found anywhere which has a “blank” to insert the name of the city. Nor has there ever been another manuscript found which has any other city’s name other than Ephesus*** (even the corrupted text used by Marcion did not insert the city’s name “Laodicea” in the text but rather in the superscription).

● **THE LETTER WAS A CIRCULAR (ENCYCLICAL) LETTER TO ASIA MINOR, EPHESUS BEING THE CHIEF CITY THEREIN** — “Paul may have intended this as a circular letter even though he did not specifically state it. Accepting the [in Ephesus] as genuine and yet considering it circular is not a contradiction. There is no real doubt about the destination of the Colossian letter and yet Paul in Col 4:16 tells them to have it read to the church in Laodecia and that, in turn, they were to read the letter he had sent to the Laodecians. Also, since Ephesus was the center of his western Asia Minor ministry and it is probable that the other churches of that area were established by him or his disciples during his long stay at Ephesus, it is reasonable to think that a letter to the Ephesian church would go to the satellite churches in that area.” [Hoehner, 141] “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] While this has become the accepted explanation of most conservatives, Moule does point out a possible objection: “[I]t may fairly be asked whether it is not far more likely that he would have written, in such a case, ‘in Asia,’ or, ‘in the Churches of Asia.’ Cp. 2 Cor. i. 1; Gal. i. 2.... On reviewing the evidence, it is plain that the true theory must embrace the phenomena, on the one hand, of a very early variation in the reading of i. 1, and of the non-local tone of the Epistle; on the other hand, of the universal tradition of its destination to Ephesus, and the immense documentary evidence for it, and the total absence of any serious rival claim. In constructing such a theory it will be useful to remember, what is indicated by the Acts, that the City stood in the closest possible relation to the Province, both politically and in regard of St. Paul’s three years’ work. ***Ephesus, more than many other Metropolis, may well have represented its Province to the writer’s mind.***” [Moule, 27f] “Asia Minor is generally accepted as the geographical location of the readers. The letter itself, because of its very general nature, offers however no substantial clues to their location. There are no references to outside events like persecution or heresy which might enable us to tie it down, or at least to eliminate some possible areas....*It would be wrong to conclude that it can be definitely established that [the author] wrote for readers in Asia Minor but a stronger case can be made out for this area than any other and it should probably be accepted as the area of the intended readers.*” [Best, 4ff]

**SUMMATION: “IN EPHESUS” PART OF THE ORIGINAL / LETTER SENT TO EPHESUS WHICH INCLUDED CHURCHES IN THE LYCOS VALLEY AND SURROUNDING ASIA MINOR TERRITORY** — “Traditionally it is

**la-cu-na** (plural, **la-cu-nae**) — noun: an empty space or a missing part; a gap

understood that this letter was written to believers in Ephesus of Asia Minor. Because certain manuscripts omit the words ‘in Ephesus’ and because of the impersonal tone of the letter, some doubt that this letter was written by Paul to the Ephesians and this has engendered a great deal of discussion on the destination of this epistle.... [It is my conclusion] that the words ‘in Ephesus’ were most likely in the original manuscripts. Some suggest that this letter was encyclical and possibly the city name was omitted so that

Tychicus or anyone who read the letter could fill in the city’s name. However, there is no lacuna in any manuscript, even those which omit ‘in Ephesus,’ and no such lacunae exist in examples of letters in the ancient world. Moreover, the manuscripts which omit the city name after the participle [‘who are’], would read ‘to the saints and those who are faithful in Christ Jesus’ (cf. RSV, JB, NJB) which is grammatically awkward if not impossible. No other Pauline letter has this construction without the name of the city (see Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1).... It seems that the best solution is to retain [‘in Ephesus’] for it has good support from external and internal evidence. The acceptance of this reading has gained supporters (cf. AV, ASV, NASB, NEB, NIV, NRSV). The scenario may well have been not one large church but many house churches in the city of Ephesus and in western Asia Minor.... [Regarding the impersonal nature of the letter,] if this letter were to be read to several churches in the vicinity, the lack of personal greetings, as in some of the other Pauline letters, is understandable. It is not inconceivable that there were several churches in the area because on his third missionary journey Paul had ministered in Ephesus for around two and a half years. While resident in Ephesus he could well have established many churches, not only in the city but also in outlying villages. However, Ephesus would still have been the center of church activity and hence the letter was addressed to Ephesus.” [Hoehner, 78f]

**APPENDIX D: Scriptural Support the Word ‘saint, holy’ Means ‘set-apart’**

Several verses were mentioned above during our discussion of the word ‘saint.’ It was stated the essential meaning in both the OT and NT was that of being ‘set-apart, dedicated, consecrated’ irregardless of its moral aspect. Below are a couple of the verses mentioned above but prior to that, let us see the Hebrew words and their translations:

qādash = be hallowed, holy, sanctified, to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate

qōdesh = apartness, holiness, sacredness, hallowed, holy

qādosh = holy, holy one, saint

qādēsh = temple prostitute, male or female

Nothing surprising about these words until the last one, which seems so obviously out-of-place with the others. Here are a couple of the verses used above:

“There shall be no ritual harlot [qādēsh, noun feminine, ‘a temple prostitute’] of the daughters of Israel, or a perverted one [qādēsh, noun masculine, ‘a temple prostitute’] of the sons of Israel.” (Deut 23:17 NKJV) “No Israelite man or

woman is to become a shrine prostitute.” (Deut 23:17 NIV)

“And there were also perverted persons [qādēsh, noun masculine, ‘a temple prostitute’] in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.” (1 Kings 14:24 NKJV)

“There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.” (1 Kings 14:25 NIV)

“And he [Asa, good king of Judah] banished the perverted persons from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.” (1 Kings 15:12 NKJV) “He expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his fathers had made.” (1 Kings 15:12 NIV)

How could sodomites and temple prostitutes be considered ‘holy’? The answer comes when we consider the root meaning of the word itself: these sodomites and prostitutes were ‘holy’, i.e., they were ‘set-apart, dedicated, consecrated’ for a specific use. In this case the use for which they were dedicated was vulgar, pagan and we might even say satanic, yet they were ‘set-apart’ for that use.

*Have we destroyed the moral aspect of our word holy?* – quite the opposite. The moral aspect in regards to believers comes from the object to whom we are being ‘set-apart’ to serve: the infinitely good and moral Being of the universe! We are ‘holy’ (in the moral sense it is typically considered) because the Person we are ‘set-apart’ to serve is the ultimate moral authority. “Be ye holy for I am holy” says the Lord God Almighty.

This also highlights the sense in which we should God as we consider Him as ‘holy’. In Isaiah 6 we see the heavenly scene in which the angels constantly prostrate themselves before God’s throne crying ‘holy, holy, holy.’ We typically consider that as the angels essentially saying, “God, you are good, you are good, you are good” but it is more than that. Not only is that included in their praise to the Lord but it also includes, “Lord, You are Unique, You are ‘set-apart’, there is no one in the universe like You.” So it is more than “You are a good God” but rather “You are a good God and there is none like You!”

Considering the root meaning of the word ‘holy’ also places a little different stress upon our lives as believers. Yes we are to be ‘good’ and ‘moral’ but our holiness is to be more than that: we are to be ‘dedicated, separated, set-apart for His use’. Our lives are not our own, we belong to Him. That is also wrapped up in our word ‘holy, saint’.

### ***APPENDIX E: Follow-up on the General Usage of the word “Apostle”***

Above we discussed the word “apostle” being used in both a general and a specific sense throughout the New Testament. Very important to our study was the fact that the term came to refer to a distinct group of followers, chosen by Christ Himself to lay the foundation of His work after His death and resurrection. This was emphasized above. But what follows is a few more items of interest to our discussion:

Jesus told the Pharisees, “Therefore, indeed, I send [ἀποστέλλω, apostellō] you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city” (Matt 23:34 NKJV) It could be argued all of those sent by Christ were sent on an ‘apostolic mission,’ prophets, wise men and scribes.

The OT speaks of John the Baptist as being a ‘messenger’ (same word as ‘angel’) ‘sent with authority’ to prepare the way for Christ: “For this is he of whom it is written: ‘Behold, I send [ἀποστέλλω, apostellō] My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.’” (Matt 11:10 NKJV || Mark 1:2 || Luke 7:27)

The Seventy were ‘sent forth with authority’ from Christ: “Go your way; behold, I send [ἀποστέλλω, apostellō] you out as lambs among wolves.” (Luke 10:3 NKJV) Wuest: “Behold, I am sending you on a mission as lambs in the midst of wolves.” (Luke 10:3 Wuest)

The word is even used of the Pharisees sending forth their ministers ‘on an authoritative mission’: “And they [the Pharisees] sent [ἀποστέλλουσιν, apostellousin] to Him [Jesus] their disciples with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.’” (Matt 22:16 NKJV) Wuest translates this as follows: “Then the Pharisees having proceeded, took counsel with one another in order that they might ensnare Him in His discourse. And they sent off on a mission to Him their students with the Herodians, saying, ...”. (Matt 22:15,16 Wuest)

Note Mark’s version of the same event: “Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words.” (Mark 12:13 NKJV) Wuest: “And they sent to Him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians with a commission to snare Him in a statement.” (Mark 12:13 Wuest)

Angels are said to have been ‘sent with a commission, sent on a mission’: “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth [ἀποστελλόμενα, apostellomena] to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb 1:14 NKJV)

The angels not only are sent forth ‘with authority, with a commission, on a mission’ to help those being saved but will also be ‘sent forth’ during the time of reaping of the earth: “The Son of Man will send out [ἀποστελεῖ, apostelei] His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness” (Matt 13:41 NKJV)

And again: “And He will send [ἀποστελεῖ, apostelei] His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matt 24:31 NKJV)



I was surprised to learn the word usage in a related verse as Jesus spoke of the end of the age: “But when the grain ripens, immediately **he puts in** [ἀποστέλλει, apostellei] the sickle, because the harvest has come.” (Mark 4:29 NKJV) Wuest: “And whenever the fruit permits, immediately, he **sends forth** the sickle, because the harvest stands ready.” (Mark 4:29 Wuest) Interesting use of the word, is it not?

But the closest verse I found that might refer to all those who serve Christ was in the gospel of John: “Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is **he who is sent** [ἀπόστολος, apostolos; **the exact same word we translate ‘apostle’**] greater than he who sent him.” (John 13:16 NKJV) Note how other translations handle this verse:

ASV, KJV, NKJV, NAS, RSV = one that is sent

ESV, NIV = messenger

GNV = ambassador

YLT = apostle: “verily, verily, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his lord, nor an **apostle** greater than he who sent him” (John 13:16 YLT)

So in a very general sense all believers are ‘apostles,’ i.e., ‘*all believers have been sent on an authoritative mission to the unbelieving world.*’ This of course does not diminish the strict usage of the word ‘apostles’ when referring to the original twelve.

### ***APPENDIX F: the General and Specific Usage of the word “Deacon”***

What follows is material from a lesson taught years ago from Romans which illustrates the word ‘deacon’ also may be taken in both a general and specific sense.

**THE WORD “DEACON” MEANS SERVANT, MINISTER** — “The concept of serving is expressed in Greek by many words which are often hard to differentiate even though each has its own basic emphasis.

δουλεύω [douleuō] means to serve as a slave, with a stress on subjection.

θεραπεύω [therapeuō] emphasises willingness for service and the respect and concern thereby expressed (esp. towards God).

λατρεύω [latreuō] means to serve for wages. In NT days it had come to be used predominantly for religious or cultic duties.

λειτουργέω [leitourgeō] denotes official public service to the people or to the state, being used in the LXX for service in the temple and in Christianity for service in the church.

ὑπηρέτης [hupēretēs] means at root to steer. In terms of service, it signifies esp. the relation to the master to whom the service is rendered....

As distinct from all these terms, διακονέω [diakoneō] **has the special quality of indicating very personally the service rendered to another.** It is thus closest to ὑπηρετέω [hupēreteō], but in διακονέω [diakoneō] **there is a stronger approximation to the concept of a service of love.**” [Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the NT*, vol 2 pg 81] TDNT also notes the basic usage of the word outside of the NT was **“to wait on a table; to provide or care for”**

The Greeks thought serving others undignified. “How can a man be happy when he has to serve someone?” was the sophist formula. Judaism had a much deeper understanding of the meaning of service and was an acceptable status, especially in consideration to God (TDNT notes the LXX does not use the Greek word for deacon when translating the Hebrew; rather they use *douleuein*, *leitourgein* and *latreuein*).

In the NT: “Jesus’ view of service grows out of the OT command of love for one’s neighbour, which He takes and links with the command of love for God to constitute the substance of the divinely willed ethical conduct of His followers. In so doing, He purifies the concept of service from the distortions which it had suffered in Judaism. **Jesus’ attitude to service is completely new as compared with the Greek understanding. The decisive point is that He sees in it the thing which makes a man His disciple.**” [Kittel, *TDNT*, vol 2 pg 84]

The Greek word (and its cognates) used in the NT for “deacon” is as follows: diakoneō, used 37x and translated ‘minister, serve, administer, deacon;’ diakonia, used 34x and translated ‘ministry, service, minister, office, administrations;’ diakonos, used 30x and translated ‘minister, servant, deacon.’ That being so, it is not unusual to find the usage in its normal sense of “to wait at table”

*“Which of you, having a slave [doulos] plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come immediately and sit down to eat’? But will he not say to him, ‘Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink’?”* (Luke 17:7,8 NASB)

*“But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the servicing alone? Then tell her to help me.’”* (Luke 10:40 NASB)

*“So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was servicing; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him.”* (John 12:2 NASB)

*“Now Simon’s mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they spoke to Jesus about her. And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them.” (Mark 1:30,31 NASB)*

This also is used in a wider sense of “to be serviceable”:

*“Soon afterwards, He began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing [lit. were ministering] to their support out of their private means.” (Luke 8:1-3 NASB)*

*“Many women were there looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee while ministering to Him.” (Matt 27:55 NASB)*

Note in the following verses the service rendered includes clothing, feeding, ministering, providing shelter, visiting the sick and prisoners:

*“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’” (Matt 25:41-44 NASB)*

Note in the following verses Peter speaks of our spiritual gifts being given for us to be servants (deacons) towards one another:

*“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Pet 4:10,11 NASB)*

The same comment might be made by Paul:

*“if service, in his servicing; or he who teaches, in his teaching” (Rom 12:7 NASB)*

Paul uses the word to describe himself taking the offering to Jerusalem:

*“but now, I am going to Jerusalem servicing the saints.” (Rom 15:25 NASB)*

**THE WORD “DEACON” WAS WIDELY APPLIED TO THOSE WHO SERVE** — In regards to the work of a deacon, all believers are to be “deacons”:

*“But the greatest among you shall be your servant.” (Matt 23:11 NASB)*

Governmental authorities are referred to as “deacons”:

*“for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.” (Rom 13:4 NASB)*

Paul states he is a “deacon”:

*“Are they servants of Christ? — I speak as if insane — I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.” (2 Cor 11:23 NASB)*

*“but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses” (2 Cor 6:4 NASB)*

*“of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.” (Eph 3:7 NASB)*

*“if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.” (Col 1:23 NASB)*

Paul called all ministers “deacons”:

*“What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.” (1 Cor 3:5 NASB)*

*“who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Cor 3:6 NASB)*

Satan is said to have “deacons”:

*“No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.” (2 Cor 11:14,15 NASB)*

Individuals are named as “deacons”:

*“And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith” (1 Thes 3:2 KJV)*

*“But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.” (Eph 6:21 NASB)*

*“just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf” (Col 1:7 NASB)*

Jesus Himself was called a “deacon”:

*“For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers” (Rom 15:8 NASB)*

**THE ORIGINAL OFFICE OF THE DEACONS WAS ONE OF SERVICE, NOT SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP** — From those beginnings of the act of serving came the office of deacon: “Members of the community who are called deacons in virtue of their regular activity are first found in Phil. 1:1, where Paul sends greetings to all the saints in Philippi [with bishops and deacons]. *Already in this phrase there emerges a decisive point for our understanding of the office, namely, that the deacons are linked with the bishops and mentioned after them. At the time of this epistle there are thus two co-ordinated offices.... That the diaconate stands in the closest relationship to the episcopate is confirmed by 1 Tm. 3:1ff. Here an account is first given of the way in which a bishop must conduct himself (vv. 1-7), and this is followed by a list of the requirements for a deacon (vv. 8-13).*” [Kittle, *TDNT*, vol 2 pg 89f]