BECNT

EPHESIANS

BAKER EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

FRANK THIELMAN

EPHESIANS

Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

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FRANK THIELMAN

Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

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Series Preface

The chief concern of the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (BECNT) is to provide, within the framework of informed evangelical thought, commentaries that blend scholarly depth with readability, exegetical detail with sensitivity to the whole, and attention to critical problems with theological awareness. We hope thereby to attract the interest of a fairly wide audience, from the scholar who is looking for a thoughtful and independent examination of the text to the motivated lay Christian who craves a solid but accessible exposition.

Nevertheless, a major purpose is to address the needs of pastors and others involved in the preaching and exposition of the Scriptures as the uniquely inspired Word of God. This consideration affects directly the parameters of the series. For example, serious biblical expositors cannot afford to depend on a superficial treatment that avoids the difficult questions, but neither are they interested in encyclopedic commentaries that seek to cover every conceivable issue that may arise. Our aim, therefore, is to focus on those problems that have a direct bearing on the meaning of the text (although selected technical details are treated in the additional notes).

Similarly, a special effort is made to avoid treating exegetical questions for their own sake, that is, in relative isolation from the thrust of the argument as a whole. This effort may involve (at the discretion of the individual contributors) abandoning the verse-by-verse approach in favor of an exposition that focuses on the paragraph as the main unit of thought. In all cases, however, the commentaries will stress the development of the argument and explicitly relate each passage to what precedes and follows it so as to identify its function in context as clearly as possible.

We believe, moreover, that a responsible exegetical commentary must take fully into account the latest scholarly research, regardless of its source. The attempt to do this in the context of a conservative theological tradition presents certain challenges, and in the past the results have not always been commendable. In some cases, evangelicals appear to make use of critical scholarship not for the purpose of genuine interaction but only to dismiss it. In other cases, the interaction glides over into assimilation, theological distinctives are ignored or suppressed, and the end product cannot be differentiated from works that arise from a fundamentally different starting point.

The contributors to this series attempt to avoid these pitfalls. On the one hand, they do not consider traditional opinions to be sacrosanct, and they

are certainly committed to doing justice to the biblical text whether or not it supports such opinions. On the other hand, they will not quickly abandon a long-standing view, if there is persuasive evidence in its favor, for the sake of fashionable theories. What is more important, the contributors share a belief in the trustworthiness and essential unity of Scripture. They also consider that the historic formulations of Christian doctrine, such as the ecumenical creeds and many of the documents originating in the sixteenth-century Reformation, arose from a legitimate reading of Scripture, thus providing a proper framework for its further interpretation. No doubt the use of such a starting point sometimes results in the imposition of a foreign construct on the text, but we deny that it must necessarily do so or that the writers who claim to approach the text without prejudices are invulnerable to the same danger.

Accordingly, we do not consider theological assumptions—from which, in any case, no commentator is free—to be obstacles to biblical interpretation. On the contrary, an exegete who hopes to understand the apostle Paul in a theological vacuum might just as easily try to interpret Aristotle without regard for the philosophical framework of his whole work or without having recourse to those subsequent philosophical categories that make possible a meaningful contextualization of his thought. It must be emphasized, however, that the contributors to the present series come from a variety of theological traditions and that they do not all have identical views with regard to the proper implementation of these general principles. In the end, all that matters is whether the series succeeds in representing the original text accurately, clearly, and meaningfully to the contemporary reader.

Shading has been used to assist the reader in locating salient sections of the treatment of each passage: introductory comments and concluding summaries. Textual variants in the Greek text are signaled in the author's translation by means of half-brackets around the relevant word or phrase (e.g., ⌜Gerasenes⌝), thereby alerting the reader to turn to the additional notes at the end of each exegetical unit for a discussion of the textual problem. The documentation uses the author-date method, in which the basic reference consists of author's surname + year + page number(s): Fitzmyer 1992: 58. The only exceptions to this system are well-known reference works (e.g., BDAG, LSJ, *TDNT*). Full publication data and a complete set of indexes can be found at the end of the volume.

Robert W. Yarbrough
Robert H. Stein

Author's Preface

Many people provided substantial encouragement and practical help in my work on this commentary, and I wish to express my sincerest thanks to them all. My greatest debt is to my wife and children, and particularly to my wife, Abigail, for her constant encouragement from beginning to end. Dean Timothy George, Associate Dean Paul House, and many others within the community of Beeson Divinity School provided not only the time and practical resources necessary for producing such a book but also an environment of friendship, academic rigor, and Christian nurture that made the already-enjoyable task of working on Ephesians even more pleasant. In particular, Mike Garrett, theological librarian at Samford University, gave enormous help in acquiring and locating books and articles. Robert Yarbrough, Wells Turner, and the editorial team at Baker Academic read the manuscript with meticulous attention to detail and provided a wealth of perceptive suggestions for its improvement. The book is much better than it would have otherwise been because of their involvement, and I am deeply grateful for the time and thought they devoted to it.

Thanks also to the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* for use of material copyrighted by the *TLG* and the Regents of the University of California. The *TLG* provided assistance in puzzling out the meaning of many Greek terms and supplied access to a number of Greek texts that would have otherwise been difficult or impossible for me to consult.

It is hard to imagine a more edifying, enriching text on which to work than Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have labored over its interpretation for this commentary. My prayer is that the commentary would quickly get out of the way after bringing the reader to the text, and that the text would, in its turn, help the reader understand the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ.

Frank Thielman
Lent 2010

Abbreviations

Bibliographic and General

א	Codex Sinaiticus
ACCSNT	*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament*, edited by Thomas G. Oden, 12 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998–2005)
Alex.	Codex Alexandrinus
ANF	*Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, revised by A. C. Coxe, 10 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994)
b.	Babylonian Talmud
B	Codex Vaticanus
BDAG	*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, by W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)
BDF	*A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, by F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961)
BDR	*Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, by F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and F. Rehkopf, 18th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001)
BNP	*Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, edited by Hubert Cancik et al., 10 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2002–)
cent.	century
CWE	*Collected Works of Erasmus*, edited by P. G. Bietenholz et al., 86 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974–)
DDD	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst (Leiden: Brill, 1999)
EDNT	*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by H. Balz and G. Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990)
Eng.	English (versification in English Bibles)
ESV	English Standard Version
frag.	fragment
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, J. J. Stamm, and M. E. J. Richardson, study ed., 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2001)
HDCLA	*Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities*, by H. T. Peck (New York: Cooper Square, 1962)
inscr.	inscription
KJV	King James Version
LEH	*Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, compiled by J. Lust, E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie, rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003)
LSJ	*A Greek-English Lexicon*, by H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, 9th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940)

LSJSup	*Greek-English Lexicon Revised Supplement*, edited by P. G. W. Glare and A. A. Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996)
LXX	Septuagint (the Old Testament in Greek)
m.	Mishnah
𝔐	Majority text
MHT	*A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, by J. H. Moulton, W. F. Howard, and N. Turner, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1906–76)
MM	*The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources*, by J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959)
MT	Masoretic Text
NewDocs	*New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, edited by G. H. R. Horsley and S. Llewelyn, 8 vols. (North Ryde, NSW, Australia: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1980–98)
NA^{25}	*Novum Testamentum Graece*, edited by E. Nestle, 25th ed. (London: United Bible Societies, 1963)
NA^{27}	*Novum Testamentum Graece*, edited by Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, and B. M. Metzger, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993)
NAB	New American Bible
NETS	*A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, edited by A. Pietersma and B. G. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, edited by P. Schaff, 14 vols. (repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952–57)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
OG	Old Greek (version of the Greek Old Testament)
OT	Old Testament
OTP	*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, edited by J. H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983–85)
𝔓	papyrus, as for $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$
pace	in respectful disagreement with
PG	*Patrologia graeca* [= *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*], edited by J.-P. Migne, 161 vols (Paris: Migne, 1857–66)
PGL	*A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, edited by G. W. H. Lampe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961)
prol.	prologue
REB	Revised English Bible
rec.	recension
RSV	Revised Standard Version
Sin.	Codex Sinaiticus = ℵ
Smyth	*Greek Grammar*, by H. W. Smyth, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956)
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, translated and edited by G. W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)
Tg.	Targum
Theod.	Theodotion (version of the Greek Old Testament)
TLG	*Thesaurus Linguae Graecae: A Digital Library of Greek Literature* (Irvine: University of California)

TLNT	*Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, by Ceslas Spicq, 3 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994)
TNIV	Today's New International Version
TNTGH	*Neuer Wettstein: Texte zum Neuen Testament aus Griechentum und Hellenismus*, 2 vols. in 3 parts (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996)
UBS[4]	*The Greek New Testament*, edited by B. Aland et al., 4th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994)
Vat.	Codex Vaticanus = B

Hebrew Bible

Gen.	Genesis	2 Chron.	2 Chronicles	Dan.	Daniel
Exod.	Exodus	Ezra	Ezra	Hos.	Hosea
Lev.	Leviticus	Neh.	Nehemiah	Joel	Joel
Num.	Numbers	Esth.	Esther	Amos	Amos
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Job	Job	Obad.	Obadiah
Josh.	Joshua	Ps.	Psalms	Jon.	Jonah
Judg.	Judges	Prov.	Proverbs	Mic.	Micah
Ruth	Ruth	Eccles.	Ecclesiastes	Nah.	Nahum
1 Sam.	1 Samuel	Song	Song of Songs	Hab.	Habakkuk
2 Sam.	2 Samuel	Isa.	Isaiah	Zeph.	Zephaniah
1 Kings	1 Kings	Jer.	Jeremiah	Hag.	Haggai
2 Kings	2 Kings	Lam.	Lamentations	Zech.	Zechariah
1 Chron.	1 Chronicles	Ezek.	Ezekiel	Mal.	Malachi

Greek Testament

Matt.	Matthew	Eph.	Ephesians	Heb.	Hebrews
Mark	Mark	Phil.	Philippians	James	James
Luke	Luke	Col.	Colossians	1 Pet.	1 Peter
John	John	1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians	2 Pet.	2 Peter
Acts	Acts	2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians	1 John	1 John
Rom.	Romans	1 Tim.	1 Timothy	2 John	2 John
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians	2 Tim.	2 Timothy	3 John	3 John
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians	Titus	Titus	Jude	Jude
Gal.	Galatians	Philem.	Philemon	Rev.	Revelation

Other Jewish and Christian Writings

Acts Paul	Acts of Paul and Thecla	Bar.	Baruch
Add. Esth.	Additions to Esther	2 Bar.	2 Baruch (Syriac Apocalypse)
Adv. Eunom.	Basil the Great, of Caesarea, *Adversus Eunomium* (*Against Eunomius*)	3 Bar.	3 Baruch (Greek Apocalypse)
An.	Tertullian, *De anima* (*On the Soul*)	Barn.	Barnabas
Antichr.	Hippolytus, *De antichristo* (*On the Antichrist*)	Bel	Bel and the Dragon
Apoc. Mos.	Apocalypse of Moses	*Cels.*	Origen, *Contra Celsum* (*Against Celsus*)
Apol.	*Apologia* (*Apology*)	1–2 Clem.	1–2 Clement
1 Apol.	Justin, *Apologia i* (First Apology)	*Comm. Dan.*	Hippolytus, *Commentary on Daniel*

Dial.	Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* (*Dialogue with Trypho*)
Did.	Didache
Diogn.	Diognetus
Doctr. chr.	Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* (*On Christian Instruction*)
1 En.	1 Enoch
1 Esd.	1 Esdras (in the Apocrypha)
2 Esd.	2 Esdras (4 Ezra)
2 Esd.	2 Esdras LXX (Ezra and Nehemiah in MT, Eng.)
Exod. Rab.	Exodus Rabbah
Haer.	Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* (*Against Heresies*); or Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (*Refutation of All Heresies*)
Herm. *Mand.*	Shepherd of Hermas, *Mandate*
Herm. *Sim.*	Shepherd of Hermas, *Similitude*
Herm. *Vis.*	Shepherd of Hermas, *Vision*
Hist. eccl.	Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* (*Ecclesiastical History*)
hom.	homily
Hom. Eph.	Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*
Ign. *Eph.*	Ignatius, *To the Ephesians*
Ign. *Magn.*	Ignatius, *To the Magnesians*
Ign. *Phld.*	Ignatius, *To the Philadelphians*
Ign. *Pol.*	Ignatius, *To Polycarp*
Ign. *Smyrn.*	Ignatius, *To the Smyrnaeans*
Ign. *Trall.*	Ignatius, *To the Trallians*
Jdt.	Judith
Jos. Asen.	Joseph and Aseneth
Jub.	Jubilees
L.A.E.	Life of Adam and Eve
Leg.	Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis*
Let. Arist.	Letter of Aristeas
1–4 Macc.	1–4 Maccabees
Marc.	Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* (*Against Marcion*)
Mart. Pol.	Martyrdom of Polycarp
Midr. Teh.	Midrash Tehillim (Midrash on Psalms)
Odes	Odes following Psalms in LXX
Or. graec.	Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* (*Address to the Greeks*)
Paed.	Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* (*Christ the Educator*)
Pan.	Epiphanius, *Panarion* (*Refutation of All Heresies*)
Pesiq. Rab.	Pesiqta Rabbati
Pol. *Phil.*	Polycarp, *To the Philippians*
Pr. Man.	Prayer of Manasseh (Odes 12 LXX)
Praep. ev.	Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* (*Preparation for the Gospel*)
Protr.	Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* (*Exhortation to the Greeks*)
Ps.-Phoc.	The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides
Pss. Sol.	Psalms of Solomon
Ruf.	Jerome, *Adversus Rufinum libri III*
Sib. Or.	Sibylline Oracles
Sir.	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
Strom.	Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* (*Miscellanies*)
T. Ab.	Testament of Abraham
T. Benj.	Testament of Benjamin
T. Dan	Testament of Dan
T. Gad	Testament of Gad
T. Iss.	Testament of Issachar
T. Job	Testament of Job
T. Jos.	Testament of Joseph
T. Jud.	Testament of Judah
T. Levi	Testament of Levi
T. Mos.	Testament of Moses
T. Naph.	Testament of Naphtali
T. Reu.	Testament of Reuben
T. Sol.	Testament of Solomon
Trad. ap.	Hippolytus, *Traditio apostolica* (*The Apostolic Tradition*)
Wis.	Wisdom of Solomon

Josephus and Philo

Ag. Ap.	Josephus, *Against Apion*
Abraham	Philo, *On the Life of Abraham*
Agriculture	Philo, *On Agriculture*
Alleg. Interp.	Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation*
Ant.	Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*
Confusion	Philo, *On the Confusion of Tongues*
Creation	Philo, *On the Creation of the World*
Decalogue	Philo, *On the Decalogue*
Dreams	Philo, *On Dreams*
Drunkenness	Philo, *On Drunkenness*
Embassy	Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius*
Eternity	Philo, *On the Eternity of the World*
Flight	Philo, *On Flight and Finding*
Good Person	Philo, *That Every Good Person Is Free*
Heir	Philo, *Who Is the Heir?*
Hypoth.	Philo, *Hypothetica* (*Apology for the Jews*)
Joseph	Philo, *On the Life of Joseph*
J.W.	Josephus, *Jewish War*
Life	Josephus, *The Life*
Moses	Philo, *On the Life of Moses*
Names	Philo, *On the Change of Names*
Planting	Philo, *On Planting*
Posterity	Philo, *On the Posterity of Cain*
Prelim. Studies	Philo, *On the Preliminary Studies*
Providence	Philo, *On Providence*
QG	Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*
Rewards	Philo, *On Rewards and Punishments*
Sacrifices	Philo, *On the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel*
Spec. Laws	Philo, *On the Special Laws*
Unchangeable	Philo, *That God Is Unchangeable*
Virtues	Philo, *On the Virtues*
Worse	Philo, *That the Worse Attacks the Better*

Rabbinic Tractates

The abbreviations below are used for the names of the tractates in the Mishnah (indicated by a prefixed *m.*), Tosefta (*t.*), Babylonian Talmud (*b.*), and Jerusalem/Palestinian Talmud (*y.*).

ʾAbot	*ʾAbot*
Ber.	*Berakot*
Ned.	*Nedarim*
Peʾah	*Peʾah*
Qidd.	*Qiddušin*
Šabb.	*Šabbat*
Sanh.	*Sanhedrin*

Qumran / Dead Sea Scrolls

CD-A	Damascus Document[a]
1Q27	Mysteries
1Qap Gen[ar]	Fragments of Genesis Apocryphon in Aramaic
1QH[a]	Thanksgiving Hymns/Psalms (*Hodayot*[a])
1QM	War Scroll (*Milḥamah*)
1QS	Rule of the Community (*Serek Hayyaḥad*)
1QSb	Rule of the Blessings (=1Q28b)
4Q403	Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice[d]
4Q404	Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice[e]
4Q429	4QHodayot[c]
4Q434	Bless, Oh My Soul[a]
4Q502	Ritual of a Marriage
4Q504	Words of the Luminaries[a]
4Q512	Ritual of Purification
4Q521	Messianic Apocalypse

Greek Papyri and Inscriptions

CPR	*Corpus papyrorum Raineri* (Vienna: Kaiserl. Königl. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1895–)
DK	*Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, edited by H. A. Diels and W. Kranz, 7th ed., 3 vols. (Berlin: Weidmannsche, 1954)
FGH	*Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*, edited by F. Jacoby, 3 parts (Leiden: Brill, 1954–64)
IG	*Inscriptiones graecae*, editio minor (Berlin, 1924–)
I. Magnesia Sip.	*Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*, vol. 8: *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Sipylos*, edited by T. Ihnken (Bonn: Habelt, 1978)
OGIS	*Orientis graeci inscriptiones selectae: Supplementum sylloges inscriptionum graecarum*, edited by W. Dittenberger, 2 vols. (Hildesheim: Olms, 1960)
P.Eleph.	*Aegyptische Urkunden aus den königlichen Museen in Berlin: Griechische Urkunden*, Sonderheft: *Elephantine-Papyri*, edited by O. Rubensohn et al. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1907)
PGM	*The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells*, vol. 1: *Texts*, edited by H. D. Betz, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992)
P.Haun.	*Papyri graecae hauniensis*, fasc. 2: *Letters and Mummy Labels from Roman Egypt*, edited with translation and commentary by A. Bülow-Jacobsen (Bonn: Habelt, 1981)
P.Hib.	*The Hibeh Papyri*, vol. 1, edited and translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt; Greco-Roman Memoirs 7 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1906)
P.Oxy.	*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, edited by B. P. Grenfell et al., 73 vols. (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1898–2009)
P.Ryl.	*Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester*, vol. 2: *Documents of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods*, edited by J. de M. Johnson, V. Martin, and A. S. Hunt (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1915)
SIG	*Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum*, edited by W. Dittenberger, 3rd ed., 4 vols. (Hildesheim: Olms, 1982)
SVF	*Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, collected by Ioannes ab Arnim, 4 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1905–24; repr., Dubuque, IA: Brown, n.d.)

Classical Writers

Adul. amic.	Plutarch, *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* (*How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*)
Aen.	Virgil, *Aeneid*
Ag. Cleom.	Plutarch, *Agis et Cleomenes* (*Agis and Cleomenes*)
Aj.	Sophocles, *Ajax*
Ant.	Plutarch, *Antonius* (*Antony*)
Ant. rom.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates romanae* (*Roman Antiquities*)
Apol.	various authors, *Apologia* (*Apology*)
Apoph. lac.	Pseudo-Plutarch, *Apophthegmata laconica* (*Sayings of Spartans*)
Arist.	Plutarch, *Aristides*
Att.	Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* (*Letters to Atticus*)
Autol.	Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* (*To Autolycus*)
Bell. Cat.	Sallust, *Bellum Catalinae* (*Conspiracy of Catiline*)
Bell. civ.	Appian, *Bella civilia* (*Civil Wars*)
Ben.	Seneca, *De beneficiis* (*On Benefits*)
Biblio. hist.	Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historia* (*Library of History*)
Bis acc.	Lucian, *Bis accusatus* (*The Double Indictment*)
Chaer.	Chariton, *De Chaerea et Callirhoe* (*Chaereas and Callirhoe*)
Cho.	Aeschylus, *Choephori* (*Libation-Bearers*)
Cic.	Plutarch, *Cicero*
Cohib. ira	Plutarch, *De cohibenda ira* (*On the Control of Anger*)
Comp.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De compositione verborum* (*On Literary Composition*)
Conj. praec.	Plutarch, *Conjugalia praecepta* (*Advice to Bride and Groom*)
Corp. herm.	*Corpus hermeticum*
Cyr.	Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* (*The Education of Cyrus*)
Def.	Pseudo-Plato, *Definitiones* (*Definitions*); or Heron, *Definitiones* (*Definitions*)
Deipn.	Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* (*Banquet of the Learned*)
Demon.	Isocrates, *Ad Demonicum* (*To Demonicus*)
Descr.	Pausanias, *Graeciae descriptio* (*Description of Greece*)
Dom.	Lucian, *De domo* (*The Hall*); or Suetonius, *Domitian*
Eccl.	Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* (*Women of the Assembly*)
El.	Sophocles, *Elektra*
Eloc.	Demetrius, *De elocutione* (*On Style*)
Ep.	*Epistula(e)* (*Epistle[s]*)
Epict. diss.	Arrian, *Epicteti dissertationes* (*Discourses of Epictetus*)
Epig.	Martial, *Epigrammaton libri* (Epigrams)
Eth. eud.	Aristotle, *Ethica eudemia* (*Eudemian Ethics*)
Eth. Nic.	Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* (*Nicomachean Ethics*)
Fab.	Aesop, *Fabulae* (*Fables*)
Flor.	Joannes Stobaeus, *Florilegium*
Frat. amor.	Plutarch, *De fraterno amore* (*On Brotherly Love*)
Garr.	Plutarch, *De garrulitate* (*On Talkativeness*)
Gen. an.	Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* (*On the Generation of Animals*)
Geogr.	Strabo, *Geographica* (*Geography*)
Heracl.	Euripides, *Heraclidae* (*Children of Hercules*)
Hermot.	Lucian, *Hermotimus*
Hipp.	Euripides, *Hippolytus*

Hist.	*Historiae* (*Histories*)
Hist. an.	Aristotle, *Historia animalium* (*History of Animals*)
Hist. Emp.	Herodian, *History of the Empire from the Death of Marcus*
Id.	Theocritus, *Idylls*
Il.	Homer, *Iliad*
In cont.	Dio Chrysostom, *In contione* (*Political Address in the Assembly*)
Inst.	Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* (*The Orator's Education*)
Iph. taur.	Euripides, *Iphigenia taurica* (*Iphigeneia at Tauris*)
Ira	Seneca, *De ira* (*On Anger*)
Laps.	Lucian, *Pro lapsu inter salutandum* (*A Slip of the Tongue in Greeting*)
Leg.	Plato, *Leges* (*Laws*)
Lib. ed.	Pseudo-Plutarch, *De liberis educandis* (*On the Education of Children*)
Lys.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De Lysia* (*On Lysias*)
Med.	Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*
Men.	Lucian, *Menippus*
Metam.	Ovid, *Metamorphoses*
Mor.	Plutarch, *Moralia* (*Moral Essays*)
Nat. an.	Aelian, *De natura animalium* (*On the Nature of Animals*)
Od.	Homer, *Odyssea* (*Odyssey*)
Oec.	Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* (*The Economist*); or Pseudo-Aristotle, *Oeconomica* (*Economics*)
Oed. col.	Sophocles, *Oedipus coloneus* (*Oedipus at Colonus*)
Off.	Cicero, *De officiis* (*On Obligations*)
Oneir.	Artemidorus Daldianus, *Oneirocritica* (*The Interpretation of Dreams*)
Or.	Oratio (Oration)
Part. or.	Cicero, *Partitiones oratoriae* (*The Parts of Oratory*)
Pel. War	Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*
Peregr.	Lucian, *De morte Peregrini* (*On the Passing of Peregrinus*)
Philops.	Lucian, *Philopseudes* (*The Lover of Lies*)
Plut.	Aristophanes, *Plutus* (*The Rich Man*)
Pol.	Aristotle, *Politica* (*Politics*)
Pomp.	Plutarch, *Pompeius* (*Pompey*)
Prot.	Plato, *Protagoras*
Pyrrh.	Plutarch, *Pyrrhus* (*The Life of Pyrrhus*)
Ran.	Aristophanes, *Ranae* (*Frogs*)
Resp.	Plato, *Respublica* (*Republic*)
Rhet.	Aristotle, *Rhetorica* (*Rhetoric*)
Rom. Hist.	Cassius Dio, *Roman History*
Sat.	Horace, *Satirae* (*Satires*); or Juvenal, *Satirae* (*Satires*)
Satyr.	Petronius, *The Satyricon* (*The Satyr*)
Soph.	Plato, *Sophista* (*Sophist*)
Strat.	Polyaenus, *Stratēgēmata* (*Strategems of War*)
Symp.	Xenophon, *Symposium*
Theaet.	Plato, *Theaetetus*
Tusc.	Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* (*Tusculan Disputations*)
Var. hist.	Aelian, *Varia historia* (*Various Histories*)
Vit. phil.	Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers*)

Transliteration

Hebrew

א	ʾ
ב	*b*
ג	*g*
ד	*d*
ה	*h*
ו	*w*
ז	*z*
ח	*ḥ*
ט	*ṭ*
י	*y*
כ/ך	*k*
ל	*l*
מ/ם	*m*
נ/ן	*n*
ס	*s*
ע	ʿ
פ/ף	*p*
צ/ץ	*ṣ*
ק	*q*
ר	*r*
שׂ	*ś*
שׁ	*š*
ת	*t*

◌ָ	*ā*	*qāmeṣ*
◌ַ	*a*	*pataḥ*
◌ַ	*a*	furtive *pataḥ*
◌ֶ	*e*	*sĕgôl*
◌ֵ	*ē*	*ṣērê*
◌ִ	*i*	short *ḥîreq*
◌ִי	*ī*	long *ḥîreq* written defectively
◌ָ	*o*	*qāmeṣ ḥāṭûp*
◌ֹו	*ô*	*ḥôlem* written fully
◌ֹ	*ō*	*ḥôlem* written defectively
◌ֻו	*û*	*šûreq*
◌ֻ	*u*	short *qibbûṣ*
◌ֻ	*ū*	long *qibbûṣ* written defectively
◌ָה	*â*	final *qāmeṣ hēʾ* (◌ָה = *āh*)
◌ֶי	*ê*	*sĕgôl yôd* (◌ֶי = *êy*)
◌ֵי	*ê*	*ṣērê yôd* (◌ֵי = *êy*)
◌ִי	*î*	*ḥîreq yôd* (◌ִי = *îy*)
◌ֲ	*ă*	*ḥāṭēp pataḥ*
◌ֱ	*ĕ*	*ḥāṭēp sĕgôl*
◌ֳ	*ŏ*	*ḥāṭēp qāmeṣ*
◌ְ	*ĕ*	vocal *šĕwāʾ*

Notes on the Transliteration of Hebrew

1. Accents are not shown in transliteration.
2. Silent *šĕwāʾ* is not indicated in transliteration.
3. The spirant forms ב ג ד כ פ ת are usually not specially indicated in transliteration.
4. *Dāgēš forte* is indicated by doubling the consonant. Euphonic *dāgēš* and *dāgēš lene* are not indicated in transliteration.
5. *Maqqēp* is represented by a hyphen.

Greek

α	*a*	η	*ē*	ν	*n*	τ	*t*	῾	*h*
β	*b*	θ	*th*	ξ	*x*	υ	*y*/*u*		
γ	*g*/*n*	ι	*i*	ο	*o*	φ	*ph*		
δ	*d*	κ	*k*	π	*p*	χ	*ch*		
ε	*e*	λ	*l*	ρ	*r*	ψ	*ps*		
ζ	*z*	μ	*m*	σ/ς	*s*	ω	*ō*		

Notes on the Transliteration of Greek

1. Accents, lenis (smooth breathing), and *iota* subscript are not shown in transliteration.
2. The transliteration of asper (rough breathing) precedes a vowel or diphthong (e.g., ἁ = *ha*; αἱ = *hai*) and follows ρ (i.e., ῥ = *rh*).
3. *Gamma* is transliterated *n* only when it precedes γ, κ, ξ, or χ.
4. *Upsilon* is transliterated *u* only when it is part of a diphthong (i.e., αυ, ευ, ου, υι).

THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE FIRST CENTURY AD

Introduction to Ephesians

The Authorship of Ephesians

Although Ephesians presents itself unambiguously as a letter from Paul the apostle, the genuineness of this claim has frequently been questioned, beginning in the late eighteenth century (Hoehner 2002: 6). At first this may seem surprising, but the practice of composing fictional letters in the name of some influential person was reasonably common in Greco-Roman antiquity and seems to have been particularly popular from the third century BC to the first century AD.[1]

The practical reasons and moral justification for the practice were varied and complex. Some pseudonymous letters were probably innocent fictions. The ten *Epistles of Anacharsis*, supposedly from a Scythian prince to various influential Greeks, puts Cynic philosophy and morals into the mouth of a well-known non-Greek from the sixth century BC. The fictional nature of the corpus becomes patently clear in epistle 7, addressed to "Tereus, the Cruel Despot of Thrace" (Malherbe 1977: 45). Any attentive reader would realize that if Anacharsis were really writing to the king of Thrace, he would not begin with an insult, however disapproving he may have been of the king's rule. The insult, says Rosenmeyer (2001: 211), was instead for the entertainment of the readers of the corpus. Here, then, the author of the letter was not trying to deceive but to provide entertaining instruction.

Just as clearly, however, pseudonymous letters were sometimes written to deceive their readers. Donelson has made a good case that the author of "Plato's" *Ep.* 12 intended to deceive the document's readers into thinking it was a real letter from Plato to "Archytas."[2] This brief missive acknowledges receipt of certain treatises from Archytas, and Plato claims to have "the utmost possible admiration" for the author of these treatises. *Epistle* 12 also serves as a cover letter for certain treatises that Plato is sending to Archytas, which, although incomplete, Archytas is to preserve according to a prearranged plan between the two that Plato mentions but does not describe. The letter seems to be part of an ingenious scheme to provide Plato's own approval for treatises

1. Metzger (1972: 10) comments, "There is scarcely an illustrious personality in Greek literature or history from Themistocles down to Alexander, who was not credited with a more or less extensive correspondence." Cf. the list in Rosenmeyer 2001: 194. For the texts of many of these letters, see Hercher 1873; and for a more accessible sampling, see Malherbe 1977.

2. Bury (1961: 607) points out that the authentic Plato spelled this name "Archytes."

that the real author of the letter has himself forged (Donelson 1986: 25–26; cf. Bury 1961: 607; Wilder 2004: 100–101).[3]

Similarly, a number of the pseudonymous Socratic epistles describe networks of specifically named friends and attend to often-elaborate details of everyday life in ways that look realistic. *Epistle* 21, from the Socratic "Aeschines to Xanthippe, the wife of Socrates," for example, opens with the information that Aeschines "gave Euphron of Megara six measures of barley meal and eight drachma and a new coat for you so that you can make it through the winter" (Malherbe 1977: 271, trans. S. K. Stowers; Donelson 1986: 33). Donelson thinks these attempts at verisimilitude serve two purposes. They give the letters the necessary air of reality to make their readers believe they are genuine, and once this conviction is established, the people presented in the letters, particularly Socrates, then become examples of how the Cynic philosopher should live (Donelson 1986: 33–42; Wilder 2004: 99).

Between honest fiction and forgery lay a whole range of possibilities. The letters supposedly from Socrates in the *Epistles of Socrates and the Socratics*, for example, contain a number of references to the details of everyday life that may betray the author's effort to deceive his readers into thinking the letters are genuine (Wilder 2004: 95).[4] But they also contain third-person references to "Socrates." These references give away the letters' fictional nature so obviously that it is difficult to think the author was intentionally trying to deceive anyone.[5] It is difficult to tell, then, whether the author intended to deceive the letters' readers or only to create a realistic fictional setting for letters that he intended his readers to regard as imaginative.

Although the body of evidence for pseudonymous Christian letters in antiquity is slim, they probably fell along a similar continuum. It is easy to think that the fictional exchanges of letters between Paul and the Corinthians, Paul and Seneca, and Christ and Abgar, for example, were honest fictions. Their form as an exchange of correspondence may have been intended to signal that they were not authentic documents but edifying fabrications.

There is also ample evidence, however, for deceptive pseudonymity in the early Christian movement, some of it unscrupulous. By the second century, letters to the Laodiceans and Alexandrians were circulating in support of Marcion's heresy, but as the Muratorian Canon puts it, they were "forged in Paul's name" (63–65, trans. Metzger 1987: 307). A different letter from "Paul" to the Laodiceans appeared around the same time and is itself an attempt to deceive but nevertheless urges its readers not to "be deceived by the

3. A similar deception may lie behind the opening of *Ep.* 13 (which follows "Plato's" trademark epistolary greeting, "Do well"): "Let this greeting not only commence my letter but serve at the same time as a token that is from me" (trans. Bury 1961).

4. E.g., "Mneson of Amphipolis was introduced to me in Potidaea" (*Ep.* 3.1; Malherbe 1977: 229, trans. S. K. Stowers).

5. E.g., "You have not understood correctly if you think that Socrates would do something for money which he had not already decided to do without charge" (*Ep.* 1.21–23; Malherbe 1977: 221, trans. S. K. Stowers; cf. Rosenmeyer 2001: 208).

vain talk of some people who tell tales that they may lead you away from the truth of the gospel which is proclaimed by me" (3).[6] The Pseudo-Clementine Homilies, probably written early in the third century, begin with a "letter" of Peter to James that is concerned to keep Peter's "word of truth" free from misrepresentation (2.2; cf. 3.2), but expresses this concern in a document forged in Peter's name. The late fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions (1.1; *ANF* 7:391) was forged to look as if it were a letter written by "the apostles and elders to all those who from among the Gentiles have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ," and yet it includes an entire paragraph warning its readers not to "receive those books which obtain in our name, but are written by the ungodly" (6.3.16; Donelson 1986: 18).[7]

The Apostolic Constitutions sharply raises the question of what led some early Christians to adopt deceptive tactics even while decrying the immorality of deception. Apart from the deception about its authors, the work upholds high standards of fairness, decency, and truthfulness, encouraging its readers to treat others as they would like to be treated (1.1.1), not to seek revenge (1.1.2), and to be careful in one's use of words (2.1.1). A bishop must, among other upstanding qualities, not be a false witness or a dissembler (2.2.6). What motivated the authors of this text to engage in behavior that seems to be inconsistent with such high moral ideals?

The answer is clearly not that ancient Greco-Roman society was more tolerant of forgery than modern society (Metzger 1972: 12–13; Wilder 2004: 41–49; J. Marshall 2008: 788–89). Inserting one's own material into the writings of others was an offense serious enough in ancient Athens to merit exile (Herodotus, *Hist*. 7.6). Cutting out passages from another's writing could result in a librarian's termination in ancient Pergamum (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil*. 7.34). Claudius (Suetonius, *Claud*. 5.15.2) ordered that the hands of a forger be amputated.[8] Galen (*De libris propriis liber* [Kühn 1821–33: 19.8–10]) complained bitterly against the forgery of works in his name as well as unauthorized additions, subtractions, and changes to his texts. Jerome (*Ruf.* 3.25) angrily charged his erstwhile friend Rufinus with forging a letter under his name that contained an embarrassing "confession."

There is no reason to think that early Christians were any more tolerant of forged documents than anyone else in the prevailing culture (Wilder 2004:

6. This is not the letter mentioned in the Muratorian Canon, since it shows no hint of Marcionism. On the date and identity of the letter, see J. K. Elliott 1993: 544. I have used Elliott's translation.

7. Whether the fifth-century Epistle of Titus, the Disciple of Paul was intended to deceive is difficult to tell. On one hand, the only aspect of the text that renders it either pseudepigraphic or a letter is its title and subscription. On the other hand, it is easy to think that the author of such an emotional screed against sexual intimacy—with its frequent misrepresentation of the meaning of Scripture, lavish use of spurious texts, and unscrupulous scare tactics—would also try to deceive readers into thinking that the text originated with "Titus, the Disciple of Paul." It is clear, in any case, that this is a highly polemical document, desperate to win a victory in the battle to keep ascetic practice alive among Christians.

8. Suetonius seems to view it as an unusually cruel punishment.

35–63), and so the motive behind the production of documents written in the name of the apostles and clearly intended to deceive their readers remains something of a mystery. Donelson (1986: 18–19) has reasonably offered the Platonic idea of the "noble lie" as the motivation. In the *Republic*, Plato spoke briefly of a lie that does not merit abhorrence—the lie told to enemies in time of war or to a friend who must be dissuaded from some insanity or foolishness (2.382c; 3.389b, 414c–e).[9] Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 7.9; *ANF* 2:538), writing in the late second century, adopted this ethic, and it is possible that some authors of forged apostolic documents justified their actions to themselves in the same way.[10]

If the noble lie was a moral compromise of last resort in time of crisis, then for early Christian forgers the crisis seems to have been the battle for apostolic support of Christian truth. Marcionites, gnostics, Ebionites, and orthodox all seem to have used pseudonymity as a means of lending historical credibility to what, in their view, were absolutely critical religious truths. Donelson's judgment (1986: 17) appears to be correct: "Christian pseudepigraphy found its main impetus in doctrinal disputes, the endless argument between orthodoxy and heresy."

Precisely here, however, the view that Ephesians is pseudonymous runs into problems. Despite occasional scholarly attempts to argue the contrary (e.g., Smith 1977; Merz 2000), Ephesians is not a polemical document. Although it mentions false teaching and certainly does not want its readers to be seduced by it (4:14; 5:6), there is no theological battle raging behind the text that might justify the extreme measure of a "noble lie" in violation of the author's otherwise high standards of honesty (4:15, 24–25; 5:9; 6:14).[11]

It is perhaps more plausible that the author thought of himself as a doctor lying to a sick patient (cf. Plato, *Resp.* 3.389b; Clement, *Strom.* 7.9). His readers seem, after all, to have been discouraged (Eph. 3:13), and perhaps they needed a word from Paul so badly that a lie was justified in this instance. It is difficult to imagine, however, that such an author would think of his readers as benefiting from a forged Pauline letter any more than they could benefit from the genuine Pauline letters already in circulation (e.g., Philippians) or from a pastoral letter written either without a name attached (cf. Hebrews, 1 Clement) or in the author's own name (cf. Ignatius's letters). Even if a letter from "Paul" provided some advantage, the author's high personal standards

9. Cf. also Exod. 1:15–22; Josh. 2:2–7; 6:25; James 2:25. See Speyer 1971: 94n4; Best 1998: 12.

10. Clement is only the first known in a long line of other church fathers who also defended the "necessary lie" (Speyer 1971: 94–95).

11. Cf. Fischer 1973: 15: "A serene tranquility appears to lie over the whole letter. In this, the letter to the Ephesians is essentially different from all other writings that critical research regards as pseudepigraphs." (Ein heiterer Friede scheint über dem ganzen Brief zu liegen. Darin unterscheidet sich der Epheserbrief wesentlich von allen anderen Schreiben, die innerhalb der kritischen Forschung als Pseudepigraphen angesehen werden.) Fischer is talking about supposedly pseudepigraphical writings in the NT.

for truthful speech would probably have prompted him to choose a less morally ambiguous option than forgery.[12]

Is it possible that the author wrote with no intention to deceive his readers? As we have just seen, the *Epistles of Anacharsis* seem to have been written in good faith as fictional documents, and it is just possible that the three bodies of fictional letter exchanges mentioned above (Paul and the Corinthians, Paul and Seneca, Jesus and Abgar) were innocent exercises in epistolary fiction writing. Ephesians, however, does not look like an innocent fiction. Nothing in the letter betrays to the casual reader its fictional character. Paul refers to himself in the first person (e.g., 3:1; 4:1; 5:32), and a realistic portrait develops in the letter of an apostle suffering for his faithfulness to what God has called him to do (3:1, 13; 4:1; 6:19–20). If the letter is pseudonymous, then it is difficult to see this portrait as anything other than an attempt to lend an air of authority to the letter that could come to it only if it were thought to be the product of one of Christianity's foundational figures on the verge of martyrdom. In the complicated world of ancient pseudonymity, it is certainly possible that someone other than Paul wrote Ephesians with no intention to deceive, but that scenario does not seem likely.

This means, in turn, that if Ephesians is pseudonymous, it is something of an anomaly among Christian pseudonymous letters.[13] It urges its readers to speak truthfully, but resorts to lying about its own author without any clear moral justification. As the rest of this introduction and the commentary itself will try to show, however, there is no need to picture the author of this text in this way. The text makes sense as an authentic letter from Paul to Christians in Ephesus, written at the end of a lengthy period of imprisonment and thus after nearly all of his undisputed correspondence (i.e., Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon).

The Literary Character of Ephesians

If scholars debate the authorship of Ephesians, there is virtually universal agreement that it is a difficult and, for Paul, an unusual text. Chrysostom

12. The author of the *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, according to many scholars, wrote pseudonymously to show Jewish readers that their traditional customs were compatible with the best ethical teaching of the Hellenistic world (W. Wilson 2005: 3–8). If this was the author's intention, then he clearly wrote deceptively at the same time that he encouraged truthfulness (lines 7, 16–17, 48, 50), and he did not write to address any obviously polemical situation. These characteristics might provide an analogy to a pseudonymous Ephesians, especially if the purpose of Ephesians was to ease tensions between Christians and their Greco-Roman environment. Apart from the difference in literary genre (one text is a poem and the other a letter), however, the purpose and deceptive intent of *Pseudo-Phocylides* is far from certain. Moreover, the idea that the household code in Ephesians was written to ease tensions between Christians and the wider society (MacDonald 2000: 159–69, 337–38; Osiek and MacDonald 2006: 118–43; cf. Merz 2000: 132, 146) runs aground on the countercultural nature of the household code itself (5:25; 6:9) and of the letter generally (2:1–3; 4:17–19; 5:3–14).

13. This is true even if, for the sake of argument, we assume that the five other disputed letters in the NT Pauline corpus are pseudonymous.

called the letter ὑπέρογκος (*hyperonkos*), a term that can mean both "sublime" and "difficult" (*PGL* 1440).[14] Origen, whose introduction to the letter is probably preserved in Jerome's commentary, thought Paul had "heaped up more obscure ideas and mysteries unknown to the ages in this epistle than in all the others" (Heine 2002: 78). Erasmus believed that Peter had Ephesians in mind when he said, "In these Epistles there are certain things difficult to understand" (*CWE* 43:299; cf. 2 Pet. 3:16).

Three features of the letter's style are particularly unusual. First, Ephesians has a high number of long sentences, some of them extraordinarily long. In more objective terms, Ephesians has 2,422 words in the NA[27] edition and, according to the punctuation in that text, has 64 sentences. In contrast, Galatians has 2,230 words in 102 sentences.[15] Six sentences in Ephesians are especially long: 1:3–14, 15–23; 2:1–7; 3:1–7; 4:11–16; 6:14–20 (van Roon 1974: 107n3; cf. Percy 1946: 185), each of them with so many subordinate clauses and digressions that the reader tends to get lost along the way.

Second, Ephesians is full of grammatical and lexical ambiguities that affect the meaning of the text. Does Paul pray in 1:17 that God will give his readers a wise spirit or that he will give them God's Spirit, who in turn will give them wisdom? In 1:18, does he pray that God will give his readers a wise spirit or the Spirit? In 1:23, does the church fill up the one who fills all things, or is it full of the one who fills all things? Does it fill up the one who is entirely filled, or is it full of the one who is entirely filled? Why does Paul begin the sentence after 1:23 with "and" when it has no clear connection to what precedes it (2:1)? When Paul says that his readers once walked "according to the Ruler of the realm of the air, of the spirit of the one now at work among the sons of disobedience" (2:2), does he refer to a hierarchy of spiritual enemies, or does he elaborately describe one of these enemies (presumably the devil)? When he says that Christ "tore down the middle wall of the partition, the enmity in his flesh" (2:14), do the terms "middle wall," "partition," and "enmity" all refer to the same object? Did Christ destroy them "in his flesh," or was the enmity Christ tore down somehow located "in his flesh"? In 2:21, does "every building" hold together in Christ, or does "the whole building" hold together in him? Does Paul command his readers to be rooted and grounded in love in 3:17, or does he say that they have been rooted and grounded in love? The letter's final sentence pronounces a blessing on those who love Christ "in incorruption" (6:24), but what could this phrase mean?

14. Chrysostom uses ὑπέρογκος elsewhere to mean "difficult" (*PGL* 1440), and this is a common meaning of the term in the LXX (Exod. 18:22, 26; Deut. 30:11; 2 Sam. 13:2). In the NT, ὑπέρογκος is used of "bombastic" speech (Jude 16; 2 Pet. 2:18; BDAG 1034). Cf. Theophylact, *PG* 82:1033.

15. What constitutes a sentence varies from editor to editor, and the Nestle-Aland text is generous with periods. Most interpreters would recognize 1:3–14, for example, as a single sentence, since it contains no independent clauses, but the Nestle-Aland text punctuates it with four periods.

Third, Ephesians is a highly redundant text. Paul speaks of "the good pleasure of his [God's] will" (1:5), "wisdom and understanding" (1:8), "the counsel of his [God's] will" (1:11), "the effect of the might of his strength" (1:19), "rule and authority and power and lordship" (1:21), "the surpassing wealth of his [God's] grace by kindness" (2:7), "the gift of God's grace given to me according to the effect of his power" (3:7), "boldness and confident access" (3:12), being "filled up to all the fullness of God" (3:19), and "each single part" (4:16). He tells his readers to "know this, knowing that . . ." (5:5), addresses the husbands in his audience as "you—every single one of you" (5:33), and urges all his readers to be clothed "in the strength" of God's "might" (6:10).

In addition to elements like these that contribute to the obscurity of the text, Ephesians is missing the argumentative, fast-paced feel typical of Paul's undisputed letters. Rhetorical questions, if-then clauses, and syllogisms are virtually absent (cf. van Roon 1974: 102–3).

Since the early sixteenth century, interpreters of the letter have wondered how the Paul who wrote the other NT letters bearing his name could have produced this unusual document. "Certainly, the style differs so much from the other Epistles of Paul," said Erasmus in 1519, "that it could seem to be the work of another person did not the heart and soul of the Pauline mind assert clearly his claim to this letter" (*CWE* 43:300n12). In the intervening centuries a number of other scholars went further and saw in the letter's unusual style evidence of its pseudonymity (e.g., De Wette 1843: 81; Holtzmann 1872: 5; Moffatt 1918: 385–89; Mitton 1951: 11; Lincoln 1990: lxv–lxvi). This evidence seemed especially compelling when it was added to the letter's tendency to use non-Pauline words for Pauline concepts (e.g., "the devil" for "Satan" or "the heavenly places" for "heaven" or "the heavens") or to use Pauline words in ways that, for Paul, were unprecedented (e.g., "fullness" applied to the church).[16]

The style of Colossians comes closest to that of Ephesians. Colossians, too, has a proportionately high number of long sentences (1:3–8, 9–20, 21–23, 24–29; 2:1–3, 8–15; 3:5–11; van Roon 1974: 107n2) and uses a number of redundant phrases strung together with genitives (e.g., "the word of the truth of the gospel," 1:5; "the kingdom of the son of his love," 1:13; "all the wealth of the assurance of understanding," 2:2; "the divesting of the body of the flesh," 2:11).[17] Like Ephesians, it has one rhetorical question (2:20; cf.

16. These examples come from Holtzmann 1872: 5–6. Διάβολος appears in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. 3:6, 7, 11; 2 Tim. 2:26; 3:3; Titus 2:3), but Holtzmann believed those letters to be pseudonymous. The vocabulary of Ephesians falls well within the Pauline range, but some scholars have observed that among the forty words appearing only in Ephesians in the NT and the fifty-one words that do not appear elsewhere in the undisputed Pauline letters, "many" also appear in early Christian writings composed after Paul's time (Schnackenburg 1991: 26; cf., e.g., Lincoln 1990: lxv). Schnackenburg lists twelve such words and adds to this list five others that appear elsewhere in the NT but "predominate in the late writings." Yet sixteen of these seventeen words appear reasonably frequently in Greek literature dating, at the latest, from the fourth century BC. Only κυριότης (Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16; 2 Pet. 2:10; Jude 8) is not well attested before the first century AD (BDAG 579).

17. Several of these examples come from R. Wilson 2005: 13.

Eph. 4:9) and is about as free as Ephesians from lively argumentation (cf. van Roon 1974: 105). According to those who think Ephesians is pseudonymous, this stylistic similarity is the result of a close literary connection between the two letters: the author of one letter had access to the other letter, often used the other letter's phrasing, and wrote under the influence of its style. Usually, the author of Ephesians is thought to have used Colossians (e.g., Mitton 1951: 68–74).[18]

The evidence of a close connection between the two letters is compelling. Not only do the references to Tychicus give the letters the same historical setting by using virtually the same words (Eph. 6:21–22; Col. 4:7–8), but also, according to Mitton's calculations, 26.5 percent of the wording of Colossians appears in Ephesians (Mitton 1951: 57). At the same time, apart from the unusual Tychicus passage, "the most protracted verbatim correspondence does not exceed seven words, and on only three occasions exceeds five" (Mitton 1951: 63). In other words, the two letters often use the same words and phrases but without clear evidence of direct copying, except in the passage on Tychicus. After a careful investigation, Mitton (1951: 64) concludes that this complex situation suggests not that the author of Ephesians copied and edited Colossians but that his "mind was saturated with the contents of Colossians" as he wrote his letter.

This state of affairs leads, in turn, to what many scholars consider a compelling piece of evidence that Ephesians is pseudonymous. If the same author wrote both letters, then he must have written them at about the same time—the material on Tychicus gives this impression, and the literary relationship between the two letters is consistent with this scenario—yet the thought of the two letters often differs, and this sometimes happens when they use identical terms to express these divergent thoughts. Mitton (1951: 82–97), for example, finds the following points of verbal convergence but conceptual divergence between the two letters:

Colossians	**Ephesians**
In 2:19, Christ is the head of the cosmos.	In 4:15–16 (a passage that has clear verbal links to Col. 2:19), Christ is the head of the church.
In 1:20, 22, God reconciles (ἀποκαταλλάσσω, *apokatallassō*) all things to himself through the death of Christ.	In 2:16, Christ reconciles (ἀποκαταλλάσσω) Jews and Gentiles to one another.
In 1:26, God has revealed the previously hidden mystery to his saints (τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ, *tois hagiois autou*).	In 3:5, God has revealed the mystery to his holy apostles and prophets (τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ προφήταις, *tois hagiois apostolois autou kai prophētais*).

18. For evidence that the borrowing went in the other direction, see Best 1997b. Complex theories about the redaction of both Ephesians and Colossians on the basis of each other or even the missing letter to the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16), although improbable, reflect the inability of the prevailing theory to explain all the evidence. See, e.g., Holtzmann 1872; Muddimann 2001.

Colossians	Ephesians
The μυστήριον (*mystērion*, mystery) is consistently Christ (1:26–27; 2:2; 4:3).	The term μυστήριον varies in meaning, referring to the reunification of all things (1:9) and the unity of Jews and Gentiles (3:3–6), and elsewhere meaning something like "symbol" (5:32).
Οἰκονομία (*oikonomia*) refers to the "assignment" God has given to Paul (Col. 1:25).	Οἰκονομία refers to "the providential dispensation of God" (1:9–10; 3:9), and the change is evident even in Eph. 3:2, where the wording is very similar to Col. 1:25.
In something of a theological breakthrough, πλήρωμα (*plērōma*) is used for the relationship between Christ and God (1:19; 2:9).	In one place (1:10), πλήρωμα is used almost as it is used in Colossians, but elsewhere it refers either to the relationship between Christ and the church (1:23) or to the increasing maturity of Christians (3:19; 4:13).

Mitton (1951) argues that the differences between the two letters at precisely the points where their language seems so close to each other make it unlikely that they were written at the same time. The theology of Ephesians, often expressed in words and phrases found in Colossians, has developed too far beyond the theology of Colossians to make their nearly simultaneous composition plausible. Yet if both letters come from the same author, they must have been written at about the same time. If they come from different hands, however, the dilemma disappears.

Mitton's analysis (1951) is largely unconvincing for two reasons. First, his initial two points are based on improbable exegesis. It is far more likely that Col. 2:19 identifies the "body" with the church than with the cosmos (cf. Col. 1:18, 24).[19] If this is correct, then at this point Colossians and Ephesians are in agreement. Similarly, it is unclear why Mitton (1951) thinks that in Eph. 2:16 the main object of reconciliation is Jew and Gentile. The text certainly implies that they are both reconciled to each other, but it explicitly states that Christ reconciles both Jew and Gentile to God. At this point there is a difference in emphasis between Colossians and Ephesians, but both texts use the verb ἀποκαταλάσσω to speak of reconciliation to God.

Second, it is unclear why the terms μυστήριον, οἰκονομία, and πλήρωμα should be understood in a semitechnical sense that would not vary from Colossians to Ephesians if both came from the same author. Οἰκονομία and πλήρωμα do not appear often enough in Colossians to allow a firm judgment on how the author may have used these terms in other writings, even in other writings produced at roughly the same time.[20] Little help is available from the undisputed Pauline letters, moreover, since the terms are infrequent there also.[21]

19. See, e.g., Dunn 1996: 186–87; R. Wilson 2005: 225.

20. Οἰκονομία appears once in Colossians (1:25), and πλήρωμα twice (1:19; 2:9).

21. Οἰκονομία appears in 1 Cor. 9:17, and πλήρωμα in Rom. 11:12, 25; 13:10; 15:29; 1 Cor. 10:26; Gal. 4:4.

Μυστήριον appears more often—four times in Colossians and eight times in the undisputed letters—but its meaning varies in the undisputed Paulines, just as it does in Ephesians. Moreover, in Colossians the meaning of μυστήριον, at least in its first two occurrences (1:26–27), is closely connected with the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles, just as it is in Eph. 3:3–6.

Mitton's comparison of Col. 1:26 with Eph. 3:5 is more convincing. When the thought that God revealed the long-hidden mystery τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ (*tois hagiois autou*, to his saints) is compared with the thought that he revealed it τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ προφήταις (*tois hagiois apostolois autou kai prophētais*, to his holy apostles and prophets), a plausible case can be made that the text of Ephesians has expanded the text in Colossians to emphasize the importance of "the church hierarchy" (Mitton 1951: 85). It is just as plausible, however, to understand Col. 1:26 as a reference to a special group of Christians to whom God revealed the mystery (Bockmuehl 1990: 184–85), and then to see Eph. 3:5 as a more detailed description of this special group.[22]

The idea that the two letters are too stylistically close and conceptually different to have been written one after the other by the same author is likely to appear convincing, then, only to those who are already convinced on other grounds that Ephesians is pseudonymous. To those who are not already convinced, a literary comparison of the two letters tends to confirm that they come from the same hand at about the same time. It does not seem unlikely that an author writing two letters that often touch on similar themes would reproduce over a quarter of the content of one letter in the other letter and yet not reproduce from the first letter more than seven consecutive words until the commendation of the courier of both letters at the conclusion of each text.

Could the person who produced both letters, however, be Paul? If so, what can explain their unusual style, and the particularly odd style of Ephesians? A wide variety of explanations has emerged from those who think the letter is authentic. Perhaps Paul wrote as he did because of Ephesus's reputation as a seat of philosophical learning (Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.*, prologue; *NPNF* 13:49) or of superstition (Theophylact, *PG* 124:1033). Perhaps an amanuensis is responsible for the peculiarities (Erasmus 1535: 591). Perhaps the subject matter was unusually sublime and thus demanded an unusually sublime style of composition (Alford 1857: 25). Perhaps "the epistle . . . takes the form of a prayer, and has the elevation of language which is natural in prayer" (E. Scott 1930: 121). Perhaps freedom from difficult pastoral problems fed a more "reflective mood" and prompted Paul to adopt a liturgical style of writing (O'Brien 1999: 7; cf. Robinson 1904: 10–11).

Whether any of these specific theories, or some other scenario, prompted Paul to write in an unusual way is less important than the plausibility that he could write this way if circumstances demanded it. Two pieces of evidence reveal that he could.

22. See the exegesis of Eph. 3:5 below.

First, the Paul of the undisputed letters could write in a variety of styles. First Corinthians 13:1–13 illustrates this well enough, but if 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1; Phil. 2:6–11; and Rom. 16:25–27 all come from Paul (and arguments to the contrary are not convincing), then Paul was clearly a versatile writer.[23] This is what we would expect, however, in a writer with Paul's level of education. "I believe everyone knows," says Dionysius of Halicarnassus, "that, in discourse, variation is a most attractive and beautiful quality" (*Comp.* 19, trans. Usher 1974–85). Dionysius is discussing the need for stylistic variation within a single discourse, but the point is still applicable to Paul's ability to produce two letters as different as Ephesians and, say, Galatians.

Second, the long sentences and broken syntax that appear in Ephesians also show up elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. The length and redundancy of Eph. 1:3–14 is remarkable, but if we are willing to admit the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, then this kind of sentence is not unprecedented in a Pauline composition. Both Eph. 1:3–14 and 2 Thess. 1:3–12 are roughly the same length, contain a torrent of words, and have a number of emphatic redundancies. Both also appear in the opening prayer sections of each letter. The long, complex sentences in Eph. 2:1–3; 3:1–7, 8–12, 14–19; and 4:11–16 are also similar to 1 Cor. 1:4–8 and Phil. 1:3–7 (Percy 1946: 202). The broken syntax and digressive nature of Eph. 2:1–7 and 3:1–19 are not unlike Rom. 5:12–18 and 2 Cor. 2:12–7:7. Paul, then, could certainly write in the way that the author of Ephesians wrote. Only the high concentration of long, complex sentences and digressions in a single, short composition makes the style of this letter unusual. It is easy to imagine, however, that the circumstances of Paul's imprisonment, and the need to dictate letters with little opportunity to revise them, accounts for this unusual element of the letter's character.[24]

The Recipients of Ephesians

Ephesians is the most general letter within the Pauline corpus.[25] The only associate whom Paul mentions is Tychicus. He sends no greetings, thanks no

23. For the same general point with respect to Ephesians, see Witherington 2007: 2.

24. It is also possible, as Witherington (2007: 4–25) argues, that Paul dictated the letter in a more Asiatic style than was his custom because he was writing to the province of Asia, where the most famous practitioners of Asiatic rhetoric had flourished (e.g., Hegesias of Magnesia). Hellenistic Jewish authors did sometimes compose in the Asiatic style (see Wifstrand 1948: 217–19, who cites Prov. 20:9; 22:13 LXX; T. Levi 4.1; and T. Gad 3.2–3 as examples), and the long sentences, redundancy, coinage of new words, and wordplays in Ephesians would fit the Asiatic profile (Sellin 2008: 64, 85n61). It is important, however, to be cautious on this point. Most of Ephesians does not have the studied, self-conscious quality of Asiatic rhetoric. The long sentences and sometimes broken syntax of Ephesians betray the voice of someone who could have composed in the Asiatic style if time were available, but who did not have the luxury to sort out the details of its complex techniques in this particular letter.

25. At first it might seem that the general nature of Ephesians counts against its authenticity, but after a careful study of ancient pseudepigraphical letters, Bauckham (1988: 488) observes that "not many pseudepigraphal writers wished to produce generalized didactic works, and those who did preferred other genres [than the letter], such as wisdom literature."

one among his readers, reviews no travel plans, and seems to have a limited knowledge of his readers' circumstances. He has heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints (1:15) but can only assume that they fully understand the nature of the responsibility God has given him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (3:2) and that they have received accurate instruction in Jesus's ethical teaching (4:21). This is especially puzzling since, if the letter went to Ephesus, Paul had spent between two and three years working among Christians in that city (Acts 19:10; 20:31).

As it turns out, however, the two words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ (*en Ephesō*, in Ephesus) in the letter's first sentence form the only indication in the text of the letter itself that it was intended for Ephesus, and those words are missing in some of the letter's oldest manuscripts. If it did not go specifically to Ephesus but was a more general letter, perhaps to Christians throughout the Roman province of Asia, then its general character is more understandable. Much hangs, then, on the solution to this textual problem, and unfortunately it is one of the most difficult textual problems in the New Testament.

The earliest manuscript witness to the text of Ephesians is the third-century Alexandrian manuscript $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$. It contains no reference to Ephesus but instead addresses the letter τοῖς ἁγίοις οὖσιν καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (*tois hagiois ousin kai pistois en Christō Iēsou*). This might mean either "to the saints who are also believers in Christ Jesus" or, taking the participle to mean "current" or "local," something like "to the local saints and believers in Christ Jesus" (cf. Best 1997a: 8–9; MHT 3:152; *pace* BDF §413.3). Although impressively early, this reading appears only in this one manuscript and so is unlikely to represent what Paul wrote.

Other early Alexandrian witnesses (א, B, 1739, 6, 424c) also give a reading that omits ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, although, unlike $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, they place the article τοῖς in front of οὖσι[ν]. Judging from Tertullian's claim that Marcion changed the traditional title of the letter so that it referred not to Ephesus but to Laodicea (*Marc.* 5.17.1; cf. 5.11.12), Marcion's text of 1:1 may have either been without a place name or had the name Laodicea rather than Ephesus in it. Since Tertullian charges Marcion with corrupting only the title of the letter, moreover, even he may have been working from a version without a place name in its text (Meyer 1880: 4–5; *pace* van Roon 1974: 74–75).

Origen's comments on Eph. 1:1, written AD 233–44 (Heine 2002: 47), reveal not only that he had before him a text that read τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσι (Gregg 1901–2: 235) but that he did not quite know what to make of this phrase grammatically. He understood it as a reference to "the saints who are" and then commented, "We ask what the phrase 'who are' can mean, if it is not redundant when added to 'the saints'" (Heine 2002: 80). He then explained the phrase as a reference to the derivation of the existence of Christians from the God whom Exod. 3:14 describes as "he who is." The God "who is" made Christians "those who are," and therefore Christians should boast only in God and not in themselves (cf. 1 Cor. 1:28–29).

Basil the Great, writing between 363 and 365, not only read τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσι καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ but also claimed that this was the traditional reading. Those before him, he says, had handed it down, and among the copies of the epistle available to him, the old ones had this reading (Basil the Great, *Adv. Eunom*. 2.19 [*PG* 29:612–13]). Like Origen, he comments on the unusual grammar: "[Paul] called them 'existing' in a special way, saying, 'to the saints who are and to believers in Christ Jesus'" (my trans.).[26]

Because of this impressive evidence from the most ancient manuscripts and from the fathers, many scholars adopt this reading as original. Acceptance of the reading, however, entails two problems. First, the reading presents almost insuperable grammatical difficulties. Both Origen and Basil were native speakers of ancient Greek, and their understanding of the phrase weighs against rendering it simply as "to God's people who are steadfast in Christ Jesus" (Goodspeed 1933: 18) or "to the saints, who are also faithful in Christ Jesus" (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 1). "To the saints who are and to believers in Christ Jesus" is really the only way to take the phrase, but as Origen and Basil seemed to realize, at face value this makes no sense. The phrase τοῖς οὖσιν needs a place name after it (Zuntz 1953: 228–29), just as it has in Phil. 1:1 (τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις, *tois ousin en Philippois*, to those who are in Philippi), 2 Cor. 1:1 (σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ, *syn tois hagiois pasin tois ousin en holē tē Achaia*, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia), and Rom. 1:7 (πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ, *pasin tois ousin en Rhōmē*, to all who are in Rome). It is true that in text-critical matters the most difficult reading is usually correct. This rule applies, however, only when at least some sense can be made of the more-difficult reading, and making sense of the text as it stands in these witnesses is nearly impossible.

Some scholars recognize this difficulty and seek to relieve it by proposing various emendations of the text and theories about how the reading in ℵ and B arose. One theory claims that Paul, or the pseudonymous author, wrote the letter as a circular document and left a space after τοῖς οὖσιν, intending that a place name should follow it when it was copied for the churches in different geographical locations (e.g., Lightfoot 1893: 392; Zuntz 1953: 228n1; Luz 1998: 108). If this is correct, however, it is difficult to know why the preposition ἐν is also missing.

Another theory claims that the original text read τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (*tois hagiois kai pistois en Christō Iēsou*, to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus; cf. Col. 1:2) and that early in its textual history a scribe inserted the words τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ. Unfortunately, he inserted these words just before the καί of the original text, creating an awkward phrase. The memory of the letter as a general document not addressed to any specific church persisted, however, and a copyist corrected the text simply by leaving out ἐν Ἐφέσῳ and producing virtually unintelligible Greek (Best

26. Ὄντας αὐτοὺς ἰδιαζόντως ὠνόμασεν εἰπών· τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσι καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

1997a: 17–24). This theory, however, is improbable because it requires such a complex textual history for the phrase over a short period of time (Lincoln 1990: 3; cf. Best 1997a: 24; 1998: 99–100).

Recognizing this problem, others offer a similar yet simpler suggestion: Paul or the pseudonymous author originally addressed the letter to the churches in Hierapolis and Laodicea (cf. Col. 4:13). This would explain, it is said, both Paul's directions to the Colossian church that they should read the letter from Laodicea (Col. 4:16) and Marcion's claim that the letter should be titled "To the Laodiceans." The text of 1:1 would then have been τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ἱεραπόλει καὶ ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ, πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (*tois hagiois tois ousin en Hierapolei kai en Laodikeia, pistois en Christō Iēsou*, to the saints who are in Hierapolis and Laodicea, believers in Christ Jesus). An attempt to make the letter applicable to the whole church led a scribe to leave out the two ἐν clauses, in the process producing a perplexing grammatical construction (van Roon 1974: 80–85; Lincoln 1990: 3–4). If this is what happened, however, it is difficult to know why the scribe left behind the troublesome καί and did not simply omit the whole phrase ἐν Ἱεραπόλει καὶ ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ (Best 1997a: 14).

A second and less-frequently noticed problem with the reading of ℵ and B is that virtually all the manuscripts that join them in omitting the place name belong, like them, to the Alexandrian text type. Although the Alexandrian text is both ancient and conservative, this limited geographical spread of the reading must count against it (Hoehner 2002: 146).

This leaves the reading of the vast majority of witnesses, including a number that belong to the Alexandrian text type. Thus A, 33, 81, 1175, 1881, and 104, all with Alexandrian affinities, have the reading τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (*tois hagiois tois ousin en Ephesō kai pistois en Christō Iēsou*, to the saints who are in Ephesus and believers, in Christ Jesus). In addition, the correctors of ℵ and B as well as the Western codices D, F, and G have this reading (although D, like $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, omits the article before οὖσιν). A wide variety of Byzantine witnesses—including K, L, and P, and other witnesses whose text type is difficult to determine—have it also. Ancient versions and fathers from a wide geographical spread join these witnesses in including the place name "Ephesus" in the letter's text. This geographical diversity of witnesses, including some from the conservative Alexandrian tradition, weighs heavily in favor of treating this reading as original.

Three problems, however, attend this conclusion. First, it is difficult to know how the reading without the place name ever arose and gained such prominence in the Alexandrian tradition if the letter was originally addressed to Ephesus. Long ago Ellicott (1859: 1–2) hinted that a dispute in the early church over whether John the apostle or Paul established the church at Ephesus may have led to the erasure of the letter's destination.[27] Meyer (1880: 9–10) thought

27. See, e.g., Theodore of Mopsuestia (Swete 1882: 112–18); Theodoret of Cyrus (R. Hill 2001: 2.31–33); Severian of Gabala (Staab 1933: 304–5).

critically inclined scribes noticed that the letter seemed to address readers whom Paul did not know personally (1:15; 3:2; 4:21–22). The scribes, he maintained, then deleted the place name because they felt that it was inconsistent with the account of Paul's extensive ministry in Ephesus according to Acts. Van Roon (1974: 81–82) and Lincoln (1990: 4) argue, more plausibly, that scribes erased the original text's geographical specificity in an effort to make it more universally applicable. This certainly happened with the text of Romans in Codex G where references to Rome in 1:7 and 1:15 disappear, leaving a text in which Paul writes to "all who are beloved of God" (πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, *pasin tois ousin agapētois theou*) and in which Paul desires to preach merely "to you," the readers (οὕτως τὸ κατ᾽ ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν εὐαγγελίσασθαι, *houtōs to kat' eme prothymon kai hymin euangelisasthai*).[28]

Second, the reading τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is itself strange Greek. The article in front of οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ seems to bind the phrase tightly to ἁγίοις as an attributive modifier and to leave πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ to refer to a separate group. The phrase might be naturally translated, "to the saints who are in Ephesus and to believers in Christ Jesus" as if Paul is addressing two groups, saints in Ephesus on one hand and believers in Christ Jesus on the other hand. The letter itself, which presumes that Paul speaks to a unified body of believers, contradicts this meaning (Best 1997a: 4; 1998: 98). The scribe who copied Codex D apparently perceived the problem and omitted the article before οὖσιν to solve it.

Third, if the reading with the place name is correct, then it is difficult to explain the nature of the letter, especially if it is an authentic letter of Paul. It is hard to imagine Paul saying to a group whom he knew well that he had "heard" of their faith and love (1:15), especially since in his letter to the Colossians a nearly identical expression implies that his readers "have not seen my face in the flesh" (Col. 1:4; 2:1). The difficulty becomes even worse when Paul says to his readers that he assumes (εἴ γε, *ei ge*, if, as I assume) they have heard about the responsibility God gave him to preach to the Gentiles (Eph. 3:2), and that he assumes (εἴ γε) they both heard Christ preached and were taught in him (4:21). As Abbott (1897: 78) said long ago, "No preacher addressing those whom he himself had taught would ordinarily express himself in this way." Even if the letter is pseudepigraphic, it is hard to imagine that the author was unfamiliar with the many references to Paul's Ephesian ministry both in the apostle's own letters (1 Cor. 15:32; 16:8; 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:18; 4:12; cf. Ign. *Eph*. 12.2) and in Acts (18:19–21; 19:1–20:2, 17–38) or that, knowing this tradition, he would portray Paul and the Ephesians as only vaguely familiar with each other.

Although the arguments and evidence on both sides of the debate have persuasive elements, on balance the arguments in favor of reading "in Ephesus" seem to outweigh those against it. Even the early manuscripts that omit the place name in 1:1 indicate in their subscriptions that the letter went "to

28. Cf. van Roon 1974: 81; Lincoln 1990: 4; Best 1997a: 5; Dahl 2000: 170–72.

the Ephesians" (Metzger 1994: 543; Sellin 2008: 66), and both Origen and Basil, despite their omission of a place name from 1:1, believed that Paul had written the letter to Ephesus. There is concrete evidence, moreover, for the tendency of scribes to tamper with the texts of Paul's letters in order to make them more universally applicable. The omission of "in Rome" in Rom. 1:7 in Codex G would parallel the omission of "in Ephesus" from Eph. 1:1. The same tendency is apparent in Tertullian's comment when discussing whether Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "But of what consequence are the titles, since in writing to a certain church the apostle did in fact write to all?" (*Marc.* 5.17 [*ANF* 3:465]; van Roon 1974: 81; Dahl 2000: 167; Lincoln 1990: 4).

The grammatical difficulty of translating τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ as "to the saints who are in Ephesus and [who are] believers in Christ Jesus," moreover, has probably been exaggerated. Such ancient Greek commentators as Chrysostom (fourth cent.), Theodoret of Cyrus (fifth cent.), and Theophylact of Achrida (eleventh cent.) found nothing odd in the phrase. They express no confusion over whether "saints" and "believers" refer to two different groups and make no comment on the unusual nature of the Greek (*NPNF* 13:50; R. Hill 2001: 2.33; *PG* 124:1033; cf. Oecumenius of Tricca, *PG* 118:1169). The phrase seems to have been readily intelligible to these native Greek speakers.

The most serious difficulty in the way of taking ἐν Ἐφέσῳ as original is the assumption throughout the letter that Paul and his readers are not personally acquainted with each other. How could a letter to a church where Paul had labored for nearly three years be so impersonal? The answer lies in understanding the circumstances of Paul and the Ephesians at the time of the letter's composition.

The Date and Setting of Ephesians in Paul's Career

As impersonal as it is, Ephesians does provide three specific pieces of information that allow us to situate its composition historically by correlating the letter both with Acts and with other Pauline letters. First, if the contested phrase "in Ephesus" is original, then the letter was written after Paul's ministry in the city. He had spent between two and three years in Ephesus (Acts 19:10; 20:31), probably the years AD 52–54 (Schnabel 2004: 1220), and had found great success in establishing a Christian community there, especially among Gentiles (Acts 19:17–20, 26; 1 Cor. 16:9; Schnabel 2004: 1206–31; Trebilco 2004: 134–52). Since Paul wrote the letter to Gentile Christians (Eph. 2:11; 3:1; 4:17) and there is evidence only for Jewish Christians in Ephesus before his arrival in the city (Trebilco 2004: 125–27; cf. Acts 18:19–21, 27), he must have written Ephesians after his departure.[29]

29. As early as the fifth century, interpreters of Ephesians debated whether Paul wrote Ephesians before or after his ministry in the city. Severian of Gabala (Staab 1933: 304) and Theodore of Mopsuestia (Swete 1882: 112) favored the idea that Paul wrote Ephesians before visiting Ephesus. Theodoret of Cyrus argued against it (R. Hill 2001: 2.31).

Second, Paul was in prison (Eph. 3:1, 13; 4:1; 6:20), and the way he requests his readers' prayers at the end of the letter may mean that he was awaiting a judicial hearing. He urges them to pray that he will boldly make known the mystery of the gospel despite his imprisonment. He is, he says, "an enchained ambassador" (6:19–20). This metaphor and Paul's request for prayer conjure up the image of a political envoy who has somehow become the prisoner of the king to whom he is to deliver an important message, a message he fears the king will not want to hear.

Acts describes two imprisonments of Paul, one relatively brief imprisonment in Philippi before Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus (Acts 16:23–34) and one long confinement that included two years in Caesarea (24:27), a winter as a prisoner at sea and on the island of Malta (27:9–28:14), and two years under "a very light form of military custody" (Rapske 1994: 182; Acts 28:30–31).[30] During the Roman phase of this long confinement, a soldier guarded Paul (28:16), but he was allowed to invite people to meet with him (28:17–28) and to receive drop-in visitors (28:30). Although wearing a "chain" (28:20), then, his circumstances were not desperate, and he had enough freedom that Luke could describe his ability to proclaim the kingdom of God as "unhindered" (28:31).

Acts does not mention all Paul's imprisonments (2 Cor. 6:5; 11:23–25), but this second lengthy imprisonment, especially the two years in Rome (from spring 60 to sometime in 62), coheres nicely with the picture of Paul's circumstances in Ephesians. Paul describes himself in the letter as wearing "a chain" (6:20), yet to produce a letter like Ephesians, he would need enough freedom to allow a secretary to visit him in order to take down his dictation.

Third, at the conclusion to Ephesians, Paul commends Tychicus to the letter's readers. Since finding a trustworthy letter courier often presented problems in Roman antiquity, saying something about the courier at the end of a letter was common as a way to urge the letter's recipients to make sure the courier had performed his task honestly or to assure the recipients that the courier was trustworthy (Richards 2004: 177–85; Head 2009: 283–84, 297). Couriers also often supplemented the letters they carried with oral information not contained in the letter itself (Head 2009: 286, 289, 293–98). Although Paul does not say that Tychicus is the letter's courier, his commendation of Tychicus as a "beloved brother" and "faithful servant" and his comment that Tychicus will tell the letter's readers about Paul's circumstances (6:21–22) fit the courier profile.

Tychicus shows up in Acts as part of the group that accompanied Paul on his journey from Greece to Jerusalem a few months after his Ephesian ministry had ended (Acts 19:21; 20:2–4). Luke says that he was from the province of Asia (Acts 20:4), and most occurrences of the name Tychicus outside the NT come from Rome (Hemer 1990: 236). We can plausibly imagine Tychicus, then,

30. Following Schnabel's chronology (2004: 1262, 1267, 1270), these would have been the periods from summer 57 to autumn 59, winter 59–60, and spring 60–62 respectively.

as someone with connections both to Rome and to Asia, perhaps specifically to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12). If so, he was a natural choice as the courier of a letter from one place to the other.

Even more significantly, Tychicus also appears near the end of Colossians, in a commendation that shares thirty-two words with the commendation of Tychicus in Ephesians, including two long stretches of words with consecutive agreement, the first consisting of ten words and the second consisting of nineteen words (Col. 4:7–9). Clearly, the two letters share a close relationship, and it looks very much as if the author of one letter copied the commendation from the other letter, although which is the original and which the copy is impossible to determine with certainty.

Two explanations for this oddity jump to mind. First, a pseudonymous author could have become bored with his standard procedure of using the language of the other letter but not copying it exactly for long stretches. Here at the end he finished his fictional or forged letter with a nearly precise duplication of Tychicus's commendation. This is an inconsistent procedure, but certainly not impossible in the often-inconsistent world of ancient pseudonymity. Second, Paul may have dictated one letter very soon after dictating the other and instructed the secretary taking down his words to reuse the first commendation of Tychicus in the second letter. This too may at first seem strange, but an almost exact precedent for it appears in two genuine letters of Ignatius, both written in close proximity to each other and sent with the same courier to two different destinations (Ign. *Phld*. 11.2; Ign. *Smyrn*. 12.1).[31] This second explanation has a concrete historical analogy to back it up and thus is more probable.

If Ephesians and Colossians are authentic letters written at about the same time, then the much more specific historical information in Colossians can fill in some of the blanks left behind by the general nature of Ephesians. From Colossians we learn that Paul took full advantage of his freedom to receive visitors during the period when he wrote these letters: Epaphras, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus-Justus, Luke, and Demas were with him (Col. 1:7; 4:8–14). We also learn that someone named Archippus was part of the Colossian church, which means that Paul's Letter to Philemon—addressed in part to Archippus—went to people in the church at Colossae. In Philemon, Paul once again sends greetings from Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke (23–24), and the letter's subject is the slave Onesimus (10) who accompanied Tychicus on his journey to Colossae with the letter to the Colossians (Col. 4:9). We know from the Letter to Philemon that Paul hoped to be released from his imprisonment and to travel east to Colossae (22), and this fits with the picture of Paul under light military custody writing toward the end of his imprisonment and with his hearing before Caesar in mind—his expectation that he would be released and free to travel in the East would not, in this case, be unrealistic.[32]

31. On Ignatius's reasons for doing this, see Richards 1991: 72.

32. Rapske (1994: 177–91) argues that Paul was under such light custody because the case against him was weak. This means that Philippians, where Paul is uncertain about the outcome

To summarize, Paul wrote Ephesians near the end of his two-year imprisonment in Rome and at roughly the same time as Colossians and Philemon, in AD 62. He was chained to a Roman soldier during this period but free to receive visitors. These probably included a secretary who took down the letters at Paul's dictation. Paul sent all three letters with Tychicus, a trustworthy Christian coworker from Asia who was also with him in Rome.

The Circumstances That Prompted Ephesians

Why send Ephesians at all? The letter's lack of obvious direct engagement with details of its readers' lives has opened the door to a wide range of ideas about the circumstances that prompted Paul, or the pseudonymous author, to write it.

These approaches have ranged from the claim that Paul had no circumstances among his readers in mind when he wrote the letter, to detailed descriptions of what in the readers' circumstances prompted specific features of the letter. Robinson (1904: 10), for example, believed that Paul's house arrest in Rome and freedom from pressing theological controversies prompted him to produce "one supreme exposition, non-controversial, positive, fundamental, of the great doctrine of his life, . . . the doctrine of the unity of mankind in Christ and of the purpose of God for the world through the Church." On the other end of the spectrum stands, for example, Kirby, who considered the letter an attempt of an Ephesian Christian to fill a request from the church at Corinth for any letters the Ephesian church might have from Paul. Since the Ephesian church had no letter of its own, he composed a letter in Paul's name, using a liturgy from the worship of his church that had some historic connections with the synagogue's Pentecostal liturgy and with Paul's own prayers during his ministry in Ephesus (Kirby 1968: 169–70).

Examples of both very general and very specific approaches to Ephesians could easily be multiplied, but neither interpretive strategy is convincing. Because of their speculative nature, none of the highly specific proposals has gained anything like a consensus. They can aid the interpretation of the letter by bringing attention to elements of its background that might otherwise suffer neglect, whether Hellenistic Judaism (Smith 1977), gnosticism (Schmithals 1983), the OT (Moritz 1996b), or the popular religious environment of Asia Minor (Kreitzer 2007: 42–53), but they often fail to recognize the difference between what is historically *possible* and what is historically *probable*. Dozens of very specific scenarios for the letter's production are consistent with the evidence the letter provides because that evidence is so skimpy. For the same reason, however, it also becomes difficult to argue that any one of these specific theories is more probable than its competitors.

The idea that the letter corresponds to no specific needs among its first readers (e.g., Meyer 1880: 29; Eadie 1883: li; Alford 1857: 19) also fails as a viable

of his imprisonment (1:19–26; 2:23–24), was probably written not at the end of Paul's Roman imprisonment but either at its beginning (Lightfoot 1896: 30–46) or, perhaps, during an otherwise unknown imprisonment in Ephesus five years earlier (Thielman 2003).

interpretive strategy since the letter does express concern for its readers on specific topics. Paul prays that they might have a better understanding of what God has done for them in Christ (1:18–23), that Christ might dwell in their hearts (3:17), and that they might understand the massive size of Christ's love for them (3:18–19). In addition, he wants his readers to work together as they remain faithful to the teaching of the church's founders and its present leaders (4:1–16; cf. 2:20) and to avoid compromise with the harmful moral standards of their unbelieving environment (4:17–19; 5:3–18). When these concerns are coupled with Paul's request that his readers not be discouraged because of his suffering for them (3:13), it is not too speculative to think of the letter as a response to a certain weariness in the readers' commitment to the gospel. It is also reasonable to imagine that this discouragement has led to disunity and moral compromise with the surrounding culture (cf. Lincoln 1990: lxxxv–lxxxvii).

Is it possible to go any further than this? A number of scholars have emphasized the interpretive importance of two elements of the letter's cultural environment—the religious culture of first-century Ephesus and the complex relationship between earliest Christianity and Judaism. When these elements are combined with the general sketch just given of the readers' needs, a picture emerges of the readers' circumstances that, while not very specific, is both historically probable and hermeneutically helpful.

First, for centuries the letter's interpretation has been linked with the religious culture of Ephesus, particularly with the city's reputation as a center of magical practice and of the worship of Ephesian Artemis, often identified with the goddess Diana. Jerome, who seems to rely heavily on Origen's commentary at this point, claims that Paul speaks more about "obscure ideas and mysteries" and about the origins, power, and destiny of the demons in Ephesians than anywhere else in his letters. He does this, Jerome says, because the environment in which Christians in Ephesus had to live was obsessed with demons and magic and was saturated with idolatry, particularly the worship of "multi-breasted Diana" (Heine 2002: 77–78).[33] In more recent times, the vibrant interest of first-century Ephesians in what Paul calls "the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (3:10; cf. 2:2; 6:12), including Artemis, has received confirmation from careful studies of the ancient city (Strelan 1996; Schnabel 2004: 1206–14; Trebilco 2004: 19–37; Brinks 2009), and Arnold (1989) has made a persuasive case for understanding the concept of "power" in the letter against this background.[34]

It is also important to understand the letter in light of the prominence of the imperial cult in the civic life of Ephesus and its environs. Visual depictions

33. The Romans identified Artemis with the Italian hunting goddess Diana. Ancient images of Artemis depicted her with a number of smooth, oval objects attached to her chest. According to Trebilco (2004: 21–24; cf. Schnabel 2004: 1212), however, they are probably not breasts, and Artemis was not a fertility goddess, as early Christian polemic sometimes claimed. She seems to have been connected with benevolence, protection, and power over other supernatural beings.

34. *Pace* Strelan (1996: 86–88), it is reasonable to associate Artemis with magical practices. In addition to Arnold 1989: 22–24, see Trebilco 2004: 21n64, 150n206.

of Augustus's deity and the hegemony of his family permeated the urban centers of the first-century Roman world. Philo, writing at a time virtually contemporaneous with Paul, puts it this way:

> The whole habitable world voted [Augustus] no less than celestial honours. These are so well attested by temples, gateways, vestibules, porticoes, that every city which contains magnificent works new and old is surpassed in these by the beauty and magnitude of those appropriated to Caesar and particularly in our own Alexandria. (*Embassy* 149–50, trans. Colson 1939; cf. Lucian, *Apol.* 13)[35]

Worship of the emperor and his family, particularly of Augustus, was a prominent feature of life at all societal levels in Asia during the latter half of the first century. Ephesus was an especially important center of the imperial cult (Friesen 2001: 128). Municipalities often had their own imperial temples and, as a mid-first-century coin from Hierapolis demonstrates, celebrated their reverence for such gods as Dionysus alongside their worship of the family of Augustus (Friesen 2001: 61). Between AD 11 and 13 Ephesus constructed a temple dedicated to "Ephesian Artemis; to Emperor Caesar Augustus, son of god; to Tiberius Caesar, son of Augustus; and to the demos of the Ephesians" (Friesen 2001: 95).

Imagery celebrating Augustus's imposition of unity on the world through conquest appears in first-century sculpture in Aphrodisias and announces that the world as it presently exists is the work of the gods and Augustus (Friesen 2001: 86, 90). The message that the emperors were warrior gods, defeating their foes and bringing order to the world, appeared on coins and on the reliefs of imperial altars (one of them found at Ephesus). Sometimes this imagery depicted the warrior emperor trampling his enemies underfoot (Price 1984: 182).

Perhaps most important for our purposes, however, is the imperial and provincial restructuring of time so that it revolved around Augustus. About 9 BC the provincial council of Asia voted to redesign the calendar of the province so that the calculation of time was centered on the birthday of Augustus. The edict of the proconsul Paullus Fabius Maximus that announced this idea spoke of how Caesar Augustus had ended a period of deterioration and suffering for the world and "restored the form of all things to usefulness" (τῶι γε χρησίμωι . . . σχῆμα ἀνώρθωσεν, *tōi ge chrēsimōi . . . schēma anōrthōsen*; *OGIS* 458 lines 6–7) . The decree of the council (or "koinon") that instituted the new calendar spoke of him as "a savior" (σωτήρ, *sōtēr*) and a "god" (θεός, *theos*) and said that the day of his birth was "the beginning of good tidings to the world" (ἦρξεν . . . τῶι κόσμωι τῶν . . . εὐανγελίων, *ērxen . . . tōi kosmōi tōn . . . euangeliōn*; *OGIS* 458 lines 35, 40).[36] Friesen argues that although this adjustment of the calendar had valuable practical results, since it simplified

35. On the whole theme, see Zanker 1988: 297–333.

36. Here I follow the translation and interpretation of these inscriptions in Friesen 2001: 32–36, 123–26.

a previously unwieldy and complicated system, the real significance behind the reform lay elsewhere:

> The realignment of Asia's calendars was not presented as a pragmatic proposal because pragmatism was not the paramount issue. The proconsul's proposal and the koinon's response demonstrated that the issue was the *meaning* of time. The proconsul argued that time had been determined by the birth and achievements of Augustus. He had saved the world from itself, ending warfare and returning order and conformity. The beginning of the year and the beginning of each month were to become a commemoration of his birth. Augustus would make sense of time. (Friesen 2001: 125)

Friesen goes on to argue that a "fundamental goal" of the imperial cult was to communicate to the populace that the rule of the imperial household was eternal. An inscription from the middle of the century speaks of the "eternal" rule of Claudius and his house, and another inscription from Ephesus closer to the end of the century (during the reign of Titus) proclaims "the permanence of the rule of the Romans" (Friesen 2001: 130).[37]

Imperial worship in Asia, moreover, was not simply a matter of the imposition of political propaganda from society's elites on a skeptical populace, but was apparently embraced enthusiastically by many provincials at a variety of societal levels (Price 1984; Friesen 2001: 126, 128). For many first-century inhabitants of Asia, the imperial cult offered a compelling explanation of how the political structure of the world received its current shape and how this current shape was related to the ancient cosmological myths that featured the traditional gods (Friesen 2001: 123–27; cf. Momigliano 1987: 92–107).

In this same context it would have been difficult for Christians to avoid seeing a direct conflict between the "gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον, *euangelion*) about the Messiah Jesus and the "gospel" (εὐανγέλιον) that coins, statuary, reliefs, temples, and the calendar proclaimed about Augustus, his successors, and Roman rule generally. When Paul tells his readers that God has given Christ victory over all authorities that would compete against him (1:21; cf. 4:8), therefore, it is likely that he includes in his thinking the close alliance between local deities and the deified members of the imperial family, whether living or dead. When he says that God put all things "under [Christ's] feet" (1:22), readers who had seen depictions of Rome trampling its conquered peoples underfoot would take heart that the ultimate victory belongs to Christ.[38] When Paul says that

37. On the use of the term αἰών on coins and in inscriptions to stress the eternality of the emperor and of Rome, see Nock 1934: 85–86.

38. Cf. his use of the terms οἱ ἄρχοντες and ἐξουσίαι in a political sense in 1 Cor. 2:6; Rom. 13:1–3; and Titus 3:1. The argument here is not that Paul believed spiritual powers controlled the governments of the various nations (e.g., Cullmann 1951: 192–93; Caird 1956: 1–30), although this view was certainly current during his time, and it is possible that he held it (Deut. 32:8–9 LXX; Dan. 10:13, 20–21; Jub. 15.31–32; 3 En. 14.2; 26.12; Luke 4:6; Rev. 12:18–13:1; Origen, *Cels.* 8.63; Wink 1984: 26–35; Schwindt 2002: 363–64). Nor is the argument that Paul has begun to "demythologize" the powers and view them as symbols "of

God is administering the times in Christ (1:9) and is summing up all things in him (1:10), that his victory over all rule and authority is not only a present but also an eternal victory (1:21), and that he intends to lavish his kindness on his people in Christ for eternity (2:7), Paul's readers could easily have understood this language as an assertion that Christ, not Augustus and his successors, is the Lord of time and that only his reign is eternal.

Second, many interpreters have suggested that the letter's concern with the connection between Judaism and Christianity provides a window onto the circumstances of its first readers. Again, this is an old approach to the letter's background. Calvin took Paul's description of his calling to preach the gospel to the Gentiles in 3:1–13 to mean that he wanted to prevent among the Ephesians the kind of problem that developed in Galatia. The apostle warned the Gentile Ephesians against the efforts of itinerant Jewish Christians to impose the law on them and to question Paul's apostleship (1965: 122). F. C. Baur (2003: 2.1–44) focused on 2:14–18 and argued that Ephesians was a pseudonymous second-century document that used gnostic and Montanist concepts in an attempt to draw Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity together into a single unified church. Similarly, Schlier (1957: 19) thought that Paul used gnostic language and concepts in the letter to refute a type of "Jewish-Christian Gnosis." Käsemann (1958: 518; 1966: 291) believed the letter used concepts from gnostic mythology to remind Gentile Christians of their Jewish roots at a time when Gentile Christianity had become dominant and "pushed aside" Jewish Christianity. Ephesians attempted to bring unity and order to a church threatened by this division (Käsemann 1971: 120–21; cf. Fischer 1973).

Many details of these proposals are unconvincing. Ephesians 3:1–13 looks less like a defense of Paul's Gentile-oriented mission against people who were questioning it than an announcement of that mission to people who may have heard of it only in vague terms (3:2) or forgotten its importance (3:4). The once-popular interpretation of Ephesians through the lens of gnostic mythology, moreover, has fallen precipitously from favor, and with good reason: it rests largely on texts that postdate Ephesians by centuries (e.g., Barth 1974: 16–17; Arnold 1989: 7–13; Sellin 2008: 59).[39]

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the real determinants of human existence" (Wink 1984: 61–63; cf. Caird 1976: 46–47). Paul is saying instead in Eph. 1:20–22a that God has made Christ victorious over every power that seeks to harm God's people or to claim ultimate sovereignty over them. Paul is thinking of powers located "in the heavenly places" (1:20; cf. 3:10; 6:12), but among these powers would be the demonic forces that Rome identified with the deified members of the imperial household. As Revelation shows, from the perspective of persecuted Christians, the power of these demonic forces to create havoc in the world made itself felt among Christians most forcefully in the reigning emperor and in the cultic, military, and political machinery through which he ruled the empire.

39. Ephesians probably does participate in the general movement in late antiquity away from Greek rationalism and toward "higher wisdom through revelation" (Hengel 1974: 1.210–18). Its participation in this movement, moreover, probably explains its use of concepts and language that later became popular within gnostic religions (cf. Schwindt 2002: 508).

The idea that the circumstances of the letter's first readers led the author to address the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, however, is well founded. It rests firmly on 2:11–22 (cf. 3:6), where Paul emphasizes the plight of unbelieving Gentiles in their position outside Israel and the reconciliation that Gentile believers now experience with believing Jews and with God.

The most useful approaches to the letter, then, will place its interpretation within the context of popular Greco-Roman religion, the imperial cult, and Judaism that formed the background of Christian life in Ephesus in the first century. Both Lincoln and MacDonald have offered helpful ideas about how to do this.

Lincoln (1990: lxxiii, lxxxv–lxxxvi) tentatively puts the letter during a period of disorientation among Pauline Christians in the decades following the apostle's death, probably between AD 80 and 90. Without Paul's defining presence and organizational abilities, his churches would have lost a sense of identity, and disunity may have become a problem (cf. Fischer 1973: 40–48; Schnackenburg 1991: 34). These problems—combined with a fading hope in the parousia, the decline of interest in the Jewish roots of Christianity, and the ever-present pressure to accommodate their way of life to the prevailing culture—Lincoln argues, probably prompted the letter's composition. The author wanted to remind his readers of their Christian identity, of Paul's important role in establishing this identity, and of their responsibility to live in a way that was consistent with it. At the same time, he wanted to give them advice that would help them lower the level of tension between their communities and the prevailing culture. The household code serves this function (Lincoln 1990: 360).

Similarly, MacDonald believes that Ephesians responded to problems faced among Christians in Asia Minor during the time of Domitian (emperor 81–96). This setting would account for two major aspects of the letter.

First, MacDonald believes that Ephesians tries to negotiate the complicated relationships between Roman society, Judaism, and Christianity under Domitian's reign. Domitian attempted to prevent any noncompliance with the tax that Rome imposed on Jews after their war with Rome (66–70) by prosecuting those "who without publicly acknowledging that faith yet lived as Jews, as well as those who concealed their origin and did not pay the tribute levied upon their people" (Suetonius, *Dom.* 12.2, trans. Rolfe 1997–98). At the same time Jews were experiencing this oppression, they also maintained their status as an ancient, tolerated religion within the empire.

This complicated situation led to a correspondingly complex relationship between Christianity and Judaism. Even Gentile Christianity must have looked like Judaism to most Romans, and Christians might sometimes have appreciated the protection that Judaism could provide since it was an older, better-known religion. Christians may have also sometimes distanced themselves from Judaism when the relationship became a disadvantage, as, for example, under Domitian's taxation policies.[40] Ephesians sought to negotiate this undulating

40. MacDonald follows S. Wilson 1995 at this point.

terrain with an approach that portrayed Christianity both as rooted in Israel and as Israel's replacement (2:11–22; MacDonald 2004: 234–37).[41]

Second, MacDonald argues that the ethical character of the epistle fits well within a period after Paul's death and the loss, as a consequence, of the cohesion and direction he could provide for the Christian community. In Paul's absence, new leadership structures developed, and these needed legitimation, so the author of Ephesians tied the foundational role of apostles and prophets (the charismatic leaders, like Paul, of the past) with the leadership structures in place in his own time—evangelists, pastors, and teachers (4:11; cf. 2:20; 3:5; MacDonald 2000: 20, 292, 299). As alienation of believers from their culture increased, assimilation to the ethics of the prevailing environment would also increase. The author of Ephesians responded by emphasizing, on one hand, the stark difference that should prevail between the ethics of his readers and their cultural environment (2000: 21; 2004: 422–28), and on the other hand, that the social structures of the households in which they worshiped posed no visible threat to the social structures of that environment (2004: 439–42; cf. Osiek and MacDonald 2006: 118–43).

The analyses of Lincoln and MacDonald are similar to each other in their basic outline. The letter responds to problems that developed in Christian communities in Asia Minor because Paul, with his charismatic authority, had disappeared from the scene and because Pauline Christians in this area were feeling increasingly marginalized from their societies. In addition, Christianity and Judaism were separate entities by this time, yet they were confused with each other by the surrounding and largely unsympathetic culture, and this made life difficult and complex for both groups.

As the commentary will show, I find this picture of the circumstances that called forth Ephesians largely convincing. I do not, however, believe it is necessary to locate Ephesians in the period after Paul's death to account for these circumstances. If Paul wrote the letter around AD 62, near the end of the Roman imprisonment described in Acts 28, then he had been confined in various places for nearly five years and absent from Ephesus for over seven years.[42] This is enough time for the conditions that produced Ephesians to develop.

To begin with, it is unnecessary to wait until Domitian's reign to find Christians struggling with the social complexities of living within Roman society as a group that maintained Jewish roots but was emerging from Judaism. Already by the time Paul wrote Galatians, some Jewish Christians were trying to avoid persecution by imposing Jewish customs, such as circumcision, on Gentile Christians (Gal. 6:12). It is easy to imagine that the reason behind this otherwise enigmatic action involved the refusal of all Christians, whether Jewish or Gentile, to participate in certain expressions of the imperial cult.

41. Cf. Chadwick's view (1960: 148) that Ephesians links Judaism to Christianity because of "einer apologetischen Notwendigkeit" (an apologetic necessity).

42. For the chronology, see Acts 20:3, 6, 16; 24:27; 27:9; 28:11, 30; 1 Cor. 16:8; and the discussion in Schnabel 2004: 1220, 1223, 1257, 1262, and 1267.

Since Jewish sacrifices on behalf of the emperor and his activities were viewed as a participation in the imperial cult from the Roman perspective, Jews were exempt from other, more common expressions of devotion to the emperor, expressions they would have viewed as idolatrous (Hardin 2008: 102–10; cf. Price 1984: 207–22; Winter 1994: 133–35). Jewish Christians may well have discovered that by making Christian assemblies look thoroughly Jewish, they were saving the entire group from persecution (Winter 1994: 136–37; cf. Hardin 2008: 114–15).

During Paul's lifetime Christians in Ephesus experienced some of the same tensions. Paul first proclaimed the gospel in Ephesus in the synagogue and stirred up considerable interest, with the result that some Jews became "disciples" (Acts 18:19–20; 19:8–9). By the end of his work in Ephesus, however, most of the Christians were Gentiles. This is clear from Demetrius's concerns that his business of making images of Artemis, his personal reputation, and the reputation of the goddess herself were suffering because of the "great crowd" Paul had persuaded to abandon idolatry (19:23–27; Trebilco 2004: 169). In the riot that resulted from Demetrius's concerns, the unbelieving Gentile crowd seems to have lumped unbelieving Jews together with Christians as opponents of Artemis (19:34). The reason the Jews put "Alexander" forward as a spokesperson, then, was probably to defend their rights as Jews and to dissociate themselves from the unpopular Christians (19:33–34). In a careful study of Acts 19, Trebilco (2004: 160) observes that "there was a risk that the general population would indulge in anti-Jewish agitation, since they would make no distinction between Jews and Christians."

It is easy to imagine the Jewish and Christian communities in Ephesus drifting farther apart over the next seven years as Jewish Christians dwindled in number or assimilated into the new culture of the church. By the time Paul wrote Ephesians, it may well have been necessary to remind believers in the city, by now an almost entirely Gentile group, of the value of its Jewish heritage (Eph. 2:11–13) and of the necessity of unity with the few Jewish Christians who still identified themselves as Jews (2:14–22; 3:6). This was certainly necessary from a theological perspective, but a renewed realization of their connectedness to Judaism may have also helped Christians in Ephesus become more intelligible to their unbelieving Gentile neighbors. In turn, this may have lowered the level of tension between the mainly Gentile Ephesian church and the prevailing culture in which it existed. This tension had been there from the beginning of Paul's ministry in the city (Acts 19:23–34; cf. 1 Cor. 15:32; 16:8–9; 2 Cor. 11:23; Trebilco 2004: 58–67, 83–87; Thielman 2003), and it probably continued in the years after his departure (Rev. 2:3).[43]

The letter's concern with unity need not be limited, however, to unity between Jews and Gentiles. Well within Paul's lifetime, Christianity in Ephesus was diverse. Apollos and the "brothers" who wrote a letter of commendation

43. If 2 Timothy was written to Ephesus (Trebilco 2004: 206–9), then it would provide further evidence for continued suffering among Christians there (2 Tim. 1:8; 2:3, 11–13; 3:12; 4:5).

for Apollos to the Christians in Achaia (Acts 18:24–27) had only a loose connection with Paul. These "brothers," moreover, were probably Jewish Christians associated with the synagogue in Ephesus where Apollos preached (18:24–28; 1 Cor. 16:8; Trebilco 2004: 115–27). There is certainly no indication of tension between these believers and Paul (1 Cor. 16:8), but "their existence at least suggests that all of the Christians in Ephesus did not owe allegiance to Paul, and that there was a pre-Pauline group in the city" (Trebilco 2004: 126). The Ephesian church, moreover, was organized according to households (Acts 20:20; 1 Cor. 16:19–20; cf. Eph. 5:22–6:9), with perhaps thirty to forty people meeting in each household (Trebilco 2004: 98, 184–86). This situation would naturally foster diversity as households differed from one another in belief, practice, social standing, and loyalties (Trebilco 2004: 98).

Once again, it is easy to imagine the house churches in Ephesus developing in their own directions during Paul's seven- to eight-year absence from the city. Perhaps some Jewish Christians had never really left the synagogue and now had little enthusiasm for displays of unity with Gentiles who had believed the gospel under Paul's preaching. These Jewish Christians did not trace their spiritual lineage to Paul in the first place, and now association with Gentile Christians meant only increased trouble with their unbelieving Gentile neighbors. Perhaps other house churches began to develop in the ascetic and speculative directions that became a problem later when 1 Timothy was written to Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3–7; 4:1–4). Without the cohesive influence of occasional visits from Paul, his coworkers, or messengers bearing his letters, seven years is ample time for house churches that were once affiliated with one another more or less loosely to dissolve into discrete groups that were either disinterested in or hostile to one another.

In such a situation, Paul could not assume that he was writing to Christians who knew him well, who were aware of his calling, or who had learned the Christian tradition in the way that he typically taught it to his converts (cf. Eph. 3:2; 4:21). At the same time, he would understandably feel some apostolic responsibility for all Ephesian Christians since he had worked in their city so long, had been instrumental in the large increase in numbers of Christians in the city, and knew some Christians there reasonably well.[44] It is not implausible that an important theme of his letter to them would be the need for unity among believers across ethnic (2:11–22; 3:6), socioeconomic (4:28), and social lines (5:22–6:9). The situation was not unlike the circumstances that produced the Letter to the Romans: there too Paul was unknown to many of those to whom he wrote, but he still felt some apostolic responsibility to bring unity to the divided church (Rom. 1:13–15; 11:13; 15:14–16).

It is also plausible that Paul would emphasize in his letter the need to recognize the important place both of the " apostles and prophets" who first brought the gospel to Ephesus and of the evangelists, pastors, and teachers

44. On the large increase in the numbers of Christians through Paul's work in Ephesus, see Trebilco 2004: 134–52.

now continuing the foundational work of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 4:11–12; cf. 2:22; 3:5). Christians in Ephesus needed to work together harmoniously to bear an effective witness to the inimical powers that their efforts to frustrate God's work were doomed to failure (3:10). They also needed to work together to bear effective witness to the wider society that its hopeless way of life (4:17–19) could be transformed by the gospel (5:11–14). Accomplishing these goals, however, would entail agreement on the founding principles of the gospel, laid down by the apostles and prophets. It would also entail working together with the variety of leaders that Christ had given to the church in Ephesus to aid its growth in maturity. It is true, then, that the references to "apostles and prophets" in Ephesians look back to the founding of the community, but this backward look may well have become necessary between the time Paul left the city and the end of his Roman imprisonment.

To summarize, Paul wrote Ephesians after an absence from the city of more than seven years and after nearly five years of imprisonment, during which the Ephesian house churches had received little or no news of him. Jewish Christians had existed in the city before Paul's first visit to it. Although certainly not hostile to Paul at the time, they had never been closely connected with the mainly Gentile house churches that flourished during Paul's nearly three years of ministry. In Paul's absence, the groups that had never been closely associated with Paul and the Pauline house churches went in various theological and social directions. At the same time, tensions between the city's Christians and the wider Greco-Roman environment—with its imperial cult, devotion to Artemis, and interest in magic—continued.

Near the end of his period of "light" imprisonment in Rome, Paul heard that the Christians in Ephesus who knew him were discouraged by his suffering and their lack of contact with him (3:13). He probably also learned that most Christians in the city, whether they knew him or not, were disunified and tempted to assimilate to the culture they had left behind at their conversion. They were certainly not in imminent danger of apostasy (1:15), but they needed a reminder of (1) the power and grace of the one God, to whom they had committed themselves at their conversion; (2) the role that, as the church, they were playing in God's plan to unite the whole universe in Christ and under his feet; and (3) the ethical responsibility that God's grace and their role in God's plan placed upon them. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians is his response to this need.

The Structure of Ephesians

The structure of the letter is a mixture of organization and spontaneity. At one level, it seems to be carefully planned. Paul moves from prayers of praise (1:3–14; 3:20–21), thanksgiving (1:15–16a), and intercession (1:16b–23; 3:1, 14–19), and descriptions of how God has used his power to bless his people in Christ (2:1–3:13), to admonitions about how to live in ways that are consistent with these blessings (4:1–6:20). He begins with a benedictory prayer that

anticipates many of the letter's main themes (1:3–14) and ends with a stirring call to action that sums up much of its message (6:10–20).

At another level, the letter is more extemporaneous. The line dividing one section from the next is sometimes unclear (2:1; 5:21), the syntax is frequently obscure or broken (1:18; 2:1–3, 5; 3:1–2, 17, 20, 21; 4:2–3, 16; 5:9; 6:24), and lengthy digressions are common (2:2–3, 14–18; 3:2–13). The following outline attempts to trace the unfolding of the letter's thought with its mixture of planned structure and free-flowing discourse.

I. Prescript and greeting (1:1–2)
II. Blessing God who has blessed his people in Christ (1:3–14)
  A. Praise to God for his grace in making believers his people (1:3–6)
  B. Praise to God for his grace in redemption and revelation (1:7–10)
  C. Praise to God for making his people heirs and giving them hope in Christ (1:11–12)
  D. Praise to God for the conversion and future salvation of Paul's readers (1:13–14)
III. Thanksgiving for conversion and intercession for understanding (1:15–23)
  A. Thanksgiving for faith and love, and intercession for illumination (1:15–19)
  B. God's great power displayed in Christ and for the church (1:20–23)
IV. From children of wrath to new creation (2:1–10)
  A. Children of wrath like all the rest (2:1–3)
  B. Objects of God's mercy (2:4–7)
  C. The nature and consequences of God's grace (2:8–10)
V. From existence without God to membership in the people of God (2:11–22)
  A. The special plight of the Gentiles and God's response (2:11–13)
  B. Christ is the believing community's peace (2:14–18)
  C. Gentile Christians as an integral part of God's household (2:19–22)
VI. Paul's divinely given task and his suffering for the Gentiles (3:1–13)
  A. Paul's role in the administration of the mystery (3:1–7)
  B. How Paul fulfills his task (3:8–13)
VII. Paul prays for his readers' inner strength and praises the God who can give it (3:14–21)
  A. Paul prays for his readers' inner strength (3:14–19)
  B. Paul praises the God who is able to strengthen his readers (3:20–21)
VIII. The growth of the church toward unity and maturity (4:1–16)
  A. Christian unity and its theological basis (4:1–6)
  B. The gifts of the victorious Christ cultivate the body's maturity (4:7–16)

IX. A reminder of how to live as new human beings (4:17–5:2)
  A. No longer walk as "Gentiles" but as a new human being (4:17–24)
  B. Living as human beings newly created in God's image (4:25–5:2)
X. Avoiding and transforming the deeds of darkness (5:3–14)
  A. Avoiding sexual immorality and greed (5:3–7)
  B. From avoidance to transformation (5:8–14)
XI. Wise conduct within the household (5:15–6:9)
  A. Introduction: Wisdom and the life filled in the Spirit (5:15–20)
  B. Submission in the believing household (5:21–6:9)
    1. Wives and husbands (5:21–33)
    2. Children and parents (6:1–4)
    3. Slaves and masters (6:5–9)
XII. Standing against the strategies of the devil (6:10–20)
  A. Wearing God's protective armor (6:10–17)
  B. Persevering in watchful prayer (6:18–20)
XIII. A concluding commendation and a final prayer-wish (6:21–24)
  A. Tychicus and his mission (6:21–22)
  B. Peace, love, faith, and grace for the letter's recipients (6:23–24)

➤ I. Prescript and Greeting (1:1–2)
II. Blessing God Who Has Blessed His People in Christ (1:3–14)
III. Thanksgiving for Conversion and Intercession for Understanding (1:15–23)
IV. From Children of Wrath to New Creation (2:1–10)

I. Prescript and Greeting (1:1–2)

The basic framework for the opening of Ephesians follows the conventions of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek letters for centuries both before and after Paul's time. Greek letters typically began with a prescript that stated the name of the sender and then the name of the recipient, often with some descriptive term added to it ("my brother," "my sister," "my son," "my daughter," "my father," "my lord," "esteemed," "beloved," or the like; Exler 1923: 23–60). After this came a word or phrase of greeting similar to the oral salutations that people gave to one another when they met in person: "Rejoice!" or "Good health!" (Lieu 1985: 163–65). Hebrew and Aramaic letters, particularly those from the first and early second century, often followed a similar pattern, with the name of the sender followed by the name of the recipient and then the common oral salutation, now changed to "Peace" (Fitzmyer 1979: 189–93; Pardee 1992: 283–84; Dion 1992: 289). In both Greek and Semitic letters, this greeting was sometimes elaborated in various ways ("Many greetings," "Good health always," "Peace be multiplied to you").

At least according to the second-century literary critic Lucian, Greek philosophers sometimes changed the standard epistolary greeting to make some point consistent with their philosophical convictions. Plato replaced "Rejoice!" with "Do well!" Pythagoras and Epicurus selected "Good health!" from among the conventional options because it fit nicely with their understanding of life (Lucian, *Laps.* 4–6).

No known modification of the customary framework from antiquity, however, matches the creativity of Paul's changes to it. In Ephesians, as in most of his letters, he qualifies both prescript and greeting in elaborate ways to alert his readers to the theological significance of the letter. He writes as an envoy of Christ Jesus, appointed to this office by a deliberate act of God, and he writes to God's people in Ephesus, who believe the gospel and are in Christ. His greeting becomes not a wish for good cheer or health but a prayer similar to that of the OT priests for the grace and peace of God to rest on his readers. Paul makes clear in the greeting, however, something that he will describe more fully in the letter: that the experience of God's grace and peace in the present, climactic period of salvation history comes to God's people through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Exegesis and Exposition

[1]Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are ⌜in Ephesus⌝ and believers, in Christ Jesus. [2]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:1 The letter begins by identifying its sender as Paul and then describing him as "an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God" (Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, *Paulos apostolos Christou Iēsou dia thelēmatos theou*). The significance we give to this identification and description will vary with the approach we take to the letter's authorship, but it is reasonable to consider Ephesians a genuine Pauline letter, written in a later period than most of the undisputed letters and emphasizing different themes in a changed setting (see the commentary introduction).

Here Paul identifies himself as an apostle through the will of God for reasons similar to those that led him to use this same designation, or something like it, in five other letters. In Gal.1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; and 2 Cor. 1:1 the reason for these emphases is not far to seek: in each instance he addressed churches where people had raised questions about his apostleship (cf. Best 1997a: 32). In Rom. 1:1 and Col. 1:1 nothing clearly indicates that Paul's apostleship was an issue, but Paul was addressing churches that he did not found and many people whom he did not know personally. He may have wanted to begin these letters, then, with a statement of the apostolic basis for the pastoral authority that he was about to exercise over his readers.

In the same way, Ephesians went to people largely unknown to Paul. He had heard only a general description of most of them (1:15; 4:21), and he could assume only that their knowledge of him was accurate (3:2). The self-description "apostle" immediately communicated why he thought he had the authority to address them in a pastoral letter.

For Paul, apostles were envoys—people whom someone or some group had sent on a specific mission. Paul could use the term of delegates that churches appointed for a special task, such as taking a gift to Paul (Phil. 2:25) or bringing monetary contributions to the needy in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:23). Paul could also use it in a semitechnical sense to mean someone whom God had set apart to preach the gospel (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:1, 15–16). In Ephesians, Paul couples apostles with prophets, and always in that order (2:20; 3:5; 4:11; cf. 1 Cor. 12:28–29; Did. 11.3). He places them at the foundation of the church (2:20) and at the head of the list of gifted people whom Christ has given to the church for its edification (4:11). For Paul, apostles played an important, authoritative role in shaping the church's growth into what God intended the church to become (2:21; 4:13).

God had set Paul apart as a particular type of apostle. He was called to preach the gospel to non-Jewish peoples (Rom. 1:5; 11:13; Gal. 1:1, 15–16). This kind of apostleship often meant traveling with the gospel to distant places (Rom. 1:5–6, 13–14; 1 Cor. 4:9, 11; 9:5; 1 Thess. 2:1–2, 7) and frequently

entailed the kind of suffering that Paul was experiencing as he wrote Ephesians (1 Cor. 4:8–15; 1 Thess. 2:1–2, 7, 9; cf. Eph. 3:1, 13; 4:1; 6:20). It also sometimes meant using letters to exercise oversight of Gentile believers whom he did not personally know (Rom. 1:5–6; 11:13; 15:15).

When Paul described himself as an apostle at the beginning of Ephesians, he probably intended to identify himself to his readers as one of the foundational guides of the church's growth to maturity, with particular responsibility for the Gentiles in Ephesus (cf. 3:1–4, 8).

Paul identifies the recipients of his letter with the phrase τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (*tois hagiois tois ousin en Ephesō kai pistois en Christō Iēsou*, to the saints who are in Ephesus and believers, in Christ Jesus). For reasons explained in the introduction to the commentary, it seems best to keep ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in the text despite its absence from the three earliest manuscripts of Ephesians and from what Basil the Great in the mid-fourth century called "the old copies" known to him. Paul wrote Ephesians about seven years after his lengthy stay in the city, and this was ample time for dramatic changes to take place among the Christian groups that flourished there. Although he was writing to a city where he had spent between two and three years, the letter has a somewhat distant tone because Paul could no longer assume that Christians he had once known in the city still lived there or were still identified with the movement, nor could he assume that all who read this letter would have a clear understanding of the important role he had played in the establishment of the church in their city (1:15; 3:2; 4:21).[1]

Does Paul address this diverse body of readers as two different groups, "the saints who are in Ephesus" and "the believers who are in Christ Jesus"? Two considerations have sometimes led interpreters to this conclusion. First, for Paul to call his readers both "saints" and "believers" seems redundant—if they are "saints," surely they are also "believers." Second, Paul's repetition of the article τοῖς in front of οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ (*ousin en Ephesō*, who are in Ephesus) but not in front of πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (*pistois en Christō Iēsou*, believers in Christ Jesus) might be understood to bind οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ closely to ἁγίοις (*hagiois*, saints), which also has the article. This would leave πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ to refer to a separate group. On this understanding of the Greek, Paul addresses his letter "to the saints, that is, the ones in Ephesus, and to believers who are in Christ Jesus."

This division of the readers into two groups, however, is without precedent in Paul's other letters, and it is difficult to see what the difference between the two groups could be. Some interpreters have suggested that Paul (or the author) wrote to Jewish Christians, whom he called "saints" (cf. 2:19; Rom. 15:25–26, 31), and Gentile Christians, whom he called "faithful" or "believers" (e.g., Kümmel 1975: 355). If this is correct, at the beginning of the letter

1. See also the third-person prayer-wishes for peace and grace at the end of the letter (6:23–24). This is the only Pauline letter in which the concluding grace-wish is not formulated in the second person.

he introduces the theme of the relationship between Gentile Christianity and ancient Israel that he will later develop at length (2:11–22). Elsewhere in the letter, however, Paul regularly calls all his readers "saints" (1:15, 18; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18), so this solution is not likely to be correct.

What, then, of the grammatical problem? Paul probably intended the first τοῖς to go both with ἁγίοις and with πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Alford 1857: 66; Wallace 1996: 282; Hoehner 2002: 142). This is unusual, but native speakers of ancient Greek, such as Chrysostom (*Hom. Eph.*, hom. 1; *NPNF* 13:51), Theodoret (R. Hill 2001: 2.33), and Theophylact (*PG* 124:1033) took the construction to mean that Paul was calling his readers in Ephesus both "saints" and "faithful" (or "believers") and seemed to see nothing unnatural in it. The grammatical difficulties, then, are not insuperable, and this makes it likely that Paul addresses his readers as a single group of Christians in Ephesus who are both ἅγιοι and πιστοί.

What does he mean by these terms? The term ἅγιοι (*hagioi*, saints) takes its meaning from the OT, which speaks of God choosing his people from among all peoples of the earth to be "a royal priesthood and a holy [ἅγιον] nation" (Exod. 19:5–6 LXX). Because of this status, Israel should "be holy" (ἅγιοι) as God is "holy" (ἅγιος; Lev. 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:7). Israel's holy status, given to it by God, should be lived out in holy conduct: those whom God has separated as his special people should live in a way that is separate from the surrounding environment. In Ephesians, Paul's use of ἅγιος and related words follows the same pattern. Christ has made believers holy (ἁγιάζω, *hagiazō*) through the cleansing bath of the gospel (5:26), and so they have this status as a gift from God. Yet they must live in a way that is consistent with this status—they should be "holy [ἁγίους] and blameless before him in love" (1:4), and their conduct should be what is "proper for holy people [ἁγίοις]" (5:3).

The adjective πιστοί (*pistoi*) probably does not mean "faithful ones" in the sense of "loyal" or "trustworthy" people (e.g., Origen [Heine 2002: 81]; Lightfoot 1895: 310; Barth 1974: 67–69), although that is the most common meaning of the adjective (MM 515; BDAG 820–21). Since he will soon describe his readers as those who "have believed" (πιστεύσαντες, *pisteusantes*) the gospel (1:13), it is more likely that he addresses them here as "believers" in the sense that they have trusted the gospel message when they heard it (BDAG 821; Lincoln 1990: 6; O'Brien 1999: 87; Hoehner 2002: 142).

They are, moreover, both saints and believers ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. This does not mean that they are saints who trust Christ, although that is implied, but that they are saints and believers who are "in Christ." As the people in Ephesus whom God has set apart as his own, and who believe the gospel, they live within the sphere of existence that Christ defines.

1:2 Paul greets his readers in exactly the same way he greets his audience in seven of his other canonical letters (Rom. 1:7b; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Phil. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:2; Philem. 3). This greeting has linguistic similarities to the standard salutations of Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic letters of Paul's

time, but it is also innovative and distinctive. Letters in all three languages derived their greetings from the verbal salutation that people gave to one another in social settings, χαίρειν (*charein*, rejoice!) in Greek and /שָׁלוֹם שָׁלָם (*šālôm*/*šĕlām*, peace!) in Hebrew/Aramaic.[2] Native Hebrew and Aramaic speakers observed the Greek norms when writing in Greek, saluting their readers not with something like εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πληθυνθείη (*eirēnē hymin plēthyntheiē*, may peace be increased for you) but simply with χαίρειν (cf. Lieu 1985: 166–67).[3]

Paul's greeting seems to have its origins in a combination of both the Greek and Semitic customs. His noun χάρις (*charis*, grace) is semantically related to χαίρειν and sounded similar to this well-known greeting when the epistle was read aloud. Similarly, for any of his readers familiar with Jewish customs, greeting them with εἰρήνη (*eirēnē*, peace) probably recalled the typical Semitic salutation both in social settings and in letters. Still, Paul's creative deviation from the conventions must have jarred those who first heard this letter (cf. Byrskog 1997: 37–38). With the term χάρις Paul was not simply saying hello, but issuing a prayer-wish that grace would come to them (cf. 6:24). Similarly, the noun εἰρήνη (*eirēnē*, peace) in the greeting of a Greek letter was highly unusual. Paul was not simply greeting them in Greek the way Jews said hello in Hebrew. This would have sounded as odd in ancient Greek as the greeting "Peace!" would sound in English today. Paul was instead implicitly asking God to bring peace to his readers.

Those among Paul's readers who were familiar with Israel's Scriptures may have recognized in Paul's greeting the language of the priestly benediction in Num. 6:23–26.[4] Here Aaron and his sons are instructed to pray for God to "show grace" (חָנַן, *ḥānan*; LXX: ἐλεήσαι, *eleēsai*) to the people of Israel and give them "peace" (שָׁלוֹם, *šālôm*). If Paul intended to recall this benediction, then he may have seen his distinctive greeting not only as a genuine prayer-wish for God's people but also as an assertion of his apostolic authority (cf. Berger 1974: 199–201). Just as Jewish priests had the authority to pronounce the priestly blessing on the people, so in his role as the envoy of Christ Jesus, Paul begins his letter with a pronunciation over his readers of the blessings of grace and peace that God gives to his people.

2. In his essay "A Slip of the Tongue in Greeting" Lucian (*Laps.* 2) says that although by his time (second century AD) the greeting χαίρειν was used only in the morning, in ancient times it was used at any time of day. His easy movement back and forth between face-to-face and epistolary greetings in his discussion reveals his assumption that the epistolary greeting arose from the oral salutation. Tertullian comments on the similarity between the greetings in Paul's Letters and the custom that Jews observed even in Tertullian's own time (early third century AD) of saluting each other with "Peace!" (*Marc.* 5.5). Cf. Lieu 1985: 162–67.

3. Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πληθυνθείη is Theodotian's rendering of the Aramaic greeting שְׁלָמְכוֹן יִשְׁגֵּא in the letters from Nebuchadnezzar and Darius in Dan. 4:1 (3:31 MT) and 6:25 (6:26 MT, Theod.).

4. Milgrom (1990: 360–62) has gathered evidence for the antiquity and wide-ranging influence of the priestly benediction (e.g., Mal. 1:8–10; 1QSb 3.1–5) and observes that it seems to have even influenced social greetings (e.g., Ruth 2:4).

In contrast to the priestly benediction, however, these blessings are not only from God but also from "the Lord Jesus Christ." This anticipates the way Paul, throughout Ephesians, describes Jesus as the means by which God shows the lavishness of his grace to his people. In 1:3–6, Paul praises God for choosing his people in Christ, predestining them for adoption through Christ, and doing all this "for the praise of his glorious grace, which he graciously gave us in the Beloved." In 2:5 it is by making believers alive together with Christ that God saves them "by grace." In 2:7 God shows the immense riches of his grace by the kindness that he displayed in Christ Jesus. In 4:32 God shows himself to be gracious by forgiving wrongdoing in Christ (χαρίζομαι, *charizomai*; cf. BDAG 1078). Jesus is also the source of peace—peace between Jewish and Gentile Christians (2:14–15), between God and humankind (2:17), and together with God, among Christians generally (6:23).

Summary

Paul's opening salutation emphasizes his authority as an apostle to instruct even Christians whom he has never seen and does not know. At least implicitly, he begins his instruction with the way he formulates the opening of this letter. He writes to those in Ephesus whom God has set apart as his people and who show this by the way they live. They believe the gospel, and their existence is defined by their relationship with Christ. As God's people they are recipients both of God's grace and of the peace that his grace brings, peace with God and peace with others. God the Father has given his people these blessings through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Additional Note

1:1. The words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ are missing in the oldest manuscript witnesses to the text of Ephesians ($\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, ℵ, B). Origen (third cent.) and Basil the Great (fourth cent.) also worked with a text of Ephesians without a place name. Although Basil knew that the text was disputed at this point, he comments that the "old" copies of the letter had the reading without the place name. Still, the place name is likely to be original. Not only do the manuscripts with the name have a wider geographical distribution, but also the text without ἐν Ἐφέσῳ both violates Paul's normal practice of including a place name at the beginning of his letters and produces almost unintelligible Greek. Probably the place name fell out of the Alexandrian manuscript tradition of the letter in an effort to further universalize its already quite general contents. For a full discussion of this important text-critical problem, see the section "The Recipients of Ephesians" in the introduction to the commentary.

I. Prescript and Greeting (1:1–2)
➤ II. Blessing God Who Has Blessed His People in Christ (1:3–14)
III. Thanksgiving for Conversion and Intercession for Understanding (1:15–23)
IV. From Children of Wrath to New Creation (2:1–10)

II. Blessing God Who Has Blessed His People in Christ (1:3–14)

Paul often follows the greeting of his letters with a brief "prayer report" in which he describes how he thanks God for his readers in prayer (1 Thess. 1:2–3:13; 2 Thess. 1:3–12; 1 Cor. 1:4–9; Phil. 1:3–8; Rom. 1:8; Col. 1:3–8; Philem. 4–5; 2 Tim. 1:3; cf. 1 Tim. 1:12–17) and how he intercedes with God on their behalf (Phil. 1:9–11; Col. 1:9–11; Philem. 6–7; cf. Rom. 1:9–10). In 2 Cor. 1:3–4 he replaces these elements with a benediction that blesses God for his mercy and compassion in rescuing Paul from death in Asia, and allowing this experience to be the means by which he can console others in their suffering. In a way unique among his canonical letters, in Ephesians Paul not only records a thanksgiving (1:15–16) and intercessory (1:17–23) prayer report but also, before it, a lengthy benediction that blesses God for the blessings he has given to all believers, and especially to Paul's Gentile readers.

The benediction, or *berekah*, has been for centuries the most common form of Jewish prayer and central to the piety of devout Jewish living. Long before the first century, Jews used both lengthy benedictions in corporate worship and brief benedictions in daily life as a way of praising God for various gracious gifts (Dahl 2000: 279–308). The benediction that David composed to celebrate the victories God had given him over his enemies (2 Sam. 22:47–49) found its way into the liturgy of ancient Israel (Ps. 18:46–48). Solomon used a benediction in a setting of corporate worship at the installation of the ark in the newly built temple (1 Kings 8:56–61). Those who returned to Israel after the Babylonian exile used a benediction in corporate worship when they gathered after the Feast of Booths to confess their sin (Neh. 9:5; cf. Pr. Azar.; Tob. 13:1–17). These benedictions sometimes do not sustain the element of praise but become intercessory prayers (1 Kings 8:57–60; Neh. 9:32; Eighteen Benedictions 4–5, 7–17), confessions of sin (Neh. 9:16–17a, 26, 28–30, 33–37; Eighteen Benedictions 6), and admonitions (1 Kings 8:61; cf. Neh. 9:38).

In everyday life, people used short benedictions as a way to express thanks to God for some good gift (1 Sam. 25:32, 39; Ezra 7:27–28; Tob. 11:14–15; Luke 1:68–75), upon receiving good news (Gen. 24:27; 1 Kings 1:48; Tob. 8:15–17; Jdt. 13:17, 18b), when giving good news (2 Sam. 18:28), to congratulate those whom God had blessed (Gen. 14:19–20; Exod. 18:10; Ruth 4:14; 1 Kings 5:7; 10:9), or simply as a greeting (1 Sam. 15:13; Tob. 11:17). They also used them to begin private, intercessory prayers (Tob. 3:11–15; 8:5–7).

The centrality of the benediction to common Jewish piety in antiquity is also clear from the Mishnah's tractate *Berakot* (Benedictions), which is, significantly, the first tractate of the Mishnah's first order. Although this tractate is difficult

to date, some of its details and much of its spirit probably originated before the destruction of the temple in AD 70.[1] The tractate provides instructions for saying the regular prayers of Judaism as well as prayers over meals and occasional, spontaneous prayers.[2] The benediction ("Blessed are you, O Lord, who . . .") is the common thread that binds all these prayers together. Some form of the Eighteen Benedictions was to be said three times a day (4.1, 3), prayers over meals took the form of benedictions (6–8), and even the morning and evening confessions of the Shema were to be preceded and concluded with benedictions (1.4). Various events in the daily routine of life were also to be greeted by blessing God: passing by a place where God had worked a miracle for Israel (9.1), seeing a display of God's power in the natural world such as a thunderstorm (9.2), finishing construction on a house (9.3), and entering or leaving a town (9.4). Paul gives evidence in his letters of how integral such expressions of praise were to the life of a devout Jew (Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 2 Cor. 11:31).[3]

In light of all this, it is not surprising that Jewish letters sometimes opened with benedictions, or something similar to them. Three sixth-century-BC letters from Tel Arad begin with the name of the sender, a word of greeting, the name of the recipient, and then the phrase "I bless you to YHWH" (Pardee 1982: 48, 57, 64). Closer to the time of Paul, in the mid-second century BC, the Jewish historian Eupolemus retells the story of the communication between King Hiram of Tyre and Solomon (1 Kings 5:1–12; 2 Chron. 2:1–16) and, perhaps taking a hint from 2 Chron. 2:11, puts the messages between the two kings into the form of an exchange of letters (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.33–34; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 8.50–54).[4] First Kings 5:7 says that when Hiram received a request from Solomon for Lebanese cedars to use for constructing the temple, he responded with a benediction ("Blessed be the Lord today, who has given to David a wise son to be over his great people"; 1 Kings 5:7 NRSV). Eupolemus apparently understood the retelling of this in 2 Chron. 2:11–12 to mean that Hiram (whom he calls "Souron") put this benediction in his letter of response to Solomon.[5] In his own account, Eupolemus fashions a proper

1. For the elements of the tractate that probably predate AD 70, see Instone-Brewer 2004: 41–119. For ancient Jewish prayer generally and the importance of benedictory prayers specifically, see, in addition to Instone-Brewer's treatment, Bonsirven 1935: 141–58; Cohen 1987: 62–73; E. Sanders 1990: 72–77; 1992: 195–208.

2. The regular prayers are the Shema and the Tefillah. The Shema is not actually a "prayer" but a confession that comprises Deut. 6:4–9; 11:13–21; Num. 15:37–41. The Tefillah is the *Shemoneh Esreh*, or Eighteen Benedictions. See Danby 1933: 2n1, 796–97nn38 and 46.

3. Paul may allude to the blessing that should accompany each course in a meal when he cites Ps. 24:1 in 1 Cor. 10:26. Cf. *t. Ber.* 4.1 and the discussion in Instone-Brewer 2004: 72–74.

4. Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 1.21) also refers to this correspondence but does not quote it. Josephus, Clement, and Eusebius apparently relied on the mid-first-century-BC historian Alexander Polyhistor, who seems to have quoted Eupolemus fairly closely. See F. Fallon, *OTP* 2:861–62.

5. According to F. Fallon, *OTP* 2:862, Eupolemus's name Σούρων (*Sourōn*, Souron) comes from the Hebrew חוּרָם (*ḥûrām*, Huram, as in 2 Chron. 2:3 [2 MT]). Curiously, it also resembles צוֹר or צֹר, the Hebrew words for Tyre.

letter from "Suron" to Solomon with a prescript, greeting, and (immediately after the greeting) Hiram's benediction. Although this evidence is too slight to be conclusive, Eupolemus's editorial work here may mean that he was familiar with letters that followed this same form.[6] If so, then the three New Testament letters that begin with benedictions (2 Cor. 1:3–4; Eph. 1:3–14; 1 Pet. 1:3–5) may be following a Jewish epistolary custom (cf. Dahl 2000: 315–19; *pace* Gnilka 1971: 58n1; Lincoln 1990: 11; O'Brien 1999: 89).

Paul's benediction in Eph. 1:3–14 is unusual because of the combination of its length, its sustained benedictory focus, and its complex series of dependent clauses. The benedictions at the beginning of other Hebrew letters are no more than a brief phrase or sentence, but Paul's benediction, although one sentence, comprises 202 words. This makes it longer by far than the New Testament's other epistolary benedictions: 2 Cor. 1:3–4 and 1 Pet. 1:3–5 weigh in at 44 and 53 words respectively. The longer benedictions in roughly contemporary Jewish literature and liturgy, moreover, tend to stray into intercession, confession, or admonition (cf. Caragounis 1977: 39–40, 48). They do this even when they maintain a benedictory character, as in the Eighteen Benedictions, by repeating the phrase, "Blessed are you, Lord. . . ." The benediction in Ephesians, however, sustains its praise of God from beginning to end. It announces its benedictory focus in the first line (v. 3), where the root εὐλογ- is repeated three times, once as an adjective (εὐλογητός, *eulogētos*, blessed), once as a participle (εὐλογήσας, *eulogēsas*, who has blessed), and once as a noun (εὐλογίᾳ, *eulogia*, blessing).[7] Although it never repeats the benedictory formula, it continues with an elaborate series of subordinate clauses that explain the blessings for which God is blessed (cf. Caragounis 1977: 40, 45) and ends with the phrase "to the praise of his glory" (v. 14; cf. vv. 6 and 12).

The Qumran literature may provide the closest parallel to the style of this benediction. Not only do its prayers often contain long sentences (Kuhn 1968: 116–17; Gnilka 1971: 56–57), sometimes punctuated with benedictions (e.g., 1QS 9.15; 1QH[a] 13.20; 18.14; 19.27–30), but also in 4Q434 we find a benedictory prayer that, although fragmentary, has the same broad pattern as Eph. 1:3–14. It too begins with a benedictory statement ("Bless my soul, the Lord for all his marvels, forever. And blessed be his name . . .") and continues with a lengthy, sustained description of why God is blessed without either repeating the initial benediction or trailing off into some other kind of prayer.[8]

In the Ephesians benediction, the complex series of subordinate clauses that qualify the initial benedictory formula is so elaborate that it has produced

6. Cf. 2 Macc. 1:10–12, which, however, may also be part of a fictional letter (Goldstein 1983: 157–67) and uses the phrase "we give much thanks to him [i.e., God]" rather than "Blessed be the Lord. . . ."

7. Sellin (2008: 85n61) calls this wordplay *figura etymologica* and says that it is a characteristic of Asiatic rhetoric.

8. Trans. García Martínez and Tigchelaar 1998. Cf. 4Q502 and 4Q512, which, although briefer and more fragmentary, seem to follow the same pattern.

a prodigious number of attempts to explain its structure.[9] The idea that the passage is a hymn, poem, or liturgy, perhaps one that the author took over and modified, was popular during the first half of the twentieth century (e.g., Innitzer 1904: 612–21; Lohmeyer 1926a: 120–25), although it also has more recent advocates (e.g., Coutts 1956–57: 120–24; Fischer 1973: 111–18; Lang 1969: 12–16; Muddiman 2001: 63–65).

This explanation has now fallen from favor, and for good reason. First, the style and theology of the benediction fit seamlessly into the style and theology of the rest of the letter. Stylistically, the letter contains long, complex sentences (1:3–14, 15–23; 2:1–7; 3:2–13, 14–19; 4:1–6, 11–16; 6:14–20; O'Brien 1999: 90; Hoehner 2002: 153), and theologically the rest of the letter repeats the benediction's concern with the heavenly places, the display of God's grace in Christ, the knowledge of God's will, and the revelation of the mystery of God's cosmic plans for the unity of the universe (cf. Caragounis 1977: 50–52; Pokorný 1992: 54; Best 1997a: 54–55; 1998: 109).

Second, the various attempts to uncover the poetic structure of the supposed hymn or poem by analyzing it in terms of a classical "period" that can then be divided into "cola" (Innitzer 1904: 617–18; Lohmeyer 1926a: 120–25) do not work.[10] These analyses are highly subjective (Debrunner 1926: 231), and on closer inspection, inconsistencies appear in them (van Roon 1974: 159). Attempts to improve the theological consistency or poetic symmetry of the hymn by deleting certain phrases as editorial additions do nothing to inspire confidence that this is the right approach.[11]

Attempts to organize the passage along the lines of its larger semantic structure show greater promise. The benediction has four prominent semantic features that seem to be repeated at critical junctures in the flow of its thought.

9. Merkel (1987: 3224–26) lists twenty, and Hoehner (2002: 154–57, 160–61) lists forty-three attempts to explain the organization of the passage.

10. In Greek poetry, a "period" is a continuous string of rhythmic sounds after which there is a pause. It is similar to a sentence in prose composition. A "colon" (the singular of "cola") is the basic unit of which a period is made, not more than twelve syllables long, with a regular, often well-known rhythm or meter. It corresponds to a phrase in prose composition. See West 1982: 5–6. Lohmeyer did not attempt to apply classical standards of poetry to Eph. 1:3–14, which he viewed as "eine eigentümliche Mischung griechischen und semitischen Sprachstiles" (a peculiar mixture of a Greek and Semitic style of speech; 1926a: 122; 1926b: 233–34). Lohmeyer (1926a: 120–21) did, however, refer to the passage as a "period," found that it had "ein überraschend regelmässiges Gebilde" (a surprisingly regular structure), and divided it into four stanzas composed of small triadic "strophes," the first three stanzas with four strophes each and the final stanza with three strophes.

11. Fischer (1973: 113–14) omits from the "hymn" elements that are either reminiscent of the theological distinctives of the rest of the letter or disruptive of its symmetry. Coutts (1957: 120–24) similarly tries to reconstruct the original baptismal liturgy on which he thinks the passage is based by eliminating the author's afterthoughts, comments, interruptions, rearrangements, and small changes to the wording. Fischer comments that his reconstruction is "natürlich sehr unsicher" (naturally very uncertain; 1973: 114), and Coutts (1957: 120) describes his own effort as "a rash undertaking." Cf. Lang (1969: 12–13), who distills part of a baptismal liturgy from 1:11–14.

First, the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ (*en Christō*, in Christ) or its equivalent occurs at the end of the benedictory opening (v. 3); at the end of the statement that God chose believers and predestined them to be his holy, blameless, and adoptive children (vv. 4–6); at the end of the description of Christ's central role in the redemption of believers and in the summation of the universe (vv. 7–9); and at the end of the description of the inheritance of believers (vv. 10–12). The final paragraph does not end in the phrase but turns specifically to the readers, applying these blessings to them through the hearing of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit (vv. 13–14).

Second, phrases beginning with κατά (*kata*, according to) or the related term καθώς (*kathōs*, inasmuch as) and often leading to a purpose statement (vv. 4, 5b–6a, 9b–10a, 11–12, but not 7b) qualify the main clauses that describe the leading themes of the benediction. God has blessed believers (v. 3) inasmuch as (καθώς) he chose them so that they might be holy and blameless before him (v. 4). He predestined believers according to his will and for the praise of his glory (vv. 5b–6a, 11–12). God redeemed them in Christ according to the richness of his grace (v. 7). He made known to them the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure for the administration of the fullness of the times (vv. 9b–10a).

Third, the benediction has three active participles, each of which announces an important theme: εὐλογήσας (*eulogēsas*, who has blessed), προορίσας (*proorisas*, having predestined), and γνωρίσας (*gnōrisas*, having made known). God has blessed believers (v. 3), predestined them for adoptive sonship (v. 5), and made known to them the mystery of his cosmic purposes (v. 9).

Fourth, three times the benediction uses the refrain "for the praise of his glory" (vv. 12, 14) or "for the praise of his glorious grace" (v. 6). Each time it appears, the phrase concludes a section in which one of the three persons of the Trinity rises to special prominence: the Father (vv. 4–6), Christ (vv. 7–12), and the Holy Spirit (vv. 13–14).

Taken together, all of this shows that Paul constructed the benediction with care, but the small inconsistencies in these features also reveal the extemporaneous nature of the passage. The κατά phrases, for example, do not follow the dominant pattern consistently. The first occurrence (v. 4) uses καθώς (κατά + ὡς) rather than κατά, the third occurrence (v. 7) has no purpose clause following it, and the final occurrences feature two closely related κατά phrases with a purpose clause only after the second phrase (v. 11). Much the same is true of the three aorist active participles (εὐλογήσας, προορίσας, and γνωρίσας). Although the number of subordinate clauses that modify them show that they express leading ideas, they are not syntactically parallel with one another: εὐλογήσας is a substantival participle and is not only the chief syntactical element in verse 3 but also arguably in the entire passage. The other two participles, however, are adverbial and syntactically subordinate to their main verbs. Similarly, the phrase "for the praise of his glory" in its first occurrence appears in the expanded form "for the praise of his glorious grace" (v. 6; cf. vv. 12 and 14).

No one of these structural features, moreover, satisfactorily accounts for the whole passage. The ἐν Χριστῷ phrases (or their equivalents) come close since a good argument could be made that they stand at the end of nearly every major section (Krämer 1967: 38–41). Even so, the phrase is missing from the end of the whole passage, and instead we find εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ (*eis epainon tēs doxēs autou*, for the praise of his glory, v. 14). If we then try to make this phrase a dominant structural marker (Innitzer 1904: 619; Coutts 1957: 116), we produce three sections of uneven length (vv. 3–6, 7–12, and 13–14). Making the three leading participles (Gnilka 1971: 59; cf. Lincoln 1990: 15–17) the dominant structural markers works no better since they can account for only verses 3–10.[12] The κατά (*kata*, according to) phrases (Schnackenburg 1977: 74–76; 1991: 46–47) similarly can account for only verses 3–11.

The passage therefore combines repetition of structural features and themes with small structural inconsistencies. This combination seems most likely if Paul dictated the passage extemporaneously but with some prior structure in mind before doing so.[13] It is perhaps not irrelevant that in early Christianity, and possibly in Judaism before AD 70, there is evidence that some Christians and Jews used set prayers less as statements to be repeated word for word than as outlines for directing their prayers. Although the rabbinic traditions on this are difficult to date, the Mishnah reveals that some ancient Jews used the Eighteen Benedictions as an outline for more spontaneous prayers; the variations between Matthew and Luke in the Lord's Prayer may also be a result of this practice.[14] If Paul used this method in 1:3–14, then he may have had some set form of prayer in mind, either a prayer form that he created when he planned the composition of the letter or a traditional form that others also knew.

Our best chance for recovering the basic structure of Paul's prayer seems to lie in observing where the dominant structural patterns converge and in observing the thematic emphases in the sections that result. The two features that converge most consistently seem to be the ἐν (*en*, in) phrases that refer to Christ (Krämer 1967) and the κατά (*kata*, according to) phrases that refer to the manner in which God has blessed believers in Christ and the purpose for which he has done so (Schnackenburg 1977: 74–75; 1991: 46–47). Using these two features, we can divide the benediction into four major parts. The beginning and end of the passage express praise to God, and the internal boundaries of each part are marked by an ἐν phrase referring to Christ at the end of a section followed by ἐν ᾧ (*en hō*, in whom) at the beginning of the

12. Schlier's idea (1957: 39) that three main verbs—ἐξελέξατο (v. 4), ἐχαρίτωσεν (v. 6), and ἐπερίσσευσεν (v. 8)—form the structural framework for verses 4–10 seems to ignore the presence of other important indicative verbs, such as ἔχομεν in verse 7 and προέθετο in verse 9.

13. Cf. Deichgräber 1967: 66–67. Some scholars (e.g., Coutts 1957: 115–27; Lang 1969: 12–16; Dahl 2000: 327–28) suggest that the prayer, or at least part of it, arose out of a baptismal setting. This seems unnecessarily speculative, however, since nothing in the prayer explicitly refers to baptism.

14. See the discussion of *m. Ber.* 4.4 and *b. Ber.* 34a in Instone-Brewer 2004: 57–59.

next section.[15] Thus the first section begins with the benedictory formula (v. 3) and ends with ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ (*en tō ēgapēmenō*, in the Beloved, v. 6). The second section begins with ἐν ᾧ (v. 7) and ends with ἐν αὐτῷ (*en autō*, in him, v. 10). The third section begins with ἐν ᾧ (v. 11) and ends with ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ (v. 12). The final section begins with ἐν ᾧ (v. 13) and ends with an expression of praise (v. 14).

Embedded in the first three of the sections that these three internal boundary markers demarcate is a κατά clause followed by a purpose clause. The final section has no such construction and has two ἐν ᾧ clauses, indicating that its function is different from the other three. This difference receives confirmation in the switch from the first person, which dominates the first three sections (vv. 3–12), to the second person in this final section (vv. 13–14).

A diagram of the structure looks like this:

Section	Introduction	Conclusion	Κατά Phrase + Purpose Clause
A. 1:3–6	**Opening expression of praise:** εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεός (*eulogētos ho theos*, blessed is the God)	ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ (*en tō ēgapēmenō*, in the Beloved)	κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν . . . εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ (*kata tēn eudokian . . . eis epainon doxēs tēs charitos autou*, according to the good pleasure . . . for the praise of his glorious grace)
B. 1:7–10	ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν (*en hō echomen*, in whom we have)	ἐν αὐτῷ (*en autō*, in him)	κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν . . . εἰς οἰκονομίαν (*kata tēn eudokian . . . eis oikonomian*, according to the good pleasure . . . for administering)
C .1:11–12	ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν (*en hō kai eklērōthēmen*, in whom also we have been made heirs)	ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ (*en tō Christō*, in Christ)	κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν . . . εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ (*kata tēn boulēn . . . eis to einai hēmas eis epainon doxēs autou*, according to the counsel . . . that we might exist for the praise of his glory)
D. 1:13–14	ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες . . . ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες (*en hō kai hymeis akousantes . . . en hō kai pisteusantes*, in whom also you, when you heard . . . in whom also, when you believed)	**Closing expression of praise:** εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ (*eis epainon tēs doxēs autou*, for the praise of his glory)	[none]

If we now allow this structure to inform the outline of the ideas expressed in the passage, we discover a threefold development followed by a specific

15. This matches exactly the arrangement of the passage in the NA[27], which departed from all previous editions in arranging the text this way. Cf. the appeal to K. Aland in Krämer 1967: 40n1 to make such a change.

application. In the first section (A) Paul praises God for everything he has done for his people in Christ and then describes the first of these blessings. God chose his people in Christ before creation to be his adopted children. He did this in accordance with the good pleasure of his will and as a praiseworthy display of his glorious grace (vv. 3–6). In the second section (B) Paul describes how God showed the richness of his grace to his people in two ways, first by redeeming them through Christ's sacrificial death and then by making known to them his purpose for the unification of everything in the universe in Christ (vv. 7–10). In the third section (C) Paul summarizes the first two sections by describing again how God made his people heirs (recalling the motif of adoptive sonship from section 1) in accord with his will (recalling the emphasis on his will in sections 1 and 2) and so that they might praise his glory (recalling the emphasis on his praiseworthy and glorious grace in sections 1 and 2; vv. 11–12). In the fourth section (D), Paul turns directly to his readers to remind them that when they heard and believed the gospel, God sealed them with his Spirit, preserving them for future salvation and providing a down payment on their future inheritance (vv. 13–14). All this, Paul says in the passage's last phrase, has happened for the praise of God's glory (v. 14). The passage therefore ends as it began, with an expression of praise to God.

The passage has a trinitarian character, as many interpreters have properly noticed (e.g., Innitzer 1904: 614; Lohmeyer 1926a: 122; O'Brien 1999: 91; Hoehner 2002: 64, 159), but its main focus is Christ (cf. Fee 1994: 665). The ten "in" statements referring to Christ, six of them forming the hinges on which the structure of the passage swings, give it an unmistakably christological emphasis. Other elements of the passage also revolve around Christ: the benedictory opening (v. 3), doxological conclusion (vv. 13–14; cf. vv. 6, 12), and explanatory κατά phrases (vv. 5b–6, 7b, 9b–10, 11b–12) all are designed to praise God for his gracious redemption of believers in Christ.[16]

The practical purpose for including such a benedictory prayer in this letter becomes clear at its conclusion, where Paul turns specifically to all who read it or hear it read and, on the basis of what God has done for them, draws them into his expression of praise. If we can take 3:13 to mean that Paul's readers were discouraged, Paul may have written this benediction to remind them of all that God has done for them in Christ and of the important place that they, as the church, occupy in God's historical purposes.

16. The ninth-century bishop Photius of Constantinople captured this element of the benediction in his comment on the passage:

> He blessed us through the Son; he chose us through the Son; he adopted through the Son; he shed favor through the Son. And how through the Son? O marvelous thing! "Through his blood," he says. Do you see the richness of grace? And how exceedingly abundant and unutterable the mercy? And not only these things, but also, "He made known to us the mystery of his will." Through what means? Even this came through his Son—everything came through the Son, whose good pleasure agrees in every way with the Father. (Staab 1933: 611, my trans.)

II. Blessing God Who Has Blessed His People in Christ (1:3–14)
➤ A. Praise to God for His Grace in Making Believers His People (1:3–6)
B. Praise to God for His Grace in Redemption and Revelation (1:7–10)
C. Praise to God for Making His People Heirs and Giving Them Hope in Christ (1:11–12)
D. Praise to God for the Conversion and Future Salvation of Paul's Readers (1:13–14)

A. Praise to God for His Grace in Making Believers His People (1:3–6)

Paul begins the first section of the benediction with a statement that follows the traditional pattern for the opening of a benedictory prayer. God, he says, is praised because of the blessings he has given to his people. These blessings are both spiritual, since they are the gifts of the Spirit, and heavenly, because they exist in a dimension of existence that stands outside everyday experience (v. 3).

Paul describes the first of these blessings in 1:4–6—God has made believers his people as a completely free act of his grace. To express this, Paul uses a complex phrase that states the blessing (he chose believers, v. 4), restates it from a different perspective (he decided in advance to adopt them as his own children, v. 5a), explains the attitude with which God gave believers the blessing (it gave him great pleasure to do this, v. 5b), and then announces the purpose for which he did so (that believers might praise him for his grace, v. 6). God accomplished all this for his people "in Christ" (v. 4; cf. "by means of Jesus Christ" in v. 5 and "in the Beloved" in v. 6).

Exegesis and Exposition

[3]Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, [4]inasmuch as he chose us in him before the foundation of the universe so that we might be holy and blameless before him in love, [5a]having predestined us for adoptive sonship by means of Jesus Christ, for him[self], [5b]according to the good pleasure of his will, [6]for the praise of his glorious grace, ⌜which⌝ he graciously gave us in the ⌜Beloved⌝, ...

1:3 The opening line of Paul's benediction follows a pattern familiar from Israel's Scriptures and Jewish literature of the Second Temple period. Often those who bless God do so because God has given blessings (Gen. 24:27, 35, 48; Jdt. 13:18; Tob. 13:17; 4Q404 10). They also often describe God as the God of some great figure of the past such as Abraham or Israel and then state why God should be blessed (e.g., Gen. 24:27; 1 Sam. 25:32; 1 Kings 8:15; 2 Chron. 2:12; 6:4; Ezra 7:27; Ps. 72:18; Dan. 3:28; Luke 1:68). The verbal adjective εὐλογητός (*eulogētos*), which is uncommon in nonbiblical Greek, means "blessed" in the sense of "praised," and therefore Paul is saying that God is praised by those whom he has blessed. He is not expressing the wish that God would be blessed or issuing an implicit admonition that he should

be blessed, but in a way analogous to his brief benediction in Rom. 1:25 (ὅς ἐστιν εὐλογητός, *hos estin eulogētos*, who is blessed), Paul is saying that God is blessed and implying that the people whom he blesses are those who bless him.[1]

Outside of Jewish contexts, the verb εὐλογέω (*eulogeō*) and the noun εὐλογία (*eulogia*) referred primarily to the praise of people. Εὐλογέω meant "speak well of," "deliver a panegyric upon," and εὐλογία referred to "good" or "fine language," "praise," "a eulogy," or "good fame." The gods could "bless" people, but this meant only that they "honored" them (LSJ 720). Paul's use of these terms, however, follows the pattern of Biblical Greek where they refer not to the honor that people receive from God but to the good things that God does for them. God blessed Abraham by delivering him from his enemies and giving him wealth (Gen. 14:20; 24:35); God blessed Moses by delivering him from the Egyptians (Exod. 18:10); God blessed Naomi by providing her with next-of-kin (Ruth 4:14); God blessed Judith by allowing her to kill Holofernes (Jdt. 13:18). In the same way, Paul says that God is blessed because he has done good things for the letter's readers.

Paul describes these blessings with the adjective πνευματικός (*pneumatikos*, spiritual), a characteristically Pauline term (BDAG 837).[2] Since Paul couples this adjective here with the adjective ἐπουράνιος (*epouranios*, heavenly) and elsewhere in his letters contrasts "spiritual" people or things with "fleshly" (σαρκικός, *sarkikos*; σάρκινος, *sarkinos*; 1 Cor. 3:1, 3; 9:11; Rom. 7:14; 15:27), "physical" (ψυχικός, *psychikos*; 1 Cor. 15:44, 46), or "human" (ἀνθρώπινος, *anthrōpinos*; 1 Cor. 2:13) things, many interpreters in the early church, and some in more recent times, have understood "spiritual blessings" to be nonmaterial or otherworldly blessings.[3]

When Paul uses the adjective πνευματικός, however, God's Spirit almost always stands in the background (see especially 1 Cor. 2:6–3:4). Ephesians 5:19 provides a good example of this: "spiritual songs" are not nonmaterial songs or "religious" as opposed to secular songs, but songs that those filled with God's Spirit (5:18) sing. Ephesians 6:12 is the one exception to this rule in the Pauline literature. Even here, however, "the spiritual [powers] of evil" who dwell "in the heavenly places" may be related to "the spirit now at work among the sons of disobedience"—probably a reference to the devil—in much the same way that elsewhere "spiritual" persons and things are related to the

1. Cf. Tob.13:17 NRSV: "'Blessed be the God of Israel!' and the blessed will bless the holy name for ever and ever"; 13:18 Sin.: εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ισραηλ· καὶ εὐλογητοὶ εὐλογήσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ἅγιον εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. See also 4Q403 28–29: "Blessed be the Lord, the king of all, above all blessing and p[raise. And may he bless all the ho]ly ones who bless him, [and proclaim him just] in the name of his glory. And he will bless those permanently blessed" (trans. García Martínez and Tigchelaar 1998).

2. Apart from the Pauline Letters, it appears in Biblical Greek only in 1 Pet. 2:5 (2x) and in Rev. 11:8, where it takes the adverbial form πνευματικῶς.

3. In the early church, see, e.g., Origen (Heine 2002: 81–84); Chrysostom (*Hom. Eph.*, hom. 1; *NPNF* 13:50–51; *PG* 62:12); Jerome (Heine 2002: 82); and cf. Pelagius (Souter 1926: 345). In more recent times, see Westcott 1906: 7.

Spirit of God (Fee 1994: 28–32). "Spiritual blessings," therefore, are the benefits that come as gracious gifts from the Spirit of God and that Paul describes in 1:4–14 (Aletti 2001: 56).

We learn more about the nature of these "spiritual blessings" when Paul describes them as ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις (*en tois epouraniois*, in the heavenly places) and ἐν Χριστῷ (*en christō*, in Christ). In the NT outside of Ephesians, ἐπουράνιος (*epouranios*, heavenly) is always associated with God and often stands in contrast to what is earthly and therefore less permanent or significant (John 3:12; 1 Cor. 15:48–49; Heb. 8:5; 11:16; 12:18–22; cf. Phil. 2:10). In Ephesians, Paul uses the term in a slightly different way. It appears only in the phrase ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, which occurs nowhere else in the NT and means "in the heavenly places" (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). God and the ascended Christ dwell in the heavenly places in Ephesians, but so do "the spiritual powers of evil" (1:20; 6:12; cf. 3:10).[4] Here, then, the phrase refers to the location or, perhaps better, the "dimension" of existence in which believers experience "every spiritual blessing" (W. H. Harris 1991: 74, 86–87, citing Hanson 1980: 138).

The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ refers even more specifically to the place where these blessings are found. They belong to those who are within the boundaries marked out by the living Christ. It is in this realm that hearing the gospel, believing the gospel, and being sealed with the Holy Spirit take place (1:13). This is the realm in which people experience the same life-giving power of God that raised Christ from the dead and gave him victory over all God's enemies (1:19–23).

When we put all this together, we find Paul beginning his benedictory prayer with a statement that God is praised among the people whom his Spirit blesses in every possible way. These blessings occur in a dimension of existence that is beyond common, everyday experience, and they belong to those who are united with Christ by their faith in the gospel.

1:4

Paul uses the term καθώς (*kathōs*, inasmuch as) to link his opening blessing of God with an account of the specific ways God has blessed those who bless him. This adverbial conjunction normally introduces a comparison, although it can also indicate cause (BDAG 493–94; Wallace 1996: 674–75). Paul can certainly use it in the causal sense (Rom. 1:28; 1 Cor. 1:6; 5:7; Phil. 1:7), and something of that idea probably stands in the background here, but notions of comparison are probably uppermost in his mind. God has blessed believers not only because he chose them but also "inasmuch as" or "to the extent that" he has given them these blessings in all their extravagance (vv. 7b–8a; cf. Ellicott 1859: 6; Eadie, 1883: 18; Schlier 1957: 48–49).

4. This notion so offended those who preserved the textual tradition represented by $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ that they left the phrase out of 6:12 (Schwindt 2002: 360n48). The notion was common in ancient Jewish literature (Job 1:6; 1 En. 61.10), however, and sometimes involved conflict between the two sides (Dan. 10:13, 21; Rev. 12:7; 19:11; Lincoln 1973: 474). Ephesians also assumes the presence of conflict in the heavenly places (6:12), but the outcome of this conflict has already been decided (1:20–22).

Paul begins his description of God's blessings by saying that God "chose us" (ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς, *exelexato hēmas*). Grammatically, this is the only verb in vv. 3–14 that is not subordinate to some other element (Hoehner 2002: 175), and although grammatical priority does not always translate into conceptual priority, it probably does so here. Conceptually, Paul considers God's free choice of his people to be the clearest indicator of the lavish nature of his grace, as the frequent repetition of the theme of God's gracious initiative in blessing his people shows (cf. vv. 5, 9, 11).

God's choice of his people is a traditional Jewish idea, with roots firmly planted in Israel's Scriptures: "It is you the Lord has chosen out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession" (Deut. 14:2 NRSV; cf. Isa. 43:10). Nothing in Israel, such as the size of the nation or its righteousness, prompted God to choose them as his people (Deut. 7:7; 9:4, 6), but only his love for them (Deut. 7:8; Isa. 44:2 LXX; cf. 41:8 LXX). The idea of God's elective love for his people was important to Paul. Elsewhere in his correspondence, he emphasizes that God did not choose his people because of some merit in them (Rom. 9:11–12; 1 Cor. 1:27–29; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:1–2; cf. Cambier 1963: 68), and he links God's choice of his people with his love for them (Rom. 8:33–39; 1 Thess. 1:4).

Here Paul focuses the attention of his readers on the completely unmerited, gracious nature of God's choice of believers to be his people with two adverbial prepositional phrases: ἐν αὐτῷ (*en autō*, in him) and πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου (*pro katabolēs kosmou*, before the foundation of the world; Calvin 1965: 125). He describes the purpose of God's choice with another adverbial phrase, εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ (*einai hēmas hagious kai amōmous katenōpion autou en agapē*, that we might be holy and blameless before him in love). The phrase ἐν αὐτῷ probably does not refer to the preexistence of Christ, in whom believers were chosen before the foundation of the world (as Pokorný 1992: 57, among many others, argues), but functions in the same way that the phrase διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (*dia Iēsou Christou*, through Jesus Christ) works in the next clause (v. 5a): it describes the means by which God's choice became effective for believers (Oecumenius, *PG* 118:1173; Cambier 1963: 69–71). This happened through Christ's death on their behalf (v. 7a), which was a lavish demonstration of the grace of God (vv. 6–7b; cf. Hoehner 2002: 177).

The phrase καταβολὴ κόσμου was a common expression in Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity for God's creation of the world (e.g., Matt. 25:34; Luke 11:50; John 17:24; Heb. 4:3; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8; T. Mos. 1.14; Barn. 5.5), and the idea that God chose his people before the world's foundation was well known (Matt. 25:34; Rev. 17:8; T. Mos. 1.12–14; cf. Jub. 2.20; Jos. Asen. 8.9; Hofius 1971: 123–28; Aune 1998: 748–49). Although he does not say so explicitly, Paul probably uses the phrase here to emphasize the graciousness of God's choice: it happened before believers could do anything to effect it, and therefore it came as an absolutely free gift (Calvin 1965: 125; Best 1998: 120; O'Brien 1999: 100). This understanding of the phrase meshes with the

emphasis of the benediction on the extravagance of God's grace (vv. 6, 7b) and with the link that Paul makes elsewhere in his letters between God's choice of his people before they existed, on one hand, and God's mercy or grace, on the other hand (Rom. 9:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; cf. 1 Cor. 1:26–31).[5]

God chose believers so that they might be ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ (*hagious kai amōmous katenōpion autou en agapē*, holy and blameless before him in love). Here too Paul uses the traditional language of election. According to Deuteronomy, the Lord's choice of Israel "out of all the peoples on earth" as his people meant they should be "holy"—separated by their behavior from the peoples who surrounded them in the land. They must take precautions not to fall under the influence of the idolatrous customs of the indigenous peoples because God's choice of Israel as his own people has set them apart: "For you are a people holy [LXX ἅγιος, *hagios*] to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession" (Deut. 7:1–6 NRSV; cf. 14:1–2). God has separated them from other nations by lovingly choosing them, and them alone; now they are to act in ways that God describes in his law to show their separate status as his chosen and treasured possession (cf. Quell, *TDNT* 4:163–64).

Paul follows the term "holy" with a word often used in the LXX rendering of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Ezekiel to refer to the "unblemished" (ἄμωμος, *amōmos*) animal that the worshiper should bring in sacrifice to God (e.g., Exod. 29:1, 38; Lev. 1:3, 10; Num. 6:14). The LXX also often uses the term metaphorically of both people and God, to mean "morally blameless" or "perfect" (e.g., 2 Sam. 22:24, 31; Ps. 15:2 [14:2 LXX]), and this is how Paul uses it here. His use of the phrase κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ (*katenōpion autou*, before him) probably means that the metaphor of an unblemished sacrifice to God was not entirely dead for Paul since the rare term κατενώπιον also appears in a genuinely cultic context in Lev. 4:17 (cf. Best 1998: 121).[6]

How Paul intended his readers to take the next phrase is not entirely clear. Many interpreters believe that ἐν ἀγάπῃ (*en agapē*, in love) does not describe more specifically the holy and blameless behavior that should characterize God's chosen people ("holy and blameless before him in love") but is an adverbial qualifier of προορίσας (*proorisas*, having predestined), the participle that begins verse 5 ("having predestined us in love"). A simple pause for breath

5. Chrysostom interprets Paul's understanding of election in 1:4 in precisely the wrong way, therefore, when he says that God not only chose believers out of his love but also because he saw in advance that their moral excellence and mettle would make them the best choice out of the various options (*Hom. Eph.*, hom. 1; *NPNF* 13:51; *PG* 62:12). Cf. Origen's comments on 1:4, especially as Jerome uses them (Heine 2002: 85, 276).

6. On the scarcity of the word κατενώπιον, see BDF §214.5. That ἄμωμος was a live metaphor for virtuous conduct in the first century is clear from Philo's statement that Moses speaks of sacrificing "to God the abominations of Egypt [Exod. 8:26], meaning thereby the virtues, these offerings unblemished [ἄμωμος] and most worthy, which are the abominations of every fool" (*Sacrifices* 51).

in the right place would have easily resolved the ambiguity in the original dictation of the letter, but the ambiguity remains in the written text (cf. the comments on 2:14–15; 3:17b).

Those who take ἐν ἀγάπῃ with προορίσας point out that Paul's focus in the benediction is on God's action of blessing his people, not on human obligation, and that a sudden, brief admonition to live in a holy and blameless way would disrupt this focus (Caragounis 1977: 85). They also argue that the terms "holy" and "blameless" are cultic terms describing the consecration and condition of a sacrificial animal placed "before" God. These terms refer not to the conduct of believers, therefore, but to the status believers have in God's sight (Best 1998: 123).

Two considerations, however, weigh against these arguments. First, although it is true that Paul conceived of God as conferring a status of holiness on believers when he chose them to be his people, the biblical passages that form the background to Paul's concept view the gift of holiness as, at the same time, a call to act in the holy ways that God prescribes. The two ideas were tied together in Deut. 7:1–6 and 14:1–2, and they were tied together for Paul. He could tell the Corinthians, for example, that they were "sanctified [ἁγιάζω, *hagiazō*] in Christ Jesus" and that they "had been sanctified [ἁγιάζω, *hagiazō*]," and yet he could call on them to "bring about" their "sanctification [ἁγιωσύνη, *hagiōsynē*] in the fear of God" (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; 2 Cor. 7:1). It is likely that this understanding of holiness also lies beneath his use of this language in Eph. 1:4.

Second, the sentence structure of verses 3–14 makes it likely that ἐν ἀγάπῃ does not qualify the participle that follows it. Wherever Paul uses a verbal form in the benediction to describe the action of God and then qualifies that verbal form with a prepositional phrase, the qualifying phrase always comes after the verbal form, not before it. This makes it unlikely that ἐν ἀγάπῃ would qualify προορίσας, which follows it.[7]

None of this means that God did not predetermine believers "in love" for adoptive status as his children. As we have seen, the biblical background of the concept of election is steeped in the notion that God loves those whom he chooses. Paul expresses that idea in this passage, however, through the language of God's "good pleasure" (εὐδοκία, *eudokia*) in predetermining the adoptive sonship of his people (v. 5) and in planning in advance to sum up all things in Christ (vv. 9–10).

The attachment of the phrase ἐν ἀγάπῃ to "holy" and "blameless" means that in this benediction Paul anticipates the concrete ethical exhortation that he gives later in the letter (4:1–6:20). Paul begins that part of the letter by urging his readers to live in a way that is "worthy of the calling [κλήσεως, *klēseōs*] with which you were called [ἐκλήθητε, *eklēthēte*]" and then specifies that they should bear with one another "in love" (ἐν ἀγάπῃ; 4:1–2; cf. 4:15–16;

7. Alford 1857: 69; Hoehner 2002: 184; cf. Lightfoot 1895: 313; Westcott 1906: 9; Barth 1974: 79–80; Lincoln 1990: 17. *Pace* Cambier 1963: 72–74.

5:2, 25, 28, 33; 6:23). Although the focus of the benediction lies on what God has graciously done for his people, then, here Paul hints at what he will say more fully in the letter's second half: God's action on his readers' behalf has implications for the way they should live.

1:5a Paul next uses the aorist participle προορίσας (*proorisas*, having predestined) to describe God's choice more fully. Just as the preposition πρό (*pro*, before) in 1:4 placed God's choice of his people before his creation of the world, so Paul prefixed this preposition to the verb ὁρίζω (*horizō*, determine) to place God's decision to mark off a people for himself chronologically before the world began. Did Paul think there was a difference between God's choice of his people before the world's creation and God's delimiting his people before the world's creation? If not, then the statement certainly seems redundant (Hoehner 2002: 194). Perhaps, therefore, we should take the aorist tense of the participle to refer to antecedent time and understand Paul to say that God predestined his people and then chose them (Alford 1857: 69; Ellicott 1859: 7–8; cf. Rom. 8:28–30). Alternatively, perhaps προορίσας states the cause of God's choice: he chose his people because he determined beforehand that they would be his people (Hodge 1856: 37; Lightfoot 1895: 315; Abbott 1897: 8; Hoehner 2002: 194).

If Paul were engaged in a philosophical discussion about the precise logic of election (cf. Calvin 1997: 113–20), and if Ephesians demonstrated an economy of language that made redundancy improbable, one of these explanations might be correct. Paul's focus, however, is not on the logic of election but on its occurrence and the need to praise God because his choice of a people for himself is such a clear demonstration of his grace. Paul's use of language in Ephesians generally, and in this benediction particularly, moreover, is as lavish in its own way as the grace of God, which he praises. Redundancy, then, is not a valid objection to understanding προορίσας ἡμᾶς as a restatement of ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς. Paul simply turns the jewel slightly and views it from a different angle, now describing God's primordial action on behalf of his people not as his choice but as his predetermination of them. God determined that they would be his people before the foundation of the world. Their status as his people, therefore, came as an utterly free gift, irrespective of anything they could possibly have done to merit it.

This shift in perspective also means that Paul now changes his angle of vision on God's purpose in predetermining who his people would be. Though in 1:4 Paul had said that God's purpose in election was that they might be holy and blameless before him in love, he now describes God's purpose in predetermining his people as their "adoptive sonship" (υἱοθεσίαν, *huiothesian*).[8] In the Greek Bible, this is a distinctively Pauline term. It is never used in the LXX, and in the NT it appears only here and in Gal. 4:5; Rom. 8:15, 23; and 9:4. The term was common, however, in the Greco-Roman world, where it referred to a legal practice by which the father of a family accepted as his heir a male

8. For the translation "adoptive sonship," see Byrne 1993: 293; 1996: 252.

child who was not his own. Paul must have known that his Gentile readers in Roman Asia would hear resonances of this practice in the term (cf. J. Scott 1992: 3–57, 267), but his use of it to describe one of the privileges of national Israel in Rom. 9:4 means that he probably also had in mind biblical ideas of Israel's "sonship" (Byrne 1979: 79–84).

Both the OT and Jewish literature of the Second Temple period claim that God's people Israel are his "sons" (LXX υἱοί, *huioi*: Deut. 14:1; Isa. 1:2; 30:9; Hos. 1:10 [2:1 MT, LXX]; Wis. 12:21; 16:26), his "children" (LXX τέκνα, *tekna*: Deut. 32:5; Isa. 63:8; Wis. 16:21), or comprise his "firstborn son" (Exod. 4:22–23; Jer. 31:9; Sir. 36:17; cf. Wis. 18:13; Jub. 2.20; 2 Esd. [4 Ezra] 6:58; 4Q504 3.6–7; cf. Hos. 11:1). This relationship had become strained through Israel's rebellion (Deut. 32:5, 19; Isa. 1:2; 30:1) but would one day be fully restored in the eschatological age (e.g., Isa. 63:8–9; Hos. 1:10 [2:1 MT, LXX]; Jub. 1.24–25; Sib. Or. 3.702–9). Paul believed that the presence of God's Spirit among believers was evidence that this time of eschatological restoration had begun, that believers were God's children, that they were now spiritually related to Jesus—God's Son par excellence—and that they were heirs with him of a future glory when their bodily resurrection would make their "adoptive sonship" complete (Gal. 4:1–7; Rom. 8:14–17; cf. 2 Cor. 6:18).[9]

This is the light in which we should understand Paul's claim that God predestined the adoptive sonship of believers διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (*dia Iēsou Christou*). Adoption as God's children is theirs "through Jesus Christ" because through their union with him, Jesus Christ shares his divine sonship with them. Believers call God "Abba Father" because Jesus spoke this way of his relationship with God (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15; cf. Mark 14:36 and Jeremias 1971: 61–68). They are heirs of God because Jesus is God's heir (Gal. 4:7; Rom. 8:17). His status as God's Son lifts them out of the status of slaves and makes them sons and daughters of God with him (Gal. 3:23–4:7; Rom. 8:15–17).

Paul expresses the goal of all this in the phrase εἰς αὐτόν (*eis auton*, to him). The αὐτόν here could refer to either Christ or God. Later in the letter Paul speaks of Christians arriving "at a mature man" (εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, *eis andra teleion*), a man whom he identifies as Christ (4:13). He then urges his readers to "grow up to him" (εἰς αὐτόν), again referring to Christ (4:15).[10] It is more likely, however, that 1:4–5 follows the same pattern of stating the action of God (choosing/predetermining), the purpose for the action (to be holy and blameless in love/to be adopted children), and the divine goal of the action (before/to God). With this prepositional phrase, therefore, Paul is saying that the goal of the adoptive sonship of believers is a relationship with God similar to that of Jesus's own filial relationship with God. The adoptive sonship of believers is εἰς αὐτόν, oriented toward God.[11]

9. For the idea that υἱοθεσία in Rom. 8:23 refers to the future bodily resurrection of believers, see Rom. 8:11 and the comments of Byrne 1979: 109.

10. Cf. Col. 1:16b, 20; Schlier 1957: 54; Gnilka 1971: 73.

11. Cambier (1963: 76) hits the mark: "Toute la théologie paulinienne souligne que le Père constitue le point de départ et le point d'aboutissement de toute l'action salvifique divine." (All

1:5b–6

Paul next uses two prepositional phrases to describe the attitude with which God predetermined that he would adopt believers as his own children and the purpose for which he would do so. His attitude was one of deep desire, of good pleasure (εὐδοκία, *eudokia*; cf., e.g., Ps. 144:16 LXX [145:16 MT, Eng.]; Rom. 10:1). Paul was not content to say simply that God predestined believers to be his people κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ (*kata to thelēma autou*, according to his will). He said instead that God's will in this matter expressed what he took great pleasure in doing (cf. Barth 1974: 81; Best 1998: 126–27). He determined in advance that those who are in Christ would be his people κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ (*kata tēn eudokian tou thelēmatos autou*, according to the good pleasure of his will).

The purpose for which he predestined believers to be his adoptive children is related to this attitude. He did this for the praise "of his glorious grace, which he graciously gave us in the Beloved" (δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ, *doxēs tēs charitos autou ēs echaritōsen hēmas en tō ēgapēmenō*). The string of genitive nouns and pronouns that Paul uses to express this thought is typical of the letter's style in its first half. Where they occur, these genitive strings slow the discourse and emphasize the grandeur or gravity of the thought (1:18b, 19b; 2:2b, 20b; 3:7; 4:13 [2x]). Here the phrase δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς . . . (*doxēs tēs charitos autou hēs . . .* , of his glorious grace, which . . .) reins in the discourse of the benediction and allows the reader, or those hearing the letter read aloud, to savor this final thought of the benediction's first major part. God took pleasure in his primordial decision to adopt believers as his children, and he did this so that they might praise him for the magnificence of his grace.

God graciously granted believers his grace ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ (*en tō ēgapēmenō*, in the Beloved). Here Paul picks up the thought of the ἐν Χριστῷ (*en Christō*, in Christ) in 1:3, the ἐν αὐτῷ (*en autō*, in him) in 1:4, and the διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (*dia Iēsou Christou*, through Jesus Christ) in 1:5 and thus provides a transition to the benediction's second part, where he explains precisely how God showed believers his grace in Christ (vv. 7–10). The name that he uses for Christ is significant. The Scriptures and Second Temple Jewish literature speak of especially important individuals in Israel's history, such as Abraham (LXX: 2 Chron. 20:7; Pr. Azar. 12), Moses (Sir. 45:1), and Solomon (Neh. 13:26), as "beloved" of God, and so it is not unexpected when, in the Synoptic Gospels, God calls Jesus his "Beloved" (Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; 12:6; Luke 3:22; 20:13).[12] Ancient Jewish literature also speaks of the nation Israel as God's "beloved" (e.g., Isa. 5:1; Jer. 11:15; 12:7; Bar. 3:36 [3:37 LXX]; Jdt. 9:4), and the LXX translators consistently translated the name "Jeshurun," a biblical term of endearment for Israel, with the word

Pauline theology emphasizes that the Father constitutes the departure point and concluding point of all the saving action of God.)

12. In these passages, the term is always the verbal adjective ἀγαπητός rather than the participle of ἀγαπάω found in the other passages and in Eph. 1:6, but the meaning is virtually identical.

"beloved" (Deut. 32:15; 33:5, 26; Isa. 44:2). In Matthew's paraphrase of Isa. 42:1–4, the concepts of God's election, his good pleasure, and his beloved all converge, much as they do in Eph. 1:4–6, and Matthew applies all of this to Jesus (Matt. 12:18–20). In its original context in Isaiah, however, it is unclear whether the passage refers to the nation Israel or to an individual within Israel as a representative of the nation.

Paul's use of the term "beloved" reflects this same alternation between a chosen and "beloved" individual and God's chosen and "beloved" people. He knew the early Christian tradition that Jesus was God's Beloved (Col. 1:13), and he frequently called God's people God's beloved (1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 9:25; Col. 3:12; Eph. 5:1), sometimes in combination with the claim that God's people are his "elect" (1 Thess. 1:4). It seems likely, therefore, that when Paul calls Jesus "the Beloved" in this passage he has in mind Jesus's embodiment within himself of the beloved and elect people of God (cf. Caird 1976: 36; Lincoln 1990: 26–27; O'Brien 1999: 105). God has shown believers his praiseworthy grace, therefore, not merely "by means of the Beloved," through his atoning death, but also "in the Beloved," through their identification with Christ.

God's delight in this act of free and lavish grace toward believers prompt them to praise him, and the praise of his people for his grace was the ultimate purpose of his primordial decision to make believers his people. With this thought, Paul brings the first part of his benediction to a close and prepares his readers for its second major section.

Summary

Paul begins his benediction by announcing its theme: he intends to praise God for the good things God has done for those who have been united with Christ by their faith in the gospel. These blessings come through the work of the Spirit and are experienced in the dimension of existence where God and all the cosmic powers dwell.

After this general statement of praise, Paul begins to give examples of all the blessings that God has given to those who are in Christ. The first section of the prayer explores the blessing that God chose those who are in Christ. His choice came to them as an utterly free gift, accomplished before they even existed, and it placed them, like Israel and even Jesus himself, within God's family. God adopted them as his children, and this was something he took great pleasure in doing. God did all this, moreover, with at least two purposes in mind: he wanted a people who would be separate from the world around them both in their dedication to him and in their love for one another, and he wanted a people who would praise him for the glorious grace he had shown them in his Beloved Son. Exactly how God showed them grace in his Son will form the subject of the benedictory prayer's next section.

Additional Notes

1:6. Instead of τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς, many manuscripts (א^{2}, D, G, K, L, Ψ, most cursives), versions (it^{d}, it^{g}, vg, syr^{h}, goth), and ancient commentators (Theodoret, John of Damascus, Photius, and Oecumenius) have τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἐν ᾗ ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς. At least one modern commentator (Hoehner 2002: 202) has also adopted this as the correct reading.

The difference in meaning between ἐν ᾗ and the relative pronoun ἧς here is so slight that it is difficult to capture it in English translation, but the prepositional phrase, if it is original, lends itself more easily to the interpretation that God bestowed upon believers a gracious disposition. It could be taken to mean that "he made us gracious by his grace" rather than that "he gave us his grace."[13] Chrysostom, although he read ἧς, took the text in this direction in his comments on it, claiming that God had bestowed upon believers the favor of making them lovely people (*Hom. Eph.*, hom. 1; *NPNF* 13:52–53).[14]

The reading ἐν ᾗ, however, is probably not what Paul wrote, for two reasons. First, the witnesses to the simple relative pronoun ἧς (𝔓^{46}, א*, A, B, P, 0278, 6, 33, 81, 88, 330, 365, 424^{c}, 436, 1175, 1319, 1739, 1837, 1881, 1908, 2127, 2464) include the earliest manuscripts of Ephesians and some early commentators (Origen, Chrysostom, and Euthalius). Second, as the occurrence of the same construction later in verses 7–8 shows (τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐπερίσσευσεν), the reading with ἧς is consistent with the style of the letter. It is not likely, moreover, that a scribe conformed an original ἐν ᾗ in verse 6 to the ἧς of verses 7b–8a, since the ἧς of verse 6 comes first in the text.

1:6. Some ancient uncial manuscripts (D*, F, G) and versions (a number of Old Latin manuscripts, the 1592 Clementine edition of the Vulgate, Thomas of Harkel's Syriac edition, Sahidic and Ethiopic versions), and some church fathers (e.g., Adamantius, Theodotus of Ancyra, Victorinus of Rome, "Ambrosiaster," Pelagius, and Augustine) read the words υἱῷ αὐτοῦ after ἠγαπημένῳ. This is very weak support. It is both late chronologically and mostly limited to the Western text type (cf. Metzger 1968: 214; Hoehner 2002: 203n3). The vast majority of manuscripts, including the oldest and most conservative witnesses, omit the phrase, and so there is no real debate over its authenticity.

How did the variant arise? A similar phrase appears in Col. 1:13 (ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ), and a scribe may have inadvertently supplied the extra words from that source or from the frequent appearance of similar expressions elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Mark 1:11; 9:7; 12:6; Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Luke 3:22; 20:13; 2 Pet. 1:17).

13. Cf. Sir. 18:17, which describes a gracious man as ἀνδρὶ κεχαριτωμένῳ, literally, "a man who has been made gracious."

14. On Chrysostom's text and comments, see Haupt 1902a: 13; Best 1998: 128.

II. Blessing God Who Has Blessed His People in Christ (1:3–14)
A. Praise to God for His Grace in Making Believers His People (1:3–6)
➤ B. Praise to God for His Grace in Redemption and Revelation (1:7–10)
C. Praise to God for Making His People Heirs and Giving Them Hope in Christ (1:11–12)
D. Praise to God for the Conversion and Future Salvation of Paul's Readers (1:13–14)

B. Praise to God for His Grace in Redemption and Revelation (1:7–10)

The second main part of the benediction praises God for two further blessings he has lavished on his people. First, Paul praises God for the specific way in which he freely granted grace to his people in the Beloved (cf. v. 6b). He did this through a rescue effort not unlike the redemption of his people from slavery in Egypt and his restoration of them to the land after the Babylonian exile. In this case, however, the redemption was not rescue from literal slavery or exile, but rescue from transgressions. Rescue from transgressions did not merely involve overcoming the enemies of his people, but also forgiveness. This forgiveness was extraordinarily costly: it was bought with the price of the violent death of God's Beloved Son (1:7a).

Paul takes God's willingness to pay this price as a demonstration that he was not simply gracious to believers but overwhelmingly gracious (vv. 7b–8). They have experienced redemption and forgiveness, Paul says, because God's grace is vast, because he took the initiative to show it to them, and because he did this "in all wisdom and understanding." It was not an ill-considered or haphazard rescue operation but part of a purposely designed plan that accords with his essential character. God's nature is not merely to be gracious, but also to be lavishly gracious to his people.

Second, Paul praises God because he showed his abundant grace to his people by revealing to them "the mystery of his will" (v. 9). God planned to do this in Christ and took pleasure in doing it. Here too, therefore, Paul emphasizes that God's revelation of his will to his people was not something he gave grudgingly, nor anything that his people had a right to because of their upright behavior. God revealed his purposes to his people as part of his design for the unfolding of history (v. 10a).

The mystery itself is God's arrangement of "the times" in order to sum up all things, whether heavenly or earthly, in Christ. When Christ's work is complete, the unfolding of history will make sense: all creatures that have ever lived, whether in heaven or on earth, will take the place that God intended them to have with respect to Christ (v. 10b). What has happened in the past will make sense in light of the future that Christ will bring.

Exegesis and Exposition

[7a]. . . in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, [7b–8]according to the wealth of his grace, which he lavished on us in all wisdom and understanding, [9]by making known to us the ⌜mystery⌝ of his will

according to his good pleasure, which he planned in him [10]for administering the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth in him, . . .

1:7a

Paul now describes what God has graciously done for believers in Christ with a new metaphor, and he goes into greater detail about what precisely Christ did. The ἐν ᾧ (*en hō*, in whom) continues the thought of ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ (*en tō ēgapēmenō*, in the Beloved) in the previous verse and should not, therefore, be translated "by whom" but "in whom": God made believers his people through their identification with Christ (Abbott 1897: 11; Best 1998: 129; Hoehner 2002: 205; *pace* Calvin 1965: 127; Alford 1857: 71). Paul now describes how God did this with the help of the new metaphor of redemption. By their identification with him, he says, believers have τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ (*tēn apolytrōsin dia tou haimatos autou*, redemption through his blood). The term ἀπολύτρωσις (*apolytrōsis*) appears only ten times in the NT and is rare in Greek literature predating the NT. Its one use in the LXX (Dan. 4:34) appears in a passage with no corresponding Hebrew text and seems to mean "deliverance."[1] In one of two uses of the verbal form ἀπολυτρόω in the LXX, the meaning, similarly, is "deliver" (Zeph. 3:1). When the noun appears in nonbiblical Greek, however, it has the more specific meaning of either "holding for ransom" (Plutarch, *Pomp.* 24.2) or "paying a ransom" (Josephus, *Ant.* 12.27) and was used to refer to the freeing of slaves through the payment of a price (Let. Arist. 12, 33; Philo, *Good Person* 114). This seems to be the meaning of the other of the two uses of the verb in the LXX (Exod. 21:8).

A heated debate has surrounded the issue of whether ἀπολύτρωσις, when it appears in the NT, refers specifically to God's purchase of people from captivity to sin at the cost of Christ's death (e.g., Morris 1955: 37–48; Ridderbos 1975: 193–97), or more generally to God's deliverance of people from the plight into which sin has plunged them (e.g., Abbott 1897: 11–13; Büchsel, *TDNT* 4:351–56; D. Hill 1967: 71–76).

When the debate reaches our text, those on one side see the phrase διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ (*dia tou haimatos autou*, through his blood) as a reference to the price that Christ paid for our redemption (Morris 1955: 38–41; Ridderbos 1975: 194; Hoehner 2002: 205–6), and those on the other side of the debate respond that διά followed by the genitive case only describes the means through which the deliverance was accomplished and does not specify a redemption price. If Paul had intended to speak of a redemption price, he would have

1. Morris 1955: 11, 39 observes that in Dan. 4:24 OG (4:27 Eng.) Daniel instructs the king to redeem (λύτρωσαι) his wickedness with almsgiving and concludes that when Nebuchadnezzar later says, καὶ ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἐτῶν ὁ χρόνος μου τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως ἦλθε (And at the completion of seven years my time of redemption came; 4:30c OG, NETS), he is referring to this purchase of his deliverance with alms to the poor. Nebuchadnezzar, however, does not explicitly make this connection, and his use of ἀπολύτρωσις rather than λύτρωσις diminishes the likelihood that the reader should make this connection.

simply used the genitive case ("the genitive of price") without an intervening preposition (D. Hill 1967: 73; Best 1998: 130; cf. Lincoln 1990: 28).[2]

This debate is so vigorous because the doctrinal issues that lie beneath it are important. Those who insist that Paul understood the term to signify the payment of a price are interested in protecting a classic Christian understanding of the way in which Christ atoned for sin (Morris 1955: 58, 275–80). Photius, the ninth-century patriarch of Constantinople, puts it this way in his comment on this text: "[God's beloved Son] himself effected the redemption for us. For we were prisoners because of our transgressions, but by giving his blood as a ransom [λύτρον, *lytron*] for us he ransomed [ἐλυτρώσατο, *elytrōsato*] us from the tyranny in which we were being held" (my trans.; text in Staab 1933: 611).[3] Behind this comment seems to lie the notion that transgression against God's law incurs a debt that must be paid for justice to be satisfied, and death is the currency in which it must be paid. To spare the lives of his people, Christ died for them, thus paying the necessary penalty. Those who believe that notions of a payment price do not inform the use of the term here, and in most of its other uses in the NT, are sometimes suspicious that the other side has forced its preconceived dogmatic concerns on unwilling texts, including Eph. 1:7 (e.g., D. Hill 1967: 69).

In evaluating the evidence, it seems first of all necessary to clear the theological air by observing that the NT unambiguously describes the blood of Christ as the ransom price for sinners. This is implied by the most natural readings of 1 Pet. 1:18–19; Heb. 9:12; Rev. 1:5; 5:9 (Lightfoot 1895: 316; cf. Best 1998: 130). Unlike some later theologians, the authors of these NT texts seem uninterested in identifying the person to whom the price was paid and precisely why, in legal terms, a payment price was necessary.[4] The basic notion that transgression results in a plight analogous to captivity or slavery—and that Christ's death has satisfied the conditions for release from that captivity and thus paid the necessary ransom—is unambiguously a biblical idea.

It seems likely, moreover, that in Eph. 1:7 Paul's Greek-speaking readers in western Asia would have most readily understood the term ἀπολύτρωσις as a metaphorical reference to the price paid to buy the freedom of a captive or slave and would have understood the phrase διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ as a reference to the purchase price. The expression would perhaps have seemed odd to them—something like saying in English, "I bought the bread with five dollars" rather than "for five dollars"—but the use of the term ἀπολύτρωσις

2. On the "genitive of price," see BDF §179; Wallace 1996: 122.

3. Cf. also the comments of Origen (Heine 2002: 91); Theophylact (*PG* 124:1037); Ellicott 1859: 10.

4. Origen thought that human beings had sold themselves into the devil's captivity and thus God had to pay the price of Christ's death for their release. Augustine claimed that God paid the price to himself to satisfy the need for justice. Anselm argued that human sin was basically a failure to give God the honor that was his due and that God's honor could be restored only by the payment of a penalty, a payment that Christ's death satisfied. For a brief review of these theories, see Colleran 1969: 42–48.

(or one of its cognates) for slave redemption would have been so familiar to them that it is hard to imagine they did not take the phrase in this way. Ancient Greek-speaking interpreters of Eph. 1:7 do not hesitate to take it this way.[5] Paul was probably aware that his readers would understand the phrase as a metaphorical reference to the redemption of slaves or captives and must have been happy with the meaning of Christ's death that he knew the phrase would convey to them.

At the same time, Paul probably appreciated, and hoped that some of his readers would appreciate, the biblical overtones of this word. The noun ἀπολύτρωσις is closely related to the verb λυτρόω (*lytroō*, ransom), which the LXX translators used to render two Hebrew verbs, גָּאַל (*gā'al*) and פָּדָה (*pādâ*), both of which also mean "redeem" (*HALOT* 1:169; 2:911–12). In both the Hebrew Scriptures and the LXX, all three terms and the nouns associated with them frequently carry a metaphorical meaning, distinctive to Biblical Greek, in which the notion of a purchase price fades into the background and the simple notion of deliverance or rescue, whether from Egypt, Babylon, other nations, or personal distress, becomes primary. Exodus 6:6 LXX provides a good example of this use of the verb λυτρόω: "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out, away from the domination of the Egyptians, and I will deliver [ῥύσομαι, *rhysomai*] you from slavery, and I will redeem [λυτρώσομαι, *lytrōsomai*] you by a raised arm and great judgment" (NETS).[6] It is difficult to understand God's raised arm and great judgment against the Egyptians as a "price" that God pays for the redemption of his people from slavery. As the parallel verb ῥύσομαι shows, the notion of simple rescue is the chief meaning here.

Paul probably intended his use of the similar word ἀπολύτρωσις in Eph. 1:7 to carry primarily these overtones of God's great deliverance of his people for their sins. This primary concern accounts for his use of the term in a similar phrase in Col. 1:14, where the reference to Christ's blood as the "cost" of redemption does not appear.[7] It also accounts better for the broadening of the word in Eph. 1:14 and 4:30 to include the consummation of God's saving purposes for his people in the future, a broadening that seems to leave notions of the payment of a redemption price behind (cf. Zeph. 3:1 LXX; Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:23).

To summarize, Paul's use of the phrase τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ probably means that the metaphor of redemption from slavery through the payment of a price was alive for him. It is unlikely that he failed to realize that this meaning would occur readily to his Gentile readers and, therefore, unlikely that he did not intend to communicate this meaning. Paul's primary

5. In addition to Photius, see, e.g., the comments of Origen (Heine 2002: 91) and Theophylact (*PG* 124:1037) on this text.

6. Cf. also Exod. 15:13; Deut. 7:8; 2 Sam. 4:9; 2 Esd. 11:10 LXX (Neh. 1:10 MT, Eng.); Pss. 25:22; 77:15.

7. Col. 1:14 reads ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν. The phrase is identical to Eph. 1:7a except that it does not have διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, and instead of παραπτωμάτων it has ἁμαρτιῶν.

concern in using the metaphor, however, was probably to communicate that in the death of Christ, God came powerfully to the rescue of his people just as he had done in former times when he rescued them from the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and other nations. Paul saw this climactic rescue effort, accomplished through the death of his Beloved Son Jesus Christ, as a measure of God's lavish grace.

Paul explains the meaning of this metaphor by placing his next phrase in apposition to τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν. The redemption of believers, he says, entailed τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων (*tēn aphesin tōn paraptōmatōn*, the forgiveness of transgressions). The term ἄφεσις (*aphesis*, forgiveness) appears only twice in the Pauline corpus (here and in Col. 1:14), and its verbal form ἀφίημι (*aphiēmi*) appears only once in the sense of "forgive" (Rom. 4:7). Paul sometimes also uses the term χαρίζομαι (*charizomai*) to mean "forgive" (2 Cor. 2:7, 10; 12:13; Eph. 4:32; Col. 2:13; 3:13), but words for forgiveness, especially God's forgiveness, are not prominent in his letters. In speaking of divine forgiveness, Paul uses them only in Colossians (2:13; 3:13) and Ephesians (4:32) and once in Romans (4:7), in a quotation of Ps. 31:1 LXX (32:1 MT, Eng.). The concept of forgiveness figures more prominently in Paul's theology, however, than a simple word count reveals. In Rom. 4:7–8 Paul defines God's willingness to "reckon" faith as "righteousness" and his willingness not to "reckon" (λογίζομαι) sin against a person in terms of God's willingness to forgive that person's sins. This concept probably is also present, therefore, when Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:19 that in Christ, God "was reconciling the world to himself, not reckoning [λογιζόμενος, *logizomenos*] their transgressions against them." Paul's language of justification and reconciliation, therefore, probably includes for him the notion that God forgives sin.

Here Paul makes explicit what is usually latent elsewhere: God's people presently have forgiveness for their sins because God, at the high cost of the death of his Beloved Son, has rescued them from the plight of alienation from himself into which their sins had plunged them (cf. Eph. 2:1–3, 5a, 16b; 4:18; 5:8a). Paul will later say that the redemption of God's people is not yet complete (1:14; 4:30), but here his focus remains on what God has already done for believers and on the present effects of what he has done (cf. Rom. 5:1–2a).

1:7b–8 Paul emphasizes the high cost at which God has purchased forgiveness for believers as a way of demonstrating to his readers the extravagance with which God has lavished his grace on them. The phrase κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ (*kata to ploutos tēs charitos autou*, according to the wealth of his grace) modifies the present tense verb ἔχομεν (*echomen*, we have) to show that the present blessing of the forgiveness of their sins results from the abundance of God's grace. The relative clause that follows the phrase (v. 8a) and qualifies the term χάριτος makes the same point.[8] God did not merely show believers

8. The relative pronoun ἧς at the beginning of Eph. 1:8, although genitive rather than accusative, is the direct object of ἐπερίσσευσεν. It has been attracted into the case of its antecedent χάριτος. See BDF §294; Wallace 1996: 338–39.

grace when he forgave them at such great cost to himself; he also "caused" grace "to abound" toward them (ἐπερίσσευσεν, *eperisseusen*; BDAG 805) or "lavished" it on them.

Most interpreters take the next phrase, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει (*en pasē sophia kai phronēsei*, in all wisdom and understanding), as a further description of what God lavishes on his people. He not only makes his grace abound toward them, but along with his grace he also gives them wisdom and understanding. This way of taking the phrase is consistent with Paul's prayer reports elsewhere in Ephesians and Colossians. There Paul says that he prays for God to give his readers "the Spirit of wisdom [σοφίας, *sophias*] and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph. 1:17–18) and that God will fill them "with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and insight [ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ, *en pasē sophia kai synesei pneumatikē*]" (Col. 1:9).[9]

A persistent minority of commentators from ancient times to the present, however, has insisted that at this point in the letter the phrase ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει must refer to God's wisdom and understanding.[10] Those who read the phrase this way often point out that it reflects a typically Jewish way of speaking about God (e.g., Jer. 10:12; 51:15; Ps. 104:24; Prov. 3:19; Sir. 1:1; 1QS 4.18; 1QH^a 9.7, 14, 19; 17.17, 23; Origen [Heine 2002: 93–94]; Gnilka 1971: 71; Best 1998: 132; Sellin 2008: 99). They also observe that it is the most natural way to take the Greek, although they then part company and construe the Greek in two different ways. Some observe that the direct object of the verb ἐπερίσσευσεν is the relative pronoun ἧς, attracted out of the accusative and into the genitive case by its antecedent χάριτος. The relative pronoun, therefore, makes the expression complete: God lavishes grace on believers. There is no need to bring wisdom and understanding into the picture to complete the meaning of ἐπερίσσευσεν (Gnilka 1971: 77; Best 1998: 133). The phrase ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει goes instead with the participle γνωρίσας (*gnōrisas*, making known) in verse 9 to describe how God made the mystery known to believers. He made the mystery known to them in a manner consistent with his great wisdom and understanding.

Others believe that ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει goes with the ἐπερίσσευσεν in the immediately preceding clause and means that God has lavished his grace on believers in all wisdom and understanding (Jerome [Heine 2002: 95]; Alford 1857: 73; Simpson 1957: 31; cf. Origen [Heine 2002: 94–95]).[11] In defense of taking the phrase this way, Alford observes the similarity between the Greek of verse 6b and the Greek of verse 8 (1857: 73). In verse 6b, Paul writes of the grace ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ (*hēs echaritōsen hēmas en*

9. Abbott 1897: 15; Westcott 1906: 12; Lincoln 1990: 17, 29; Schnackenburg 1991: 56–57; Pokorný 1992: 64; O'Brien 1999: 107; Hoehner 2002: 212.

10. Origen (Heine 2002: 93–97); Chrysostom (*PG* 62:14–15); Theodore of Mopsuestia (Swete 1882: 127); Alford 1857: 72–73; Eadie 1883: 44–49; Gnilka 1971: 77; Best 1998: 132–33; Sellin 2008: 99–100.

11. Sellin (2008: 100) thinks it goes with both verbs.

tō ēgapēmenō, which he graciously gave us in the Beloved). Here the ἐν (*en*, in) clause does not supply the object of God's giving—that is contained in the genitive relative pronoun ἧς (*hēs*, which)—but it functions as an adverbial modifier of ἐχαρίτωσεν (*echaritōsen*, he graciously gave) and describes the sphere in which, and the means by which, God gave us his grace. He did so "in the Beloved." By analogy, then, the phrase ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει should modify the verb ἐπερίσσευσεν and tell believers how God lavished his grace upon them: he did so in his multifaceted wisdom and understanding.[12]

Although the similarity of 1:8b with 1:17–18 and Col. 1:9 make a firm decision difficult, it seems best to follow the minority position and understand the phrase as a reference to God's wisdom. When we look at the epistle from the perspective of those who read it or heard it read for the first time, this argument becomes even more persuasive. Paul's first audience encountered the phrase in 1:8 without the benefit of knowing that in a moment, in 1:17–18, he would describe his prayer that God might give them wisdom. They also did not know what Paul had told the Colossians in Col. 1:9. It is possible that Paul simply did not think of how the phrase would be understood by those who first heard it read and was already thinking ahead to his prayer report in 1:17–18.[13] It is also possible that he allowed Col. 1:9, which he had recently dictated, to govern the meaning of his language here. In the absence of any firm indication that either of these possibilities played a role in his thinking, however, it seems wise to apply Occam's razor and interpret the phrase in the simplest way grammatically and stylistically.

Should ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει go with ἐπερίσσευσεν before it or with γνωρίσας after it? Again, the minority position seems to make best sense of the Greek. The parallel between the structure of verse 8 and the structure of verse 6b offers an objective guide for understanding the phrase. In addition, most of the adverbial prepositional phrases in 1:3–14 appear after rather than before the verbs they qualify, and this makes it likely that the phrase goes with ἐπερίσσευσεν, which precedes it, rather than γνωρίσας, which follows it (cf. Hoehner 2002: 213).

If this is correct, then Paul is saying that when God lavished his grace upon his people, it was not a haphazard or ill-considered action. Just as God chose his people before the foundation of the world (v. 4), predetermined that he would adopt them as his children (v. 5a), and did so in joyous agreement with his considered purpose (v. 5b), so also his decision to lavish his grace upon his

12. Some have objected to this way of taking ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει because the adjective πᾶς with a singular abstract noun that does not have the article regularly means "every kind of" and, if the phrase referred to God, would imply that God's wisdom might be incomplete. He would not have all wisdom, only all kinds of wisdom (e.g., Ellicott 1859: 12; Abbott 1897: 15; Hoehner 2002: 212). Πᾶς with an anarthrous abstract noun can, however, mean simply "all," as is probably the case in Matt. 3:15; 28:18. See Moule 1959: 94–95.

13. Paul's reference to "the beautifully complex wisdom of God" in Eph. 3:10, however, diminishes the usefulness of trying to decide the question on the basis of references to wisdom later in the letter.

people by paying the cost of their redemption in the death of his Beloved Son was in accord with his infinite capacity for wisdom and understanding. Once again, Paul emphasizes that God's graciousness to his people is not a marginal or occasional characteristic of his dealings with his people, but integral to his character and thus to the way he acts.

1:9–10

Mention of God's wisdom and understanding provides the transition to another way in which God has lavished his grace on his people. The participle γνωρίσας is dependent on the verb ἐπερίσσευσεν and further describes how God made his grace abound to his people. It does not, therefore, signal a new step in the argument (*pace* Caragounis 1977: 93; Best 1998: 133). God has also lavished his grace on believers by making known to them τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ (*to mystērion tou thelēmatos autou*, the mystery of his will). God has now shared with his people the wisdom and understanding that he put to work when he graciously redeemed them through the death of his Beloved Son.

As many commentators from Origen onward have observed, in verse 9 Paul uses the same stylistic pattern that appears in verse 5.[14] Just as in verse 5 God "determined in advance" (προορίσας, *proorisas*) that he would adopt believers as his children "according to the good pleasure of his will" (κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, *kata tēn eudokian tou thelēmatos autou*), so here Paul says that he has "made known" (γνωρίσας, *gnōrisas*) the mystery of his will to his people "according to his good pleasure, which he planned in him" (κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ ἣν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ, *kata tēn eudokian autou hēn proetheto en autō*). Many commentators observe that the prefix προ- on the verb προέθετο does not normally carry connotations of "prior" planning (cf., e.g., Rom. 1:13; 3:25; 3 Macc. 2:27; e.g., Lightfoot 1895: 318; Lincoln 1990: 31), but since the temporal connotations of the preposition πρό receive such emphasis throughout the benediction (πρό, v. 4; προορίσας, v. 5; προορισθέντες and πρόθεσιν, v. 11; προηλπικότας, v. 12), it seems likely that Paul intended a similar emphasis here (Schlier 1957: 63; Gnilka 1971: 78; cf. Best 1998: 138).[15] In verses 5 and 9b, therefore, Paul links the prior decision of God to his pleasure in accomplishing his will (Cambier 1963: 85). In verse 5 God was pleased to decide in advance to adopt believers as his children. In verse 9b Paul says that when God graciously revealed the mystery of his will to them, he did so in accord with prior plans laid down for his own delight.

As the additional note explains, the term μυστήριον (*mystērion*, mystery) refers in a general sense to God's gracious revelation to his people of something they could not possibly know unless he had made it known (cf. Dan. 2:17–30). Paul describes this mystery more fully in verses 9b–10, and he does this in three phrases that qualify the clause γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον (*gnōrisas hēmin to mystērion*, by making known to us the mystery). His first two qualifying

14. See, e.g., Origen and Jerome (Heine 2002: 96); Ellicott 1859: 12; Hoehner 2002: 215.

15. Cf. also Paul's use of the noun πρόθεσιν in 3:11, where the qualifying phrase τῶν αἰώνων seems to give it temporal connotations.

phrases say something about God's action of making the mystery known to his people, and the third qualifying phrase tells what the mystery is.

The first qualifying phrase explains that God made the mystery known to his people κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ ἣν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ (*kata tēn eudokian autou hēn proetheto en autō*, according to his good pleasure, which he planned in him). Two aspects of this statement are important for a full understanding of the benediction at this point. First, just as in verse 5 God predestined his people for adoption according to the good pleasure of his will, so here God made the mystery known to them according to plans that he laid for his good pleasure.[16] It is hard to miss the emphasis on the delight that God has taken in laying out his plans, whether to adopt his people as his children or to reveal to them the mystery of his will. Second, God has planned to reveal the mystery to his people ἐν αὐτῷ (*en autō*, in him), that is, in Christ. Just as their adoption, according to verse 5, took place through Christ, so God's plans to reveal the mystery to them revolve around Christ.

The second qualifying phrase says that God has revealed the mystery to his people according to plans laid εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν (*eis oikonomian tou plērōmatos tōn kairōn*, for administering the fullness of the times). Although Paul's grammar is ambiguous here, we should probably understand εἰς (*eis*) not to mean "at the time of" (Hoehner 2002: 217) or "in reference to" (Eadie 1883: 50; Lightfoot 1895: 319), but "for the purpose of."[17] We should probably also take οἰκονομίαν (*oikonomian*, administration) not as a reference to Paul's role as administrator of God's mysteries (Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25–26; cf. 1 Cor. 9:17), or as a reference to God's plan itself (cf. 3:9), but to God's work of administering the plan that he decided on according to his good pleasure (cf. Luke 16:2).[18] When Paul says that God has made his plans in Christ for the purpose of administering "the fullness of the times," he probably has in mind God's control over the unfolding of successive historical periods, just as in Daniel the God who revealed mysteries (2:19, 22) was the God who "changes times [καιρούς, *kairous*] and seasons [χρόνους, *chronous*]" (Dan. 2:21 OG, Theod.).[19]

16. The thought is similar to that expressed in Matt. 11:26 (Luke 10:21), where Jesus says that it was God's "good pleasure" (εὐδοκία) to reveal the significance of Jesus's mighty works to his disciples although they were mere babes in comparison to the "wise [σοφοί] and intelligent [συνετοί]" people who rejected Jesus.

17. This is the conclusion of the overwhelming majority of commentators. See, e.g., Alford 1857: 73; Ellicott 1859: 13; Abbott 1897: 17; Caragounis 1977: 94–95; Lincoln 1990: 31; Best 1998: 139; Muddiman 2001: 75. For the use of εἰς with προτίθημι to indicate the purpose of the action, see Rom. 3:25.

18. This is the majority position among commentators (e.g., Schlier 1957: 63; Gnilka 1971: 79n4; Lincoln 1990: 31–32; Best 1998: 138–39; Hoehner 2002: 217–18; cf. Lindemann 1975: 94), although not of Eadie 1883: 51 ("an arrangement, . . . a compact and symmetrical system of perfect harmony, . . . a plan"); Lightfoot 1895: 319 ("system or method of administration"); or BDAG 698 ("plan of salvation").

19. Cf. Dan. 4:37 Theod.; 2 Bar. 40.3; cf. 2 Bar. 81.4; Schnackenburg 1991: 59; Lincoln 1990: 32. Paul may also mean that God has measured out the length of time before he acts decisively

To summarize, God made the mystery known to his people because it gave him pleasure to do this, and to do it in a way that made Christ of central importance. His revelation of the mystery to his people was part of his administrative work within history for accomplishing his ultimate purposes.

The third qualifying phrase summarizes the content of the mystery and states God's ultimate purposes. It is not immediately obvious that the phrase ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ (*anakephalaiōsasthai ta panta en tō Christō*, to sum up all things in Christ) relays the content of the mystery. It is separated from the phrase "the mystery of his will" by two subordinate clauses, the first of which contains a verb (προέθετο, *proetheto*, planned) whose meaning is often completed with an infinitive.[20] Paul might be saying, therefore, that God planned to sum up all things in Christ rather than that the mystery he revealed to his people was the summing up of all things in Christ.

Despite this ambiguity it is likely that Paul intended for the infinitive to describe the mystery's content. In a section of the letter designed to praise God for the revelation of the mystery of his will, it would make little sense to leave the reader guessing about the mystery's content and the goal toward which "the times" were moving. Moreover, Paul uses a similar construction in 3:3–6. There he mentions the mystery twice in verses 3–4 but does not define it more closely until verse 6, and he packages this more-detailed definition in an infinitive construction (εἶναι τὰ ἔθνη . . . , *einai ta ethnē* . . . , that the Gentiles are . . .) just as he does here in 1:10.

The mystery of God's will that he has graciously revealed to his people, therefore, is the ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι (*anakephalaiōsasthai*) of all things in Christ. This is an unusual word in Greek literature, and Paul's use of it here has led to two exegetical errors, each of which focuses on one element of the word (either ἀνά or κεφαλαιόω) rather than the normal meaning of the term taken as a whole. The first approach focuses on the preposition ἀνά (*ana*) attached to the beginning of the verb. When compounded with verbs, ἀνά can connote "*repetition* and *improvement*" (LSJ 98) in a way similar to the English prefix *re-*. Jerome, accordingly, thought that ἀνακεφαλαιόω (*anakephalaioō*) referred to Christ's repetition and perfection of salvation history in himself (e.g., Jerome [Heine 2002: 97–98]), and both Theodoret

to rescue his people and that this measure has now been filled up. In Christ, God's historical purposes have come to a climax. Cf. Gal. 4:4; 2 Esd. (4 Ezra) 4:35–37. *Pace* Lindemann (1975: 95), however, this would not mean "the elimination of history generally" (die Ausschaltung von Geschichte überhaupt). It is difficult to think that for the author of Ephesians, Christians would need to be vigilant against "the strategies of the devil" (6:11) in a period when history had ceased to exist.

20. See, e.g., Polybius, *Hist*. 24.5.2; 3 Macc. 2:27; and Rom. 1:13. Haupt (1902a: 16) comments that if we do not take the infinitive as an expression of the content of the mystery of God's will, then it might be attached to εὐδοκία (it was God's good pleasure to sum up all things in Christ) or to προέθετο (God planned to sum up all things in Christ, and this was his good pleasure), or it could explain more fully the meaning of the phrase οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν (God administered the fullness of the times by summing up all things in Christ). All three of these other possibilities, he says, ultimately yield the same sense.

(R. Hill 2001: 2.34–35) and John of Damascus (*PG* 95:824–25) seem to have similarly thought that it referred to the restoration of the fallen creation in the incarnation of Christ (see McHugh 1982: 308). The common use of the term, however, does not emphasize the restoration of what was broken or damaged but the orderly summation of what was previously laid out in piecemeal form.

The second approach argues that Paul, or the author of Ephesians, made a conceptual link between ἀνακεφαλαιόω and the important theme, developed later in the letter, of Christ's headship over all things and over the church (1:22; 4:15; 5:23). These interpreters are aware that ἀνακεφαλαιόω is formed not from the noun κεφαλή (*kephalē*), meaning "head," but from the noun κεφάλαιον (*kephalaion*), meaning "a brief statement concerning some topic or subject, *main thing, main point*," and that its corresponding verb, κεφαλαιόω (*kephalaioō*) means to "sum up" (BDAG 541). They still think, however, that Paul linked ἀνακεφαλαιόω with the notion of Christ's headship.[21] If they are correct, then the mystery that God revealed to his people is his plan to "head up all things in Christ." On this reading, Paul says that God will place Christ as the head over all things.

The trouble with this approach lies in the location of the word in the flow of the letter. This is the first occurrence in the text of any term with the κεφαλ- root, and so Paul has not yet explained his thesis that Christ will be the head over all things or over the church. It is unlikely that he gave the term a special meaning that his readers could determine only from what he wrote later in the letter.

The noun ἀνακεφαλαίωσις (*anakephalaiōsis*) and its corresponding verb ἀνακεφαλαιόω were commonly used in rhetorical contexts of an orator's or author's "recapitulation" or "summary" of the various elements of a speech or composition (LSJ 108; LSJSup 27), and this use of the term provides the most help in understanding Paul's use of it here. The Roman rhetorical theorist Quintilian, only slightly younger than Paul and also writing in the first century, defined the noun ἀνακεφαλαίωσις as "the repetition and grouping of facts" that should come at the end of a speech in court "both to refresh the memory of the judge and to place the whole case before his eyes." This device is especially useful, Quintilian says, because although the details of the case may have made little impression on the judge, "their cumulative effect is considerable" (*Inst*. 6.1.1). For Quintilian, therefore, the noun ἀνακεφαλαίωσις refers to a collection of the essential data of a case into a brief, coherent form that both reminds one of the crucial points scattered throughout the preceding speech and makes the point of the whole argument clear.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing at the turn of the first century, could use the term in the same way, this time of the unfolding of his written composition *Roman Antiquities*. At the end of book 1, he says that he will begin

21. See, e.g., John Chrysostom, *PG* 62:16; Schlier, *TDNT* 3:682; Masson 1953: 145; Schlier 1957: 65; Cambier 1963: 86–89; Schnackenburg 1991: 60–61.

book 2 with the ἀνακεφαλαίωσις of what he has shown in his first book (*Ant. rom.* 1.90.2), meaning that he will neatly summarize the main points of that section.[22] Paul probably had something similar in mind in the only other use of the word (here too in its verbal form) in the NT. In Rom. 13:9 he says that the Mosaic law's commandments concerning relationships among people "are summed up" in the sentence "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18).

If Paul used the term in Eph. 1:10 with this common oratorical and literary meaning, then he is metaphorically describing God's plan to sum up his disparate creation in Christ. Just as an orator or writer draws together the elements of an argument and shows how they demonstrate the chief point of the speech or composition, so Christ will bring order to the universe. God will use Christ to bring together the disparate elements of creation whether they are "things in the heavens" or "things on the earth" (cf. Lightfoot 1895: 321–22).

Later, Paul will explain in detail what he means by this: God will unify the created universe around Christ. Through the resurrection and ascension of Christ, God has conquered all powers inimical to his purposes and placed them, vanquished, at Christ's feet (1:20–22a). God has given this conquering Christ to his body, the church (1:22b–23), and the church is itself comprised of believers drawn from people groups formerly alienated both from God (2:1–10) and from one another (2:11–22). Christ will therefore be head over all things (1:22), especially the church (4:15; 5:23). This important theme in Ephesians recalls 1 Cor. 15:28 (where all things are subjected to the Son, and the Son to God), Phil. 2:10 (where every creature—heavenly, earthly, and subterranean—pays homage to Jesus for God's glory), and especially Col. 1:20 (where God reconciles all things, whether in heaven or on earth, to himself through Christ; Masson 1953: 145).

We should not, however, get ahead of Paul at this point in the argument (cf. Lincoln 1990: 33). Here Paul says only that the mystery of God's will, which he graciously made known to his people, reveals that God intends to sum up in Christ the disparate elements of the universe, both heavenly and earthly. Christ will emerge as the organizing principle of all creation.

Summary

In 1:7–10 Paul praises God for two further blessings he has given to his people. First, he has purchased them out of a metaphorical slavery by forgiving their transgressions against him. This has happened at the high price of

22. Cf. Luke's procedure in Acts 1:1–2 and Josephus's procedure in *Ag. Ap.* 2.1. For the use of a participial form of the verb to refer to the concluding summary of an oral declamation, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Lys.* 9.16. Chrysostom (*Hom. Eph.*, hom. 1), in his comments on this passage, defines the infinitive ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι as meaning συνάψαι (*synapsai*, to join together), a term that could be used of drawing a conclusion from a logical argument (LSJ 1698). He defines the noun ἀνακεφαλαίωσις as a "pulling together in a brief space things spoken at length and to say concisely all the things spoken in many words" (*PG* 62:16; cf. *NPNF* 13:54).

the death of his Beloved Son on the cross and was no haphazard plan but in accord with God's wisdom and understanding. God's carefully considered willingness to pay such a price for the forgiveness of the sins of his people reveals something about his character: he is not merely a gracious God but an overwhelmingly gracious God. Second, God has blessed his people by revealing to them something they could not have deduced themselves: God is in the process of organizing the entire universe, both its heavenly dimension and its earthly dimension, around Christ. The historical course of the universe finds its organizational principle in him.

Additional Note

1:9–10. The term μυστήριον was used widely in religious contexts where Greek was spoken in antiquity. In Greco-Roman cultural contexts, beginning in the seventh century BC (Heraclitus, frag. 14), it referred to the secret rites of various religions in which initiates were united with a god (Bornkamm, *TDNT* 4:803; Harvey 1980: 321), and especially to the secret religious rituals practiced at Eleusis (Caragounis 1977: 5–6). This union took place through reenacting various significant events in that god's existence, such as suffering, death, and rebirth (Bornkamm, *TDNT* 4:805). These religions placed their adherents under strict codes of secrecy, not about the goal of these rites, which was often a pleasant existence in the afterlife, but about the details of the rituals (Bornkamm, *TDNT* 4:806–8; Harvey 1980: 321). The term "mystery" also appeared widely in other religious contexts, such as philosophy and magic, as a reference to esoteric knowledge that either resulted from or led to contact with the divine (Bornkamm, *TDNT* 4:808–13; cf. Harvey 1980: 321–22).

Beginning in the Hellenistic period, Jewish writers used the term in both positive and negative ways. The Wisdom of Solomon, for example, speaks both positively of "the mysteries [μυστήρια] of God" that the wicked do not know (2:22) and negatively of the "mysteries and mystic initiatory rites" that idolatrous pagans practice and hand down from one generation to the next (14:15, 23). Here, "the mysteries of God" seem to refer to the rewards that the righteous will receive in the afterlife (cf. 1 En. 103.2–4; 1 Cor. 2:9; Brown 1968: 10; Winston 1979: 120–21).[23]

Elsewhere in Jewish literature from the Second Temple period, the Greek term, or its equivalent in one of the Semitic languages, can refer to the mysterious rationale that lies beneath God's ordering and assigning symbolic meaning to cosmic phenomena and bodies such as lightning, thunder, wind, clouds, dew, sun, moon, and stars (1 En. 41.3; 43.1–4; $1QH^a$ 9.11; cf. Brown 1968: 15). Both the actions of evil beings, such as the magical rituals of fallen angels, and the actions of the righteous are "secrets" that God knows (1 En. 9.6–8; 16.3; cf. $1Qap\ Gen^{ar}$ 1.1; 1Q27 frag. 1, col. 1.1; 1QM 14.9; $1QH^a$ 13.36; 4Q429 frag. 1, col. 4.10). Apparently this means that God knows why such rituals operate in the way they do and what motivates the righteous to do good (Brown 1968: 16–17).

The most characteristic use of the term "mystery" in a Jewish context, however, is visible clearly in the Greek text of Daniel, which uses it to translate the Aramaic word רָז (*rāz*). In this context the term refers to the knowledge of God's orchestration of the future rise and fall of kingdoms in history, particularly as these events move the universe toward "the last days" (Dan. 2:28–29 LXX; cf. 2 Esd. [4 Ezra] 10:38, 59; 2 Bar. 48.3; 54.1; 81.4; 82.2; 83.6–7; 1QS 4.18; 11.3; 1Q27 frag. 1, col. 1.3–4; $1QH^a$ 5.19). This knowledge resides with God, and those who possess it only do so because God has revealed it to them (Dan. 2:18–19, 27–28, 30, 47 LXX; 1QS 10.3). In 2 Baruch, God similarly "made known" to Baruch "the mysteries of the times" and "the coming of the periods" (cf. 2 Esd. [4 Ezra] 10:38–59). God reveals

23. *Pace* Harvey (1980: 327), who believes that μυστήρια here refers to "the moral and ascetic discipline of the just man."

these mysteries concerning the unfolding and end of history to Baruch "according to the multitude of his grace" and "the magnitude of his mercy" (2 Bar. 81; *OTP* 1:649), a point that, although not as explicit, is nevertheless present in Dan. 2, where God mercifully saves the lives of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego by revealing the "mystery" of Nebuchadnezzar's dream to them (see esp. Dan. 2:18 MT, Theod.).

Sometimes in these Jewish contexts, the term continues to carry the connotations of esoteric knowledge that it had within the mystery religions, a knowledge available only to certain cognoscenti. In the Old Greek version of Daniel (but in neither the MT nor Theodotion's version), for example, Daniel "proclaimed a fast and supplication and that help be sought from the Lord Most High about this mystery" of the king's dream and its interpretation (Dan. 2:18 NETS). After this, the king's "mystery" is revealed clearly to Daniel in a nighttime vision (2:19). This version of the story leaves the impression that Daniel received the vision because of his exemplary piety. Similarly, in 2 Esdras (4 Ezra), God reveals "many secrets" to Ezra because he has seen his "righteous conduct" (10:38–39; cf. 12:36), and some of Ezra's visions come to him after he has wept and fasted for seven days (5:20; 6:35; cf. 9:23–28).

The term appears far more often in the Pauline corpus than in other early Christian literature and is especially characteristic of Colossians and Ephesians.[24] In the undisputed Pauline letters μυστήριον can have esoteric connotations, just as in the mystery religions and in some Jewish apocalypses. Paul and his fellow apostles have a special role, vaguely like that of the apocalyptic seers, as "administrators of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1). Similarly, Paul knows that those who speak in tongues are not understood apart from an interpretation of their speaking because they speak "mysteries in the Spirit" (1 Cor. 14:2; cf. 2 Cor. 12:4). Those who "have prophecy" can understand "mysteries" (1 Cor. 13:2).

There is no hint, however, that any of these persons, including the apostles, received their special revelation because they were more righteous than others. The opposite seems rather to be the case. Paul defines "administrators of the mysteries of God" as "helpers (ὑπηρέτας) of Christ" (1 Cor. 4:1), emphasizing their subordinate and serving role rather than their lofty status. One can understand "all mysteries" and yet be "nothing" if one's great knowledge is unaccompanied by love (13:2). Similarly, mysteries spoken in uninterpreted tongues and therefore kept inaccessible to the church are not useful for building up the church and must give way to prophecy, which is intelligible and edifying to everyone (14:1–2). The apostle, tongues speaker, and prophet, therefore, are unusual because they have access to knowledge that is not available to others, not because their piety or ascetic discipline has been rewarded with special revelation.

In the Pauline corpus (excluding, for the moment, Ephesians), the term most often carries the common Jewish connotation of God's knowledge of the unfolding of events in the last days, a knowledge that would be unavailable to human beings unless God had graciously revealed it to them. Paul can speak of various elements of this unfolding eschatological scenario as mysteries. In 2 Thess. 2:7, μυστήριον describes the increase in evil during the last days; in Rom. 11:25 the eschatological influx of Israelite believers into the people of God; in 1 Cor. 15:51 the transformation of the bodies of believers who are alive when the last trumpet sounds and God raises the dead; and in Col. 1:27 (cf. Rom. 16:25–26) the inclusion of the Gentiles within the people of God. The most characteristic use of the term in the Pauline corpus, however, describes the gospel and Christ, who stands at its

24. The term μυστήριον appears three times in the Synoptic Gospels in parallel passages, four times in Revelation, and eleven times in the Apostolic Fathers (seven of these in the Epistle to Diognetus). The term appears twenty-one times in the Pauline corpus (a figure that assumes μυστήριον rather than μαρτύριον is the right reading in 1 Cor. 2:1); of these uses, six occur in 1 Corinthians, four in Colossians, and six in Ephesians. This makes the concentration of the term in Colossians and Ephesians about the same (and about the same as in the Epistle to Diognetus). This concentration of uses is far heavier than in 1 Corinthians, which is more than four times the length of Colossians and nearly three times the length of Ephesians.

center, as eschatological events that have happened according to God's historically enacted plan for salvation (1 Cor. 2:1–2; 4:1; Col. 1:27; 2:2; 4:3; 1 Tim. 3:16; cf. 3:9).[25] God had predetermined the crucifixion of Christ before the ages for the purpose of "our glory" (1 Cor. 2:7; Col. 1:27), but this μυστήριον remained hidden until God revealed it to the saints (1 Cor. 2:7; Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26). Paul and the other apostles are "administrators" of these "mysteries" (1 Cor. 4:1; Col. 1:25–26; 4:3).

In Ephesians, Paul's use of the term falls in step with these other occurrences. Paul can use μυστήριον in its most fundamental sense as a way to describe the gospel (6:19) or Christ (3:4), hidden until God revealed them (3:9). Just as in the undisputed letters and in Colossians, God has given to Paul and other apostles and prophets the responsibility of administering this gospel mystery by telling others about it (3:2–5; 6:19; cf. Col. 1:25–27).[26] As with the other letters, however, Paul's piety or ascetic heroism did not win him this role. To the contrary, he is the least of all the saints, but God has graciously given him the task of illuminating others about the mystery (Eph. 3:2, 7–9).[27]

Just as in the other letters, the union of all peoples—Gentiles and Jews—in one eschatologically restored people is a mystery (Eph. 3:4, 6; Rom. 11:25; 16:25–26; Col. 1:27), but in Ephesians this element of the mystery rises to prominence. Paul defines "the mystery of Christ" as the union of Jewish and Gentile believers together in one body (Eph. 3:3, 6; cf. 2:16), and defines the unified body, in turn, both as the church (3:10; cf. 1:23) and as the body of Christ (4:12–13; 5:23, 30). In 5:32, therefore, Paul reveals to his readers the "great mystery" that Gen. 2:24 refers not merely to the union of husband and wife but also to the union of Christ with the church.

Here in 1:9, μυστήριον refers to the knowledge that God intends to sum up all things in Christ. The revelation of this mystery is a blessing: it is one of the ways in which God lavishly pours out his grace on believers (cf. Dan. 2:17–30). The content of the mystery is that God is unifying the cosmos, whether earthly or heavenly, in Christ. Because the church is comprised of both Gentiles and Jews (Eph. 2:11–22; 3:4–7) and as a united entity forms the body of Christ (4:13, 16), it plays a critical role in the outworking of this mystery.

25. On this understanding of μυστήριον in 1 Corinthians, see Bockmuehl 1990: 157–66.

26. Cf. also 1 Cor. 9:17, where the same idea occurs without the use of the term μυστήριον.

27. Cf. Col. 1:25–26, where Paul describes his role as one who proclaims the mystery of God's word as that of a "servant" (διάκονος).

II. Blessing God Who Has Blessed His People in Christ (1:3–14)
A. Praise to God for His Grace in Making Believers His People (1:3–6)
B. Praise to God for His Grace in Redemption and Revelation (1:7–10)
➤ C. Praise to God for Making His People Heirs and Giving Them Hope in Christ (1:11–12)
D. Praise to God for the Conversion and Future Salvation of Paul's Readers (1:13–14)

C. Praise to God for Making His People Heirs and Giving Them Hope in Christ (1:11–12)

The turning point from the second to the third section of the benediction repeats the structure of the turning point from the first to the second section. Just as the phrase "in the Beloved, in whom" (vv. 6b–7a) provided the bridge for crossing from the first to the second section, so the phrase "in him, in whom" (vv. 10b–11a) provides the bridge for crossing from the second to the third section.

This third section returns to the themes of the first section. The idea that God chose his people because he predetermined them for adoption in verses 4–5 reappears in the statement that God made them his heirs because he predetermined them in verse 11. Just as the notions of God's choice and adoption of his people in verses 4–5 recall the biblical emphasis on Israel as God's people, so the notion that God's people are his heirs is redolent of the biblical theme of Israel as the children, and therefore heirs, of God. Similarly, just as Paul uses a prepositional phrase in verse 5 to emphasize the deliberate nature of God's decision to choose his people and adopt them ("according to the good pleasure of his will"), so Paul uses two prepositional phrases in verse 11 to underline the thoughtful and deliberate nature of God's decision to make them his heirs ("according to the purpose of the one who works all things according to the counsel of his will"). Finally, just as the first section of the benediction ends with an expression of the purpose behind God's decision to adopt believers as his people ("for the praise of his glorious grace"), followed by a brief tag ("which he gave us in the Beloved"), so verse 12 ends with the same expression of purpose ("that we might exist for the praise of his glory"), followed by a brief phrase ("we who hope beforehand in Christ").

Although this third section recalls the major themes of the first section, it also advances the thought of the benediction. Paul takes the thought that believers are God's chosen people and adopted children a step further than he had in verses 4–5: as God's children they are also his heirs (v. 11; cf. Rom. 8:17). In verse 11 Paul also places even greater emphasis on the deliberate nature of God's action of making believers his heirs: God did not simply predetermine that they would be his children because it gave him pleasure to do so (v. 5), but in his capacity as the God who effects all things, he also worked very deliberately to make believers his heirs; he did this in accord with his "purpose" and the "counsel" that resulted in the doing of his "will."

Perhaps most important, Paul ends the third section by briefly describing the eschatological tension in which all believers live. The benediction's second section (vv. 7–10) has spoken of God's plan "to sum up all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth in him" (v. 10). Christ is the very person in whom all Christians exist, and therefore the participation of all believers in this summing up of all things is assured. Now, however, before all that happens, believers live in hope that it will happen, a hope that is not some fragile expectation that may or may not come to pass, but a hope whose basis is Christ himself. God has made his people heirs so that even now "we who hope beforehand"—before the full summation of all things in Christ—will exist for the praise of his glory.

Exegesis and Exposition

[11]. . . in whom also we have been made heirs, because we were predestined according to the purpose of the one who works all things according to the counsel of his will [12]in order that we might exist for the praise of his glory—we who hope beforehand in Christ, . . .

1:11 Paul begins the third section of the benediction with the claim that in Christ—the Christ in whom God will sum up all things (v. 10)—"we have been made heirs" (ἐκληρώθημεν, *eklērōthēmen*). The verb κληρόω (*klēroō*) is infrequent in Biblical Greek (appearing only here and in 1 Sam. 14:41 and Isa. 17:11 [2x]), but common in ancient Greek literature generally, where it meant "appoint by lot," "cast lots," and by extension, "allot, assign." In the passive voice it means "appointed by lot" and "allotted" (LSJ 960). If the term carries these normal connotations here, then we should translate it "we have been allotted."[1] By itself, however, this expression requires some additional information to complete its meaning. What have believers been allotted? Or alternatively, to whom have they been allotted?

Interpreters have often filled in this information from the use of the term in ancient Jewish and Christian texts. In the OT, sometimes Israel or its various tribes are allotted the land, or portions of it, by God (Num. 26:55–56). At other times, Israel is called God's allotted portion (Deut. 4:20; 9:29; 32:9; Add. Esth. 13:8–14:19). Some Jewish texts of the Second Temple period speak of those who have a "lot" among God's people (e.g., Wis. 5:5; 1QS 11.7–8; 1QH^a 11.22–23), and this idea reappears not only in Acts 26:18 but also, significantly, in Col. 1:12. If this approach is correct, then Paul could be saying

1. Through the centuries a few interpreters have claimed that Paul means "we have been appointed by lot." On this reading, Paul pictures God metaphorically as casting lots to determine who would be his people, and the lot fell on "us." Yet Paul used this expression to emphasize the sovereign grace of God in choosing his people—his choice came to them completely unmerited by anything in them—and then guarded against the conclusion that God's choice was arbitrary by immediately qualifying the verb ἐκληρώθημεν (we have been chosen by lot) with the participle προορισθέντες (having been predestined).

that Christians have been assigned a destiny, or lot, by God. This thought is close to Col. 1:11–12, although there the noun κλῆρος (*klēros*) rather than the verb κληρόω appears (Abbott 1897: 20; Lincoln 1990: 36). Alternatively, Paul might be saying that either Jewish Christians (O'Brien 1999: 115–16) or Christians generally (Robinson 1904: 34, 146; Alford 1857: 75; Westcott 1906: 14–15) have been allotted to God as his portion, just as Israel of old once filled that role. These approaches to the term have two advantages. First, they are consistent with the common use of the verb κληρόω to mean "allot," and second, they recognize the probable conceptual connection between Col. 1:12 and Eph. 1:11.

Still, another approach is probably best. Although the verb κληρόω does not mean "inherit," it shares a root with the nouns κληρονόμος (*klēronomos*, heir) and κληρονομία (*klēronomia*, inheritance), and with the verbs κληρονομέω (*klēronomeō*, inherit) and κατακληρονομέω (*kataklēronomeō*, inherit). These terms appear throughout the Greek Scriptures in reference to God's people as his "heirs" (Rom. 8:17; cf. James 2:5), to the land as Israel's "inheritance" or as something they will "inherit" (Num. 33:54; Deut. 4:1; Acts 13:19; cf. Zech. 8:12), and to God's people as God's "inheritance" (Deut. 32:9) or as something he will "inherit" (Zech. 2:16 [2:12 MT, Eng.]). Sometimes, the verbal idea that Israel "will inherit" (κατακληρονομήσετε, *kataklēronomēsete*) the land is linked with the notion that God will give the land to Israel "by lot" (ἐν κλήρῳ, *en klērō*; Num. 33:53–54; 34:13). This is probably the concept that stands behind Col. 1:12, which speaks of God qualifying Christians to have a "portion of the lot of the saints in light" (τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί, *tēn merida tou klērou tōn hagiōn en tō phōti*; Dunn 1996: 75–76).

In the Ephesians benediction itself, Paul will say in verse 14 that the Spirit is "the down payment of our inheritance" (κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, *klēronomias hēmōn*), a phrase that, as we will see below, refers to the eschatological inheritance of God's kingdom, over which Jesus, the Messiah, rules as God's vice regent (5:5). In verse 18 Paul will speak of God's "inheritance in the saints" (τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις, *tēs klēronomias autou en tois hagiois*). It seems probable, therefore, that when Paul uses the term ἐκληρώθημεν here in verse 11, he intends for it to refer not simply to an "allotment" or "portion" that has been given either to believers or to God, but specifically to an "inheritance" that has been given either to believers or to God.

But is the inheritance theirs or God's? Since Paul will speak of the inheritance of believers in the next subsection of the benediction (v. 14), it seems likely that he also intends to refer here to the status of believers as heirs. If so, then the thought is similar to that of Rom. 8:17, where Paul describes believers as adopted children of God and therefore his "heirs" (κληρονόμοι, *klēronomoi*; cf. Gal. 3:29; 4:1, 5, 7).[2] Paul has already praised God for his adoption of believers (Eph. 1:5). Here in 1:11, he praises God for making believers his heirs.

2. Haupt 1902a: 26; Masson 1953: 146; cf. Foerster, *TDNT* 3:784.

Paul next says that this blessing came to God's people "because we were predestined" (προορισθέντες, *prooristhentes*) to have it. The thought here is similar to that of verse 5, where Paul uses the same term, although in the active rather than the passive voice (προορίσας, *proorisas*). Just as in verse 5 God has chosen believers because he has predestined them for adoption, so here God has made them his heirs because he has predestined them. Moreover, just as in verse 5 Paul says that God has predestined believers for adoption "according to the good pleasure of his will," so here he says that believers were predestined "according to the purpose of the one who works all things according to the counsel of his will." In both places his basic thought is the same: the blessing of God's relationship with his people comes at God's joyfully considered initiative. In verse 5, however, the accent falls on the pleasure that God took in his plan for his people. Here the accent falls on the considered nature of that plan. Words that emphasize God's meticulous planning and sovereign control pile up one upon another: πρόθεσις (*prothesis*, purpose), ἐνεργέω (*energeō*, work), βουλή (*boulē*, counsel), θέλημα (*thelēma*, will).[3] This piling up of words arises not merely from stylistic verbosity but also from Paul's desire to encourage his readers to think of themselves as an especially privileged people—privileged not because of their accomplishments (2:5, 8) but because of what God, who effects all things, has done for them. He carefully planned to make his people his heirs before he did it. This action was neither haphazard nor dependent on anything they would do to earn it.

1:12 Just as near the end of the first section of the benediction (vv. 4–6) Paul says that God has predestined us to be his adopted children "for the praise of his glorious grace" (v. 6a), so here, near the end of the third section, Paul says that believers were made heirs of God "in order that we might exist for the praise of his glory" (v. 12a).

This expression of purpose is so climactic that the phrase added to it almost seems out of place: τοὺς προηλπικότας ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ (*tous proēlpikotas en tō christō*, we who hope beforehand in Christ). Here too, however, Paul follows the pattern of verses 5–6, where he adds to the concept that his readers were predestined to praise God's grace (v. 5–6a) the further thought that God has granted them his grace in the Beloved (v. 6b).

Through the centuries many interpreters have thought that the participle προηλπικότας (*proēlpikotas*, hope beforehand) referred to Jews who hoped beforehand in the Messiah or, more commonly, to Jewish Christians who,

3. So, correctly, Muddiman (2001: 77), without, however, adopting his ingenious idea about what motivated this string of references to predestination. Muddiman suggests that an interpreter of Paul, anticipating the supposed reference to Jewish Christians who "hoped beforehand in Christ" in verse 12, may have tried to forestall any notion that Paul had denied Jewish privilege in his authentic correspondence by piling up references to God's predestination of the belief of Jewish Christians. As Muddiman points out, in Rom. 9:4–5 Paul had already done something to prevent this misunderstanding, and we might add, also in Rom. 1:16; 3:2; 10:1; 11:1–32.

like Paul, were the first to hear the gospel.[4] Paul would then be contrasting "we [Jews] who hoped beforehand in Christ" or even "we [Jews] who hoped beforehand in the Messiah" with the Gentile audience of Ephesians, to whom he refers in verse 13 with the phrase "in whom you also. . . ."

The emergence in 2:11–3:13 of the unity of Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians as an important theme in the letter, and specifically as an important element in the mystery that God has revealed to believers (1:9; cf. 3:3–6), makes this an attractive approach to this final phrase in verse 12. If this approach is correct, then in 1:12–13 Paul anticipates his fuller exposition of that theme later in the letter (Aletti 2001: 79).

This understanding of προηλπικότας, however, is probably incorrect. Up to this point in the benediction, Paul has used the first-person plural ("we") ten times to refer to all Christians as recipients of the blessings he is describing. It is unlikely that he would expect the first hearers of this letter to understand the first-person-plural subject of προηλπικότας in verse 12b in any other way.[5] It is difficult to see how they could have done so. The phrase ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν (*en hō kai eklērōthēmen*, in whom also we have been made heirs) at the beginning of the third major section of the benediction (v. 11) is structurally almost identical to the phrase ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν (*en hō echomen*, in whom we have) at the beginning of second major section (v. 7), and these two phrases contain the only first-person-plural indicative verbs in the entire benediction. Paul would have introduced considerable confusion into the benediction if he meant the "we" of these two verbs to refer to different groups: all Christians in verse 7, and Jews or Jewish Christians in verse 11. Since the "we" of verse 7 must refer to all who have experienced redemption through the blood of God's Beloved Son, the "we" of verse 11 must likewise refer to all Christians. Similarly, the appearance of a participial form of προορίζω (*proorizō*, predestine) in both verse 5 and verse 11 makes it unlikely that the first-person-plural subjects of these two participles refer to different groups, yet this would be required if we took προηλπικότας in verse 12b as a reference to Jews only.[6]

What then does προηλπικότας mean? The verb is rare, appearing only here in the NT, never in the LXX, and seldom in ancient Greek literature generally. Where it occurs, it seems to mean "hope for before," "anticipate," "expect" (LSJ 1477).[7] Its perfect tense places the reader close to the verb's action and,

4. Westcott (1906: 15–16) and Barth (1974: 132) think that the word refers to Jews who believed in the promises of "the Deliverer" or "the Messiah" before his actual coming (cf. Aletti 2001: 77–79). Robinson (1904: 34–35) is undecided as to whether the reference is to Jewish Christians or to Jews who hoped in the coming of the Messiah before hearing the gospel (cf. Muddiman 2001: 77). Bengel 1860: 4.68–69; Alford 1857: 75–76; Ellicott 1859: 16; Eadie 1883: 60; Abbott 1897: 21; O'Brien 1999: 116–17; and MacDonald 2000: 203–4 believe that the term refers to the hope of Jewish Christians.

5. Cf., e.g., Haupt 1902a: 26–27; Masson 1953: 146; Lincoln 1990: 37; Best 1998: 144–45; Hoehner 2002: 231–33.

6. The subject of προηλπικότας in 1:12b is identical to the subject of προορισθέντες in 1:11a.

7. As in, e.g., Posidippus of Cassandreia, frag. 27.8 (cf. Athenaeus of Naucratis, *Deipn.* 9.20); Galen, *In Hippocratis prorrheticum I commentaria iii* [Kühn 1821–33: 16.822, 838];

in this context, emphasizes the state in which believers live (Campbell 2008b: 24–29; 2008a: 46–52, 103–4, 106–7).[8] The word and its tense-form, then, refers to the expectation that all Christians have for the time when "all things, . . . things in the heavens and things on the earth," will be fully summed up "in him" (v. 10). The prefixed preposition πρό refers not to the past but to the present time, "before" the consummation takes place, a time in which Christian existence is characterized by hope (cf. 2:12; Haupt 1902a: 27; Masson 1953: 146, *pace* Lindemann 1975: 100–101; Aletti 2001: 78).[9]

Summary

In this third section of the benediction, Paul praises God because he has made his adopted children his heirs. In other words, they have all the blessings that come with membership in God's household. Their status as God's heirs is not a result of some accident or of anything they did but because God carefully planned in advance to give them this blessing. He did this so that his people might exist to praise him not only in the future but also in the present as they wait in hope for all things to take their assigned place in relationship to Christ.

Publius Herennius Dexippus, frag. 2a; Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita sanctae Macrinae* 9; Themistius, *Or.* 5.65a.

8. Paul's use of the perfect active participle here in 1:12 is similar to the use of the perfect active participle προηλπικώς in a fragment from the new comedy poet Posidippus (frag. 27.8) from the third century BC. Posidippus compares the plight of a cook who faces a hungry, drunken crowd to that of a general facing the surging mass of enemy combatants. This crowd, he says, has been "anticipating" dinner for fifteen days (ἐκ πέντε καὶ δέχ' ἡμερῶν προηλπικὼς τὸ δεῖπνον). The anticipation of the crowd is on the verge of ending with a satisfying meal, but they are still hungry. The perfect tense allows the reader to view this anticipation closely: it is not anticipation pure and simple but a complex state built up over the course of fifteen days.

9. The thought is therefore similar to that of Rom. 8:19.

II. Blessing God Who Has Blessed His People in Christ (1:3–14)
A. Praise to God for His Grace in Making Believers His People (1:3–6)
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➤ D. Praise to God for the Conversion and Future Salvation of Paul's Readers (1:13–14)

D. Praise to God for the Conversion and Future Salvation of Paul's Readers (1:13–14)

The fourth and final section of the benediction turns directly to Paul's readers to remind them of their conversion and especially of the gift of the Holy Spirit that God gave to them at that time. When they heard and believed the gospel, Paul says, God sealed them by means of the Holy Spirit.

He did this for two reasons. First, the Holy Spirit's seal protects them from the wrath that God will one day pour out on the wicked. Although Paul does not say this explicitly, it is implied in his use of such words as σωτηρία (*sōtēria*, salvation), σφραγίζω (*sphragizō*, seal), and περιποίησις (*peripoiēsis*, saved remnant). In the context of Paul's theology and of the Scriptures that Paul used, these terms speak of protection from the destruction that will come to the wicked on the final day when God judges all people. Second, and more positively, the gift of the Holy Spirit also serves as a down payment on the inheritance that he will give to the remnant he has saved from his wrath. The Spirit's presence with them is a guarantee that when God brings his purposes to an end, he will fully apply to them the redemption that Christ's death has accomplished for them (v. 7).

As with all the other blessings for which Paul praises God in the benediction, these blessings are applied to the believer "in Christ" (v. 13 [2x]; cf. vv. 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 [2x], 11, 12). Paul's readers have heard the gospel of salvation, have believed it, and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit in the sphere of reality that Christ defines. The ultimate purpose for these blessings, moreover, is also identical to the ultimate purpose of the others: God has blessed Paul's readers in this way so that he might receive their praise (v. 14; cf. vv. 6, 12).

The fourth part of the benediction brings the prayer full circle and therefore to a fitting close. Just as the benediction has begun on a note of praise to God for spiritual blessings, so it concludes with a reference to the way God has used the Spirit to bless Paul's readers along with all Christians, and with an expression of praise to God for this spiritual blessing.

Exegesis and Exposition

[13a]. . . in whom you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation . . . , [13b]in whom you also, when you believed, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14]⌜who⌝ is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the ⌜saved remnant⌝, for the praise of his glory.

1:13a Paul begins the fourth and final section of the benediction with the phrase ἐν ᾧ (*en hō*, in whom). This phrase repeats the substance of the ἐν (*en*, in) phrase before it, just as it did in the "hinges" between the first and second section (v. 6b–7a) and the second and third section (vv. 10b–11a).

Paul follows this phrase with a direct reference to his readers for the first time since the greeting in verse 2: "In whom you also . . ." Although his readers were born Gentiles (2:11–12), as we have seen above, Paul probably did not have the contrast between his own Jewishness and their ethnic origins in mind when he turned to them directly in this verse. He is not saying that just as "we Jews" have been made heirs (v. 12), so "you Gentiles" have been sealed by the promised Holy Spirit (v. 13). Rather, he turns directly to his readers in the final section of the benediction to emphasize that the blessings God has given to all Christians, and that Paul has recounted in verses 4–12, belong to them. The sudden appearance of the second-person pronoun is a way of speaking directly to them and urges them to think of "every spiritual blessing" that Paul has described in the previous verses as not merely the possession of all Christians but also as theirs personally.

If we may take 3:13 as a hint that Paul's readers were discouraged, then this shift to a personal address at the end of the benediction may signal the purpose behind this opening prayer of praise. Paul designed it to move his readers' focus away from the potentially discouraging circumstances that plagued both Paul and them and point them instead to the blessings that God has given them in Christ.

The inclusion of his readers "in Christ"—in the sphere in which the blessings he has just described become operative—happened when his readers heard the gospel, believed it, and received God's eschatological seal of the Holy Spirit. The syntax of the phrase that expresses this thought is difficult because it begins with two adverbial clauses that are not joined together by any connecting word. The two clauses, moreover, begin in the same way, almost as if Paul had dictated the first clause and then suddenly started over again with the second clause before completing the phrase with the main verb:

First adverbial clause: in whom you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation,

Second adverbial clause: in whom you also, when you believed,

Main verb: were sealed. . . .

We should probably not try to repair the broken syntax by supplying some verb in the first clause that could then transform it into a complete sentence with a pattern similar to the second clause.[1] This is simply a broken sen-

1. Three verbs have been proposed: ἠλπίκατε (*ēlpikate*, you hoped), ἐκληρώθητε (*eklērōthēte*, you were made heirs), and, most often, ἐστέ (*este*, you are). See the surveys in Alford 1857: 76; and Eadie 1883: 63. Origen (Heine 2002: 101), who read the text in his native tongue, comments on the strange repetition of the second ἐν ᾧ but does not suggest supplying a verb to remedy

tence, or anacoluthon, a common occurrence in the Pauline corpus.[2] Paul began dictating the sentence ("in whom you also, when you heard the word of truth . . .") and then qualified what he had written with a statement that interrupted the main train of thought (". . . the gospel of your salvation . . ."). He then started over using a slightly different phrase ("in whom you also, when you believed, . . .").

This way of taking the syntax clarifies the meaning of the sentence. Both ἀκούσαντες (*akousantes,* when you heard) and πιστεύσαντες (*pisteusantes*, when you believed) are adverbial participles of time. Because they are in the aorist tense, we might at first think that they speak of events that occurred prior to the time of the main verb ἐσφραγίσθητε (*esphragisthēte*, you were sealed), and because the two participles occur one after the other we might think that Paul speaks of a series of events here: his readers heard the gospel, believed it, and then were sealed by the Holy Spirit. If we understand that the sentence is an anacoluthon, however, and that Paul restates the first adverbial clause when he starts the sentence over in the second adverbial clause, then we can see that the two clauses refer not to two different events but to two aspects of the same event: Paul's readers heard the gospel and believed it at the same time. Moreover, since aorist adverbial participles often describe events that happen at the same time as the main verb when that verb is itself in the aorist tense (Wallace 1996: 624–25), Paul probably conceived of all three events as happening at the same time: hearing the gospel, believing it, and receiving the seal of the Holy Spirit all happened at once.

Taking the sentence as an anacoluthon also helps us to see that the phrase ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες is not trying to say that Christ was the object of his readers' faith when they believed the gospel (as true as that is). Since the two phrases are set up in a virtually identical way syntactically, the phrase ἐν ᾧ in the second phrase must refer to the sphere in which Paul's readers believed, just as in the previous clause ἐν ᾧ refers to the sphere in which they heard the gospel. They both heard and believed the gospel "in Christ"—just as every blessing in the benediction comes to Christians "in Christ."

Paul describes the gospel that his readers heard as both τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας (*ton logon tēs alētheias*, the word of truth) and as τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας (*to euangelion tēs sōtērias*, the gospel of salvation). When he attaches the gospel to the concept of truth elsewhere in his letters, he most often intends to draw a contrast between the true version of the gospel and a false version that is competing with it (Gal. 2:5, 14; cf. 2 Cor. 4:2; 2 Tim. 2:15). Such a contrast may have been in the back of his mind when he dictated these words, especially if he had recently written Colossians. That letter was designed to refute a specious philosophy that had melded its teaching with

the situation. This implies that the phrase could not be construed according to the normal rules of Greek syntax.

2. Cf. Rom. 2:17–22; 5:6; 2 Cor. 4:6; Gal. 2:4, 6; 1 Tim. 1:3–4; and the comments of both BDF §467 and Schlier 1957: 68.

the Christian gospel (Col. 2:3, 8), and there Paul had also described the Colossian Christians' conversion as a result of hearing τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (*tō logō tēs alētheias tou euangeliou*, the word of truth, the gospel; Col. 1:5; cf. Eph. 4:14–15).

The gospel that Paul's readers heard not only was the true gospel, but it also brought σωτηρία (*sōtēria*, salvation). Some commentators believe that this is the salvation that believers have already received and that is described more fully in 2:1–10. They then contrast this idea of a completed salvation with salvation in the undisputed Pauline letters, where its ongoing (1 Cor. 1:18; 15:2; 2 Cor. 2:15) and future (1 Thess. 5:8–9; 1 Cor. 3:15; 5:5; Phil. 1:19, 28; 2:12; Rom. 5:9–10; 10:9; 11:26; 13:11) aspects predominate (Muddiman 2001: 78–79; cf. Mitton 1973: 59; Lindemann 1975: 102).[3]

It is not at all clear, however, that Paul intends the phrase τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν (*to euangelion tēs sōtērias hymōn*) to mean "the gospel of your present salvation." Paul has just said in verse 12 that all Christians live in the hope of God's final summation of all things in Christ, and in verse 14 he is about to speak of "our inheritance" and of "the redemption" that await Christians in the future. This makes it likely, therefore, that when he says that his readers have heard and believed "the gospel of salvation," he was thinking of salvation as something for which believers hope and to which they are appointed (cf. 1 Thess. 5:8–9).

13b–14 When his readers heard and believed the gospel, Paul continues, they were "sealed" with the promised Holy Spirit, who is a "down payment" of believers' eschatological inheritance. Paul has already mentioned the Spirit in passing in verse 3, when he spoke of the "spiritual blessings" with which God blessed believers "in the heavenly places in Christ." There he was referring to the blessings he was about to describe in the benediction and implying that they are gifts of the Holy Spirit (Aletti 2001: 56). The gifts themselves, however, rather than their origin with the Spirit, were his main concern there. Now Paul highlights the work of the Spirit much as he has emphasized the work of the Father in verses 4–6 and the work of the Son in verses 7–12 (cf. Cambier 1963: 96).

Paul refers to four aspects of the Spirit's work in verses 13b–14. First, Paul says that his readers, when they believed, "were sealed with the . . . Holy Spirit, who is the down payment of our inheritance" (ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι . . . τῷ ἁγίῳ, ὅ ἐστιν ἀρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, *esphragisthēte tō pneumati . . . tō hagiō, ho estin arrabōn tēs klēronomias hēmōn*). Seals were widely used in Near Eastern antiquity to guarantee the quality, authenticity, or ownership of a piece of property or a legal document. On property, they often gave protection by preventing tampering, and on legal documents, such as a king's edict, a bill of sale, or a marriage contract, the seals of the interested parties provided evidence against forgery (Fitzer, *TDNT* 7:943–48).[4] Authenticity seems to be

3. Yet see Rom. 1:16; 8:24; and 2 Cor. 6:2.

4. Ancient Jewish literature sometimes compares circumcision to a seal (Fitzer, *TDNT* 7:947–48), just as Paul does in Rom. 4:11, and Christian literature beginning in the early second

uppermost in Paul's mind when he uses the image in 2 Cor. 1:22, and he follows it, as here, with a reference to God's Spirit in the hearts of Paul and his coworkers as a "down payment" (ἀρραβών, *arrabōn*). The presence of God's Spirit with them, Paul says, authenticates his ministry among the Corinthians in the face of charges (probably originating with Paul's opponents) that the fluctuations in his travel plans proved he was vacillating and unreliable (2 Cor. 1:12–21; cf. 1 Cor. 9:2).

Here in Ephesians, however, the thought is slightly different. If we allow Paul's other use of the sealing metaphor in Ephesians to guide us to the proper meaning here, then it seems to have a stronger orientation toward the future. In Eph. 4:30 Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as a seal on believers "for the day of redemption" (εἰς ἡμέραν ἀπολυτρώσεως, *eis hēmeran apolytrōseōs*). The idea of marking or sealing certain people for future salvation from the wrath that God will bring upon the wicked appears elsewhere in Jewish literature of Paul's time (Ezek. 9:4; Pss. Sol. 15.6; 2 Esd. [4 Ezra] 6:5; Rev. 7:3–8).[5] This is probably the meaning of the imagery in Eph. 4:30, and if so, then it is probably its meaning here in 1:13–14, where Paul also speaks of future "redemption" (εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν, *eis apolytrōsin*, v. 14). God has chosen his people from among all humanity, who are "by nature children of wrath" (2:3), and set the seal of his Spirit on them to protect them from the wrath that is coming (5:6).

Second, Paul says that the Spirit's presence with believers is not only God's seal on them but also his ἀρραβών, or "down payment," of the "inheritance" of their salvation that awaits them in the future. When Paul wrote Ephesians, ἀρραβών was a term used in Greek legal custom for an amount of money that someone who wanted a service performed paid to the person who would provide the services (Kerr 1988: 92–93). It was an amount smaller than the total cost of the service and functioned as a guarantee that the full amount would be paid once the service was rendered. Accepting the ἀρραβών also served as commitment from the service provider that he or she would follow through on the contract.[6]

Paul had the blessings that God had given and would give to the believer in view in the benediction, and so it is probably the obligation of the person

century makes a similar comparison between baptism and sealing (Herm. *Sim*. 9.16.3–4). Some interpreters have argued that Eph. 1:13 also has baptism in view. Gnilka (1971: 86), for example, believes that the metaphor speaks of baptism itself, and Schlier (1957: 70) suggests that it could refer to "die Handauflegung, . . . durch die das Pneuma vermittelt wurde" (the laying on of hands, . . . through which the Spirit was mediated). If Ephesians was known to the author of the Shepherd of Hermas, then this interpretation may be very ancient. Herm. *Sim*. 9.17.4, with its sequence of hearing (ἀκούσαντα), believing (πιστεύσαντα), and receiving the seal (τὴν σφραγῖδα) of baptism (cf. 9.16.3–4), may echo this text. Although ancient, this interpretation reads too much into the text. Paul says nothing explicit about baptism here, and if he had intended to refer to it as a critical element in his readers' conversion, he probably would have made the reference explicit.

5. See the full footnote on this in Schlier 1957: 70–71.

6. According to Kerr (1988: 93), a service provider who failed to render the promised services was required to repay twice the amount of the ἀρραβών.

who paid the ἀρραβών that he has in mind when he uses the metaphor here.[7] God has given believers the Holy Spirit, therefore, as a sign that he will fulfill his commitment to his people in the future and give them their inheritance. Just as the seal of the Spirit marks God's people for future redemption, so the "down payment" of the Spirit is a sign that God's promise of redemption is reliable. Here the thought is similar to 2 Cor. 5:5, where Paul says that the presence of the Spirit with him and his coworkers is a guarantee that God will one day replace their mortal existence with immortality.

The ἀρραβών metaphor, therefore, is the positive counterpart to the sealing metaphor. The Spirit's sealing function assures believers they will be redeemed rather than destroyed on the day of God's wrath. The Spirit's function as a "down payment" assures them of redemption in the future and of the greatness of that redemption in comparison to the present.

Third, believers have been sealed by the Spirit in Christ (ἐν ᾧ, *en hō*, in whom). Their relationship with Christ is the sphere in which the blessing of the Spirit has come to them. Even here where Paul highlights the Spirit's work, therefore, the centrality of Christ is also prominent. God's people experience the eschatological gift of the Spirit only insofar as they have heard and believed the gospel that redemption from sin comes through the sacrificial death of Jesus (v. 7).

Fourth, the Spirit is τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ (*tō pneumati tēs epangelias tō hagiō*), "the promised Holy Spirit," taking the genitive τῆς ἐπαγγελίας as a genitive of quality (BDF §165; Wallace 1996: 86–88). Here Paul speaks of the fulfillment of the prophetic promise that in the days of Israel's eschatological restoration, God's Spirit would dwell among his people (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26–27; 37:14; Joel 3:1–2 [2:28–29 Eng.]; cf. Gal. 3:14; Acts 1:4; 2:33).[8] This fulfillment has happened "in Christ."

Paul finishes this section of the benediction with the statement that his readers have heard and believed the gospel and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως (*eis apolytrōsin tēs peripoiēseōs*, for the redemption of the saved remnant). Ἀπολύτρωσις (*apolytrōsis*) refers not to the redemption that Christ accomplished through his blood, as it did in verse 7, but to the completion of that redemption in the future. This shift from the past to the future is evident from the connection of redemption here to the metaphor of a "down payment." The "redemption" of believers is metaphorically the full amount of which the Spirit is the "down payment," and so, at this point in the benediction, our "redemption" must lie in the future (cf. 4:30).

God will bring redemption, Paul says, to the περιποίησις (*peripoiēsis*), a term whose meaning is difficult to determine. Most commentators opt

7. *Pace* Lightfoot (1895: 324) and Kerr (1988: 97), who argue that Paul's use of the metaphor also implies that those who have received the "down payment" of the Holy Spirit have an obligation to God that they must fulfill.

8. On the relationship of the Acts passages to the prophetic promises of the Spirit listed here, see Fitzmyer 1998: 259.

to see it as a reference either to God's people as his "possession" or to the "acquisition" of salvation by God's people. The thought would then move in either of two directions, depending on the translation that one chooses. If we choose "possession," then God has given the Holy Spirit as a down payment on the inheritance that believers will receive, and he has done this for the purpose of (or until) the redemption of his own possession. Since the noun περιποίησις has no qualifier to tell us whose possession it is, this reading assumes that the possession is God's and that it refers to God's people as his special possession.

If we choose "acquisition," then God gave the Spirit as the down payment on the eschatological inheritance of God's people until the full redemption, and this redemption is his people's acquisition of the inheritance. This second reading requires that we understand the genitive τῆς περιποιήσεως as an epexegetical genitive—a genitive-case noun that further explains the noun it qualifies—and that we complete its meaning mentally with some such noun as "inheritance" or "salvation" (Schnackenburg 1991: 45, 67; Best 1998: 153).

As I argue in the additional note, however, the common meaning "the saved remnant" for ἡ περιποίησις fits the context here well and is probably the way Paul meant for his readers to understand the term (Bengel 1860: 4.69; LSJ 1384). On this reading, there is no need to supply anything to complete the meaning of the term. Paul simply says that God gave the Holy Spirit to believers in order to seal them against destruction on the final day and for the purpose of redeeming the remnant whom he will graciously save on that day.

In verses 13–14, therefore, Paul says that God has sealed his readers with the promised Holy Spirit for two reasons. First, he has done this to provide them with a down payment on their future inheritance—tangible assurance that they are part of his people whom he will save. Second, he has done this so that they might be redeemed from the outpouring of his wrath on the final day.

Paul concludes not only this fourth section of the benediction, but also the benediction itself, by stating the ultimate purpose for which God has sealed Christians with the Holy Spirit and intends to redeem and save them in the future. He has done this εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ (*eis epainon tēs doxēs autou*, for the praise of his glory). This statement recalls the benediction's opening expression of praise: "Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us . . ." (v. 3). It also recalls the expressions of praise that punctuate the benediction at the conclusions of the first and third subsections. God has predetermined that he will adopt his people as his children through Jesus Christ "for the praise of his glorious grace" (v. 6), and he has predetermined that he will make them his heirs in Christ so that they may exist "for the praise of his glory" (v. 12). This concluding doxology therefore describes not only why God intended to redeem those whom he has sealed in Christ with the Holy Spirit (vv. 13–14) but also why he "blessed [them] with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (v. 3). He did all this "for the praise of his glory."

Summary

In this final part of the benediction, Paul addresses his readers directly to emphasize that all the blessings that come to those who are in Christ, and that he has described in verses 3–12, also belong to them. This happened when they heard the gospel, believed the gospel, and entered the sphere of existence defined by Christ. In that place, the Holy Spirit began his work in their lives. The Holy Spirit sealed Paul's readers, keeping them safe from God's eschatological wrath, and provided them with a guarantee of the inheritance that God has promised to his people. God did all this in order that Paul's readers, as members of God's people, might praise him. Paul has provided a model for this sort of praise in his benedictory prayer.

Additional Notes

1:14. Instead of ὅ (which appears in $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, A, B, F, G, L, P, 6, 81, 104, 365, 1175, 1505, 1739, 1881 [among others], two Old Latin manuscripts, the Syriac Peshitta, and the Latin version of Irenaeus), a number of manuscripts have the nominative masculine relative pronoun ὅς (א, D, Ψ, 33, 𝔐). It is very difficult to decide between the two readings on both the evidence of these witnesses and the stylistic probabilities. The differences in modern editions and commentators reveal the difficulty of the problem. Among the editions, Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort's margin, Vogels, Merk, and NA[25] all opt for ὅς, and among commentators Hoehner argues cautiously for the same reading on the basis of slightly superior manuscript evidence. The evidence for ὅς, he says, has a marginally better geographical distribution than the evidence for ὅ (Hoehner 2002: 241). Metzger (1994: 533) and NA[27] conclude, to the contrary, that the manuscript evidence points toward the originality of ὅ.

Grammatically, either reading works equally well: the neuter relative pronoun agrees in gender with its neuter antecedent πνεύματι, and the masculine relative pronoun agrees in gender with the predicate nominative ἀρραβών. A firm decision is virtually impossible yet also does not affect the meaning of the passage. Since the issue is one simply of grammatical gender, the question of whether the Holy Spirit is a person or a force does not come into play (Wallace 1996: 338). Clearly, if the Holy Spirit can be grieved (4:30), he is a person.

1:14. The term περιποίησις is a "noun of action," derived from the verb περιποιέω, which can mean "preserve," "save up," "obtain," or "procure" in the active voice, and in the middle voice can mean "keep or save for oneself," "acquire." This verb has the meaning "save for oneself" in Luke 17:33 and "acquire" in Acts 20:28 and 1 Tim. 3:13.[9] The noun, by analogy, means "preservation" or "acquisition" (LSJ 1384); when it means "acquisition," it can refer to the act of acquiring something, or to that which is acquired, or when the action of acquiring falls into the background, simply to a "possession." The range of meanings appears in the LXX and in the NT—"preservation" (or "remnant") in 2 Chron. 14:12 (LXX, MT, 14:13 Eng.) and Heb. 10:39; "the act of acquiring" in 2 Thess. 2:14; "a thing acquired" in Hag. 2:9; and possibly, although this is debatable, a "possession" in Mal. 3:17.

Virtually all modern interpreters of Eph. 1:14 discuss the word here as if only two options for understanding it are available.[10] One group believes that the word has the sense of "a thing acquired,"

9. Compare Luke's use of περιποιήσασθαι in Luke 17:33 with his use of σώζω in the virtually identical saying in 9:24.

10. See, e.g., Cambier (1963: 96), who in a footnote mentions the three lexical options—"conservation, acquisition (sens subjectif), propriété"—but discusses the meaning of the term as if only the last two options are possibilities for this passage. In their helpful review of the

a "possession," and that Paul uses it to refer to God's people. They are his "possession," as in Exod. 19:5 (cf. 23:22 LXX), and Paul speaks here of God's eventual redemption of that possession. Often these interpreters point to 1 Pet. 2:9, where the term appears in an allusion to Mal. 3:17 LXX. These interpreters assume that in Mal. 3:17 περιποίησις means "possession."[11]

Unfortunately, in Exod. 19:5 LXX the term is περιούσιος rather than περιποίησις, and as opponents of this view are fond of pointing out, if περιποίησις in Mal. 3:17 and 1 Pet. 2:9 refers to God's possession, it does so not because of any technical meaning for the word as "God's special people" but because the broader context in both cases makes clear that God's people are *his* "possession." In Eph. 1:14, say these interpreters, there is no word such as αὐτοῦ that makes the term refer specifically to *God's* possession.[12] This leaves only the meaning "acquisition" for the term. Paul, then, speaks of "the redemption of the acquisition," and the term refers to "that full and final achievement of salvation, to which the addressees are called through the 'gospel of salvation' and in which they have already received a share" (Schnackenburg 1991: 67).[13] Both ways of understanding περιποίησις assume that Paul (or the author) has expressed himself ambiguously and left his readers to figure out the basic point of the phrase.

It is curious that the common meaning "something preserved" has received so little attention among interpreters. In the eighteenth century, John Albert Bengel (1860: 4.69) read it this way: "Περιποίησις is said of that which remains still, when all other things perish." In modern times, the classical Greek lexicon LSJ also chose this meaning, translating περιποίησις here as "those who are saved" (LSJ 1384). To my knowledge, no other interpreter of Ephesians has read the word in this way.

Despite its rare appearance in the interpretive literature on Ephesians, however, this meaning represents a natural understanding of the term both within the wider context of Greek usage and within the narrower context of Ephesians. Where it appears in Greek literature generally, including the Greek Scriptures, the term frequently refers to the preservation of a remnant in the context of war or some other hardship. The pseudo-Platonic *Definitions* treats the term in the course of discussing words connected with war. "Salvation," it says, "is preservation without harm" (σωτηρία περιποίησις ἀβλαβής; *Def.* 415c, my trans.). As we have seen, this meaning fits 2 Chron. 14:12 LXX, which describes how King Asa and his people routed the Ethiopians "so that there was no preservation among them" (ὥστε μὴ εἶναι ἐν αὐτοῖς περιποίησιν; NETS). Hebrews 10:39 can carry this meaning, as the NRSV translators seem to have recognized with their rendering: "We are not among those who shrink

history of the interpretation of this text, Lyonnet and Sabourin (1970: 116) describe three opinions on the meaning of περιποίησις: the people acquired for God by the blood of Christ (cf. v. 7), an act of acquisition that believers engage in, and God's "most precious possession." If we are thinking of the meaning of the term itself, however, we can collapse the first and second of these interpretations into the single category of those who think the word refers to the action of acquiring something, whether God's acquisition of believers through Christ's redemption or believers' acquisition of an inheritance at the time of their redemption. Once again, that leaves basically two interpretive options.

11. Most interpreters take this approach. See, e.g., John of Damascus, *PG* 95:825; Ellicott 1859: 20; Eadie 1883: 70; Robinson 1904: 148; Percy 1946: 188–89n15; Cambier 1963: 96–97; Lincoln 1990: 41–42; Pokorný 1992: 74; O'Brien 1999: 122; Muddiman 2001: 80; Hoehner 2002: 244; Spicq, *TLNT* 3:100–101; BDAG 804. For the idea that περιποίησις is a technical term meaning "God's special people," see Haupt 1902a: 32; and Gnilka 1971: 87.

12. See, e.g., Abbott 1897: 23; Masson 1953: 148n6; and Best 1998: 153.

13. See also, e.g., Jerome (Heine 2002: 104–5); Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 62–63; Masson 1953: 148; Schlier 1957: 71–72; Best 1998: 152–53.

back and so are lost, but among those who have faith *and so are saved*."[14] The italicized phrase is εἰς περιποίησιν ψυχῆς, literally, "for the preservation of the life." This meaning also works well for 1 Thess. 5:9, although no translations adopt it and commentators do not discuss the possibility—"God did not appoint [ἔθετο] us for wrath but for the preservation which is salvation [εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας] through our Lord Jesus Christ."[15] It even works well in 1 Pet. 2:9, where Peter describes Christians as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, which might be rendered "a people destined for preservation." These people stand in contrast to unbelievers, who are destined (ἐτέθησαν, 2:8) for disobedience and, presumably, condemnation. In Mal. 3:17 LXX, on which 1 Pet. 2:9 is based, the context is also one in which the Lord distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked on a future day of reckoning, and it is the righteous among his people who will be for him on that day a περιποίησιν. Here too the meaning "a saved remnant" fits well.[16]

Whatever we think of the plausibility of this meaning for Mal. 3:17; 1 Thess. 5:9; and 1 Pet. 2:9, it solves the problem of ambiguity in Eph. 1:14 and fits well the broader context of the letter. In 1:13–14, as we have seen, Paul describes his readers as a people who have been sealed, a metaphor that is often used in eschatological contexts to refer to God's protection of the remnant among his people at the time of his judgment. They were sealed, Paul says, when they heard "the word of truth" and believed "the gospel of salvation." If sealing means protection from God's eschatological wrath, then salvation in this context means rescue from that wrath. If these ideas form the backdrop to Paul's language here, then translating εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως "for the redemption of the saved remnant" makes good sense. We no longer need to debate whether the term refers to redemption as an eschatological "acquisition" of believers or to God's people as his "possession." Paul simply says that the Spirit seals believers for salvation so that "those who are saved" might receive redemption.

This interpretation receives some confirmation in 5:6, where Paul, albeit unconsciously, provides a negative counterpart to it. There Paul warns his readers that they should "let no one deceive you with empty talk: because of these things the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience" (5:6). The deception of empty words here stands in contrast to the "the word of truth" that Paul's readers have believed in 1:13, and the wrath of God coming to the disobedient who participate in such deception stands in contrast to the salvation and redemption that belong to the περιποίησις of 1:14.

14. Cf. NIV, NJB, and the similar idiom in Xenophon, *Cyr*. 4.4.10, where Cyrus uses the verb when he speaks to captives taken in war and whom he intends to spare because they have surrendered to his army. He says to them, ἄνδρες, . . . νῦν τε ὅτι ἐπείθεσε τὰς ψυχὰς περιεποιήσασθε ("My men, . . . you have now saved your lives by your submission"; trans. Miller 1914).

15. Taking σωτηρίας as a genitive of apposition.

16. It is true that the Hebrew text of Mal. 3:17 echoes the covenant promise of Exod. 19:5 that if Israel obeys God and keeps his covenant, they will be his "treasured possession" (סְגֻלָּה), but there the LXX uses λαὸς περιούσιος to translate סְגֻלָּה. The translator of Mal. 3:17 may have purposely switched the expression λαὸς περιούσιος for περιποίησις thinking that περιποίησις was more appropriate for a context in which one group is spared in a time of judgment.

II. Blessing God Who Has Blessed His People in Christ (1:3–14)
➤ III. Thanksgiving for Conversion and Intercession for Understanding (1:15–23)
IV. From Children of Wrath to New Creation (2:1–10)
V. From Existence without God to Membership in the People of God (2:11–22)

III. Thanksgiving for Conversion and Intercession for Understanding (1:15–23)

Personal letters in the Greco-Roman world often included a prayer report after the greeting. Sometimes this report was a thanksgiving to the gods, or to a particular god, for the well-being of the letter's authors or recipients.[1] "I give thanks to all the gods if you are in good health yourself and everything else has been satisfactory," says "Dromon" to "Zenon" in a short letter from the mid-third century BC (Hunt and Edgar 1932: 273). About a century later, the author of 2 Maccabees recorded an official letter from the leadership of Judea to the Jewish philosopher Aristobulus that began with a thanksgiving prayer report: "Having been saved by God out of grave dangers we thank him greatly for taking our side against the king" (1:11 NRSV).

Frequently in personal letters an intercessory prayer report follows the greeting, and nearly always these are prayers for the well-being of the recipient. "Before all I pray for your health," reports one letter writer. Another says, "I pray always for your health; every day I make supplication for you before the lord Serapis." Still another, "Before everything I pray for your health and that of my brothers, unharmed by the evil eye, and withal I make supplication for you daily before the lord Serapis."[2] Sometimes ancient Greek letters used both a thanksgiving and an intercessory prayer report after the greeting, and these reports sometimes anticipated the primary theme of the letter.[3]

The letters in the NT Pauline letter corpus often follow this same general pattern. After the greeting, they commonly turn to a thanksgiving prayer report,[4] and this is sometimes followed by an intercessory prayer report.[5]

1. Reports of thanks to a god or the gods are not common in the extant correspondence from antiquity. Schubert (1939: 172–73, 181) suggests that this is because the conditions of intimacy and genuinely shared religious feeling that are common to most thanksgiving prayer reports were rare in private correspondence and even rarer in official letters.

2. Hunt and Edgar 1932: 303, 317, and 319 respectively. The thanksgiving or intercessory prayer report could also occur at other places in the letter besides the beginning. See, e.g., P.Oxy. 1481 (White 1986: 158), where the thanksgiving to the gods comes at the letter's conclusion, and 1 Macc. 12:11, which records an intercessory prayer report in the middle of an official letter. Cf. the comments of Richards 2004: 132n36.

3. See the often-cited letter of Isias to Hephaistion from 168 BC, which can be found in White 1986: 65–66; and Hunt and Edgar 1932: 283. See also the commentary on the letter in both Schubert 1939: 160–63; and Murphy O'Connor 1995: 56–57.

4. See 1 Thess. 1:2–5; 2 Thess. 1:3–4; 1 Cor. 1:4–9; Phil. 1:3–6; Rom. 1:8; Col. 1:3–5; Philem. 4–5; 2 Tim. 1:3–5; cf. 1 Tim. 1:12–14.

5. 2 Thess. 1:11–12; Phil. 1:9–11; Rom. 1:9–12; Col. 1:9–14; Philem. 6.

These reports always anticipate important themes developed in the letter body (Schubert 1939: 180; O'Brien 1977: 262, 271).

Within the Pauline corpus itself, however, the prayer patterns vary widely (see especially O'Brien 1977). In 1 Thessalonians, a reasonable case can be made that, aside from the opening greeting, the thanksgiving prayer report covers the entire first three chapters. This massive thanksgiving report then concludes not merely with an intercessory prayer report but also with an actual intercessory prayer (3:11–13). Second Thessalonians looks similar, but instead of a long thanksgiving section, it has two discrete thanksgiving prayer reports (1:3–4 and 2:13–15), the second of which ends, as in 1 Thessalonians, with an intercessory prayer (2:16–17). In 2 Corinthians, Paul replaces the thanksgiving prayer report with a benediction (1:3–4); after digressing from prayer into a reflection on his suffering in Asia, he concludes the letter opening with a reference to the Corinthians' intercessory prayer for him and eventual thanksgiving to God after he answers their prayers on his behalf (1:11). In Colossians, the intercessory prayer report includes a petition that the Colossians give thanks to God (1:11b–12).

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the prayer pattern at the opening of Ephesians also demonstrates a unique combination of formal elements. Among the Pauline Letters, only Ephesians begins with a benediction, a thanksgiving prayer report, and an intercessory prayer report.[6] The combination of a thanksgiving and intercessory prayer report is reminiscent of Phil. 1:3–11; Col. 1:3–5; and Philem. 4–5. The inclusion of a benediction is reminiscent of 2 Cor. 1:3–4. At the level of form, Eph. 1:3–23 probably comes closest to 2 Cor. 1:3–4, 11, where all three elements (benediction, thanksgiving, intercession) also appear, although the subjects and order of the intercessory and thanksgiving elements are reversed (2 Cor. 1:11). At the level of Paul's use of the prayer report form, Ephesians resembles 1 Thessalonians most closely. In both letters, the first major section alternates between prayer and descriptive material (1 Thess. 1:2–3; 2:13; 3:9; Eph. 1:3–14, 15–19; 3:1, 14–19) and then concludes with prayer (1 Thess. 3:11–13; Eph. 3:20–21).

As is common with Paul's letters, it is difficult to tell in Ephesians precisely where the thanksgiving prayer report ends and the intercessory prayer report begins. Paul says he does not cease giving thanks for the letters' recipients when he remembers them in prayer (1:16), but when he describes his prayers in the following subordinate clause, they turn out to be prayers not of thanksgiving but of intercession (1:17–19).

It is also hard to know where the intercessory prayer report ends and the body of the letter begins. The lengthy relative clause that runs from 1:20 to 1:21 is subordinate to Paul's prayer in 1:19 that his readers might understand

6. Cf. 2 Macc. 1:10–17, where elements of thanksgiving (1:11) and benediction (1:17) are mixed together. This makes it difficult to see how Schubert's claim (1939: 44) can be sustained that the thanksgiving in Ephesians "is superfluous" after the benediction and therefore the mark of a pseudonymous author who wanted "to omit nothing which he considered formally essential in Pauline epistolography" (cf. Schnackenburg 1991: 71).

the great power of God, but it is so long that it seems to leave behind the prayer report and to merge at some point with the main body of the letter. Since Paul returns to prayer in 3:1 and 3:14–21, it seems likely that he did not wish to distinguish carefully between the prayer report and the letter body. In the first major section of the letter (1:3–3:21), he instead moves so easily between actual prayers (1:3–14; 3:1, 14–19; 3:20–21), prayer reports (1:15–19), and theological description (1:20–2:22; 3:2–13) that it becomes difficult to define the literary pattern of the first three chapters in formal, epistolary terms.[7]

Paul's primary concern in 1:15–23 is easier to identify. He begins with a brief report of thanks to God for the "faith" (πίστις, *pistis*) and "love" (ἀγάπη, *agapē*) of the letter's readers (1:15). As is typical of Paul's thanksgiving prayer reports, the mention of faith and love in this part of the letter anticipates the dominant concerns of each major section of the letter. Most of the occurrences of the terms πίστις, πιστός (*pistos*, faithful), and πιστεύω (*pisteuō*, I believe) appear in 1:1–3:21, and most of the occurrences of the terms ἀγάπη, ἀγαπητός (*agapētos*, beloved), and ἀγαπάω (*agapaō*, I love) appear in 4:1–6:20.[8]

Thanksgiving yields to intercession in 1:16b, and Paul becomes more specific about his concerns. He prays that God might open the eyes of his readers' hearts to the hope of God's calling, to their status as God's valuable inheritance, and especially to the immense power that God put into effect for all believers. The first and second petitions of the intercessory prayer report in verse 18 reach back to the benediction. The theme of hope recalls the mention of believers' hope there, the theme of calling is reminiscent of the predestinarian language (vv. 4–5, 11; cf. Rom. 8:28–30), and the theme of inheritance recalls the language of adoption (v. 5) and inheritance (v. 11).

The much longer third petition (v. 19) and the complex relative clause that is attached to it (vv. 20–21) introduce Paul's chief concern in the intercessory prayer report. Paul wants God to open his readers' inner eyes (v. 18) to the work God has accomplished on their behalf through Christ (v. 19). He alludes to Pss. 110:1 and 8:6 to say that God has given Christ victory over all the inimical spiritual beings in the universe, and that he has given Christ, in his capacity as

7. It is also difficult to identify the precise epistolary genre of many of Paul's letters, including Ephesians. They blend the intimate quality of private correspondence, noticeable especially in those with thanksgiving prayer reports (although not as noticeable in Ephesians), with the authoritative quality of official correspondence, obvious from their length, their wide publication, and certain formal elements such as Paul's identification of his apostolic office, his mention of cosenders (although not in Ephesians), and the address of his letters to entire communities. See Schubert 1939: 182; Stirewalt 2003: 25–55; and Richards 2004: 122–40.

8. Prior to 3:21, πίστις and its cognates appear in the letter seven times (1:1, 13, 15, 19; 2:8; 3:12, 17). After 3:21, they appear in the body of the letter only at 4:5, 13 and 6:16. After 3:21, ἀγάπη and its cognates appear twelve times (4:2, 15, 16; 5:1, 2 [2x], 25 [2x], 28 [3x], 33), whereas prior to 3:21 the terms appear only seven times (1:4, 6, 15; 2:4 [2x]; 3:17, 19). In the letter's conclusion, πιστός and ἀγαπητός appear together in a description of Tychicus (6:21; cf. Col. 4:7), and εἰρήνη, ἀγάπη, πίστις, χάρις, and ἀγαπάω show up in the benediction (6:23–24). These concluding occurrences of the two concepts together with other important themes from the letter seem to have a summarizing function similar to that of 1:15.

victor, to the church (vv. 20–22). The church, moreover, is Christ's body and therefore full of Christ, who is full of God (v. 23).

Here Paul anticipates four major themes of the subsequent letter. First, he foreshadows the theme of the church's defeat of the inimical spiritual powers in 2:2, 6; and 3:10 and the military and biblical expressions of that victory in 4:8 (Ps. 68:18) and 6:10–17 (Isa. 11:4–5; 52:7; and 59:17). Second, he anticipates his use of the body metaphor for the church in 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 11–16; 5:22–33. Third, the idea that the church is full of Christ, who is full of God (v. 23), reappears in Paul's claim that God dwells within the ethnically unified church in 2:21–22, that Christ dwells within believers' hearts in 3:17, and that believers are full of God in 3:19. Fourth, he anticipates the theme, already broached in the benediction (1:10–11), that God is powerfully at work in his people to accomplish his purposes for the unity of the universe (3:7, 20).

In sum, the thanksgiving and intercessory prayer report turn out to be an important guide to Paul's primary concerns in the letter. In the thanksgiving prayer report, Paul tells his readers that he is thankful for their faith in the gospel and for the love that represents the outworking of this faith. In broad terms, the rest of the letter is an exploration of the blessings that come to those who have faith in the gospel (1:3–3:21) and the love that believers should show toward one another (4:1–6:20). In the same way, the intercessory prayer report gradually moves into the main subject of the letter and both recapitulates and anticipates the letter's most prominent themes: God's gracious inclusion of the letter's readers among his people by means of their faith in and relationship with Christ (1:3–14; 2:11–22; 3:2–12) and the availability of God's immense power to his people to enable them both to defeat their cosmic enemies (2:1–3; 6:10–20) and to accomplish their important role in God's purposes for his creation (2:10, 15; 3:10; 4:13).

A. Thanksgiving for Faith and Love, and Intercession for Illumination (1:15–19)

In the first part of his thanksgiving and intercessory prayer report, Paul tells his readers that what he has heard about them has led him to unceasing thanksgiving for them whenever he remembers them in prayer. He has heard that they have placed their faith in the gospel and that they are therefore "in the Lord Jesus" (v. 15; cf. vv. 13–14). In particular, he is grateful to hear this because, as he will explain later, God has entrusted him with the special responsibility of proclaiming to the Gentiles that they have been included in the people of God through the gospel (3:2–13). The report of his Gentile readers' faith in the Lord Jesus and of their working out of this faith in love for their fellow believers is therefore appropriate cause for many prayers of thanksgiving (v. 16).

The real burden of this section, however, comes in the form of Paul's intercessory prayer report, which emerges almost imperceptibly out of Paul's expressions of thanks. Paul tells his readers that when he prays for them, he asks God that he might give the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to them. This is not a prayer for wisdom generally but specifically for wisdom related to knowing God (v. 17).

Paul prays, moreover, that this revelation about God might come to the letter's readers as God illumines their inner self ("the eyes of your heart") about three theological truths (v. 18a). Paul expresses these truths in three clauses, each beginning with a form of the interrogative pronoun "what" (τίς, *tis*). He prays that God will grant his readers insight into (1) the hope they have as a result of God's call to be his people (v. 18b), (2) the rich glory they possess in their status as God's own inheritance (v. 18c), and (3) the enormity of the power that God has put into effect for their advantage (v. 19).

This series of three clauses grows in complexity as it progresses. The first clause (v. 18b) is a simple construction in Greek and contains no explicit reference to God's people; such a reference is only implied in the action nouns "hope" and "calling," whose subjects must be the immediately preceding "you." The second clause (v. 18c) moves a step beyond this to make explicit reference to God's people in the concluding prepositional phrase "in the saints." The third clause (v. 19) makes an even more explicit reference to God's people with the longer prepositional phrase "toward us who believe" and the shift from the second-person plural "you" (v. 18a) to the more-inclusive first-person plural "we." In addition, this final clause includes a second prepositional phrase that describes God's power with an elaborate genitive construction.

The length and complexity of this third indefinite clause, and the further elaboration of it in 1:20–23, reveal that this clause contains Paul's primary concern in his intercessory prayers for his readers. It also anticipates an important theme of the entire letter.

Exegesis and Exposition

[15]Because of this, I in particular, after hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and ⌜love⌝ for all the saints, [16]do not cease giving thanks for you when remembering you in my prayers [17]that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, ⌜might give⌝ to you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, [18a]having the eyes of your heart enlightened in order that you might know [18b]what is the hope of his calling, [18c]what is the wealth of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, [19]and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the effect of the might of his strength, . . .

1:15–16 The beginning of Paul's thanksgiving prayer report has seemed unclear to some readers. Does διὰ τοῦτο (*dia touto*, because of this) point backward (most commentators and translations) or forward (NRSV)? Is it perhaps a light rather than logical connective phrase, merely intended to keep the discourse flowing (Best 1998: 158)? If it points backward, does it refer back to the whole benediction (vv. 3–14; e.g., Schnackenburg 1991: 72), only to the last section with its reference to the readers' conversion (vv. 13–14; e.g., Ellicott 1859: 20), or to the whole benediction but with the readers themselves now particularly in mind (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 54)? Moreover, what are we to make of the term κἀγώ (*kagō*) in this context? Although Paul frequently uses the first-person singular in his thanksgiving prayer reports (1 Cor. 1:4; Phil. 1:3; Rom. 1:8; Philem. 4; cf. 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:3), he never uses the emphatic pronoun ἐγώ (*egō*, I) or the contraction κἀγώ (καί + ἐγώ, *kai* + *egō*, also + I) with the verb of thanksgiving.

In this diction some commentators have found hints of a hand other than Paul's. Διὰ τοῦτο κἀγώ seems to be borrowed from διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς (*dia touto kai hēmeis*, because of this we also) in Col. 1:9 (e.g., Muddiman 2001: 82; Sellin 2008: 124). The unusual κἀγώ, moreover, fits with the emphasis in Ephesians on the authority of the great apostle Paul himself (cf. 3:1 and 4:1), an emphasis that most likely comes from an admirer (Lincoln 1990: 54; cf. Hübner 1997: 145).

The phrase, however, is certainly within Paul's stylistic repertoire: it occurs word for word in 1 Thess. 3:5. The emphasis on Paul's apostolic authority, moreover, does not accent that authority generally, but a specific element of Paul's call to be an apostle. God has graciously given to him the role of proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles (3:1, 8), and in this role he has met with suffering, including the imprisonment he experiences as he writes this letter (3:13; 4:1; 6:20). First-person comments on this element of Paul's apostolic

call are not unusual within the undisputed Pauline letters (Rom. 11:13–14; 15:14–16, 31).

This theme that God had granted Paul a special gift of proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles (3:8) may hold the key to understanding how the thanksgiving prayer report and the benediction are related to each other. The phrase διὰ τοῦτο points backward to Paul's description in verses 13–14 of the conversion of his readers after they have heard the gospel, and the term κἀγώ refers to Paul's particular interest, as the apostle to the Gentiles, in their conversion. Because his readers have heard and believed the gospel and have been sealed with the Holy Spirit, Paul says, "I in particular" have reason to give unceasing thanks in my prayers.[1]

Paul began thanking God for his readers after he heard (ἀκούσας, *akousas*) of their faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints. In this reference only to "hearing" of his readers' faith and love, some commentators see a sign that the letter cannot have been addressed to Ephesus (e.g., E. Scott 1930: 152) or is pseudepigraphic (e.g., Sellin 2008: 124).[2] Assuming that Paul really did address the letter to Christians in Ephesus, where, according to Acts, he had spent between two and three years (Acts 19:8, 10; 20:31), talk of only hearing of his readers' faith and love with no mention of his personal relationship to them seems odd. The oddity only deepens with further hints later in the letter that Paul and his readers have little personal knowledge of each other (3:2; 4:21; 6:21–24).

These expressions of distance from his readers are more natural, however, if Paul wrote Ephesians after an absence from the city of over seven years and near the end of almost five years of imprisonment (Acts 24:27; 27:9; 28:11, 30). Much had probably changed even in the house churches that had some connection to his original ministry, and some Christians in the city had never had more than a loose connection to his ministry there (Acts 18:24–28; cf. Trebilco 2004: 115–27). By the time Paul wrote Ephesians, he could have known many, perhaps most, of his readers only by hearing of them from someone else.

The report that Paul received brought news of his readers' πίστις (*pistis*, faith) and ἀγάπη (*agapē*, love). Both are qualities that also appear in the thanksgiving prayer reports of Colossians (1:4) and Philemon (v. 5). This could mean that someone writing in Paul's name leaned heavily on Col. 1:4 and Philem. 5 when writing these words (e.g., Mitton 1951: 65; Gnilka 1971: 88; Lincoln 1990: 49; Hübner 1997: 144–45; Sellin 2008: 124–25). It seems at least equally

1. The more common translation "I also" for κἀγώ does not work here since the notion that Paul also gives thanks in addition to his readers or some other person or group is unsupported by the surrounding context and thus reads too much into the word. On this, see the still-valuable comments of Eadie 1883: 72–73. For the translation of κἀγώ as "I in particular," see BDAG 487, although it does not adopt this meaning for Eph. 1:15, preferring instead to see the contraction simply as a synonym for ἐγώ.

2. The peculiarity of the remark was already discussed in the mid-fifth century. Theodoret comments, "From this remark some commentators surmised that the divine apostle wrote the letter without having yet laid eyes on them" (R. Hill 2001: 2.36).

likely, however, that Paul wrote Ephesians at about the same time as Colossians and Philemon and used similar language in his thanksgiving prayer reports in each letter. A close comparison of the three letters at this point reveals exactly the kind of agreement in substance but difference in specific wording that one would expect if a single author wrote all three letters at about the same time but with no concern to repeat the wording of one letter in another. At the same time, the small differences in wording between the three are not what one would expect if the author of Ephesians were trying to follow Colossians.[3]

First, Paul gives thanks for the faith that his readers have placed ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ (*en tō kyriō Iēsou*, in the Lord Jesus). Grammatically, this phrase could mean either that the Lord Jesus is the object of his readers' faith (that they have placed their trust in him) or that the Lord Jesus is the sphere of his readers' faith (that they exercise faith as people who are "in Christ"). In ancient Jewish and Christian literature, words that refer to believing and to faith sometimes express the object of that faith with an ἐν clause (e.g., Ps. 105:12 LXX [106:12 MT, Eng.]; Jer. 12:6 LXX; Sir. 32:21; Mark 1:15; John 3:15; Ign. *Phld*. 8.2), but when faith terminology together with an ἐν clause that has Christ Jesus as its object shows up in the Pauline corpus, the construction most often describes the sphere in which faith operates (Gal. 5:6; 1 Tim. 1:14; 3:13; 2 Tim. 1:13; 3:15; Lincoln 1990: 55). In 1:1 and 13 Paul had used the phrases πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (*pistois en Christō Iēsou*, believers, in Christ Jesus) and ἐν ᾧ . . . πιστεύσαντες (*en hō . . . pisteusantes*, in whom . . . , when you believed) respectively to refer to the sphere in which his readers had exercised their faith, and this, together with the typical Pauline usage, probably means that Paul had the sphere rather than the object of his readers' faith uppermost in mind here also (Lincoln 1990: 55).

Still, we should be careful not to make the separation between sphere and object too watertight. If Paul wrote the thanksgiving prayer report in Philemon at roughly the same time that he composed the prayer reports in Colossians and Ephesians, then the distinction seems to be relatively unimportant to him. In Philem. 5 he unambiguously gives thanks that his readers have put their faith in Christ (τὴν πίστιν, ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν, *tēn pistin, hēn echeis pros ton kyrion Iēsoun*, the faith that you have in the Lord Jesus). It would be very difficult to make a convincing case that something in the historical context of Philemon drove Paul to emphasize the object of his readers' faith whereas something in the context of Col. 1:4 or Eph. 1:15 led him

3. Why would the author of Ephesians, if he were following Colossians, have expressed the second-person-plural possessive with the phrase καθ' ὑμᾶς rather than with the simple genitive ὑμῶν? Why, with his greater interest in the connection between Gentile Christianity and Israel, would he have replaced the Χριστῷ of Col. 1:4 with κυρίῳ? And why would he have described his readers' "love for all the saints" with the attributive use of a prepositional phrase rather than with a relative clause? Explanations can be offered for these changes (see Sellin 2008: 124–25), but it is at least as reasonable to think of the same author producing all three letters as it is to think of the author of Ephesians making the minute editorial decisions that these changes would involve.

to emphasize the sphere of their faith. Paul probably thought he was saying roughly the same thing in each of the three letters, and so here in Eph. 1:15 Paul probably intends to affirm both that his readers trusted Christ and that they are in Christ by faith.

Paul also gives thanks for "the love" his readers have "for all the saints" (ἡ ἀγάπη ἡ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους, *hē agapē hē eis pantas tous hagious*). Ἅγιοι (*hagioi*, saints) here, as usual in Ephesians, refers to all Christians (1:18; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18), and love is a theme of particular interest to Paul in this letter: God's love for believers (2:4; 3:17; 6:23), Christ's love for believers (3:19), the love of believers for Christ (6:24), and especially the love of believers for each other (1:4; 4:2, 15, 16; 5:2, 25, 28, 33). Just as he does elsewhere in his opening thanksgiving prayer reports, therefore, Paul congratulates his readers for displaying precisely the quality that he will urge them later in the letter to cultivate.[4]

1:17 The ἵνα that begins verse 17 introduces the content of his prayers for his readers.[5] They are prayers not only of thanksgiving for their faith and love but also of intercession. Paul begins his description of the intercessory element of his prayers with a twofold description of God, both parts of which echo the letter's opening benediction.

First, the God to whom Paul prays is ὁ θεὸς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (*ho theos tou kuriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou*, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ), just as he is in the benediction (1:3). As with the benediction, so with the intercessory prayer report, the phrase demonstrates the centrality of Jesus Christ to God's purposes.

Second, God is also ὁ πατήρ (*ho patēr*, the Father), just as in the benediction (cf. Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 1:3; 11:31; 1 Pet. 1:3), but now, rather than the Father of Jesus, he is ὁ πατὴρ τῆς δόξης (*ho patēr tēs doxēs*, the Father of glory).[6] Here Paul uses the term "Father" metaphorically to mean that the God to whom he prays is the origin and defining example of glory. The expression resembles 2 Cor. 1:3, where God is the "Father" of mercies, and James 1:17, where he is the "Father" of lights (Best 1998: 161). The glory that God displays is the splendor or brightness that is often characteristic of God's power, authority, and honor in the OT and that he graciously shares with his people (*HALOT* 1:457–58; BDAG 257).[7] As the benediction has shown, it is for the praise of God's glory (1:12, 14), shown especially in his grace (1:6), that God has made his people heirs (1:12) and provided them with a future inheritance (1:14).

4. Cf., e.g., 1 Thess. 1:3; 3:5, 6, 10, 12; 4:9–10, 13; 1 Cor. 1:4–8; 12:1–14:40; Phil. 1:3–4; 4:10–20; Rom. 1:12; 14:19; 15:5, 7, 14.

5. Here, then, ἵνα functions not as the introduction to a purpose clause but merely as a conjunction meaning "that" (BDAG 476; Wallace 1996: 475).

6. Something similar happens in 2 Cor. 1:3, where Paul begins his opening benediction with the statement Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and then continues by dividing the designations θεός and πατήρ between two further descriptions: ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν καὶ θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως.

7. See, e.g., Exod. 24:17; Isa. 4:2; 35:2; 60:2, 13, where in each instance the LXX uses δόξα or δοξάζω.

Paul prays that this glorious God, who has shown his grace to his people in Jesus Christ, might give to his readers πνεῦμα σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως (*pneuma sophias kai apokalypseōs*, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation). Is Paul praying here that God might give to his readers a "disposition" of wisdom and revelation (see, e.g., Abbott 1897: 28; Westcott 1906: 22; Swete 1909: 234)? He can certainly use the term πνεῦμα in this way in other places, speaking sometimes of "a spirit of gentleness" (πνεύμα . . . πραΰτητος, *pneuma . . . praytētos*, 1 Cor. 4:21; cf. Gal. 6:1), "a spirit of slavery" (πνεῦμα δουλείας, *pneuma douleias*, Rom. 8:15), or "a spirit of cowardice" (πνεῦμα δειλίας, *pneuma deilias*, 2 Tim. 1:7).[8] Here in Ephesians he can refer in a similar way to "the spirit of your mind" (τὸ πνεύμα τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν, *to pneuma tou noös hymōn*, 4:23), and there is precedent for the use of the phrase πνεῦμα σοφίας in this way in the OT and other Jewish literature extant during Paul's era (e.g., Deut. 34:9; Wis. 7:7).

The trouble for this reading comes with the genitive ἀποκαλύψεως. What could Paul mean by a "spirit of revelation"? Since God is the one who gives revelation to people, the phrase seems virtually unintelligible as a reference to the human spirit (Fee 1994: 676; Best 1998: 163). In addition, the only other place in Ephesians where the term πνεῦμα and the concept of "revelation" come together is 3:4–5, and there God's Spirit reveals "the mystery of Christ" to apostles and prophets (ἀπεκαλύφθη τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ προφήταις ἐν πνεύματι, *apekalyphthē tois hagiois apostolois autou kai prophētais en pneumati*; cf. Lincoln 1990: 57). These considerations weigh heavily in favor of taking πνεῦμα here in 1:17 as a reference to God's Spirit. Paul is saying that he asks God in prayer to give his readers "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation."[9]

This understanding of the phrase, however, also encounters a problem: Paul has just emphasized that his readers have already been sealed with the Holy Spirit (1:13). If this is so, then in what meaningful sense can Paul pray that God might give them the Spirit (Swete 1909: 234)? This is a real interpretive difficulty, but since Paul so clearly connects God's Spirit with revelation elsewhere in the letter, it seems most likely that, despite this difficulty, he refers to God's Spirit here. If this is correct, then Paul requests not that God would give the Spirit to his readers for the first time but that God would awaken them to the Spirit's role of revealing wisdom and revelation to them (cf. Fee 1994: 676n55).

Paul makes explicit the theocentric aspect of both the wisdom and the revelation that he prays God would give his readers with the phrase ἐν ἐπιγνώσει

8. Westcott (1906: 22) gives a much longer list of the occurrences of πνεῦμα in similar constructions and claims that they all refer to "the influence and temper" that allows a certain "principle or power or feeling or characteristic" to become effective in the person. Many of the references he lists, however, probably refer to the Holy Spirit rather than to a human spirit.

9. Cf. Isa. 11:2, where "the spirit of the Lord" rests on the coming Davidic king and is further identified with "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord" (NRSV). As Fee (1994: 675) says, the "spirit" here is clearly the Spirit of God.

αὐτοῦ (*en epignōsei autou*, in the knowledge of him). Some interpreters have thought this clause gives the means "by" which the wisdom and revelation come (e.g., Haupt 1902a: 36), and others have attached it to the first part of verse 18 so that Paul prays for the enlightenment of his readers "in the knowledge of him" (e.g., Abbott 1897: 28). The most natural reading grammatically and contextually, however, takes it as a description of the sphere of knowledge with which Paul's prayers are concerned (e.g., Ellicott 1859: 23–24; Hoehner 2002: 259). He prays not for knowledge generally but that God's Spirit, who reveals wisdom and understanding to God's people, might reveal the knowledge of God to the believers who read this letter.[10]

1:18a

Paul continues his prayer report with a phrase whose grammar is difficult to construe. He clearly refers to the enlightenment of his readers' inner being, but is this a further request in addition to the gift of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, or does the enlightenment of the inner being in some way describe how that gift will be given? Since the participle πεφωτισμένους (*pephōtismenous*, enlightening) is accusative, we might at first think that it supplies a second direct object, in addition to the πνεῦμα of verse 17, for the verb δώῃ (*dōē*, may give). Paul would then be praying that that his readers would receive (1) the gift of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation and (2) the gift of enlightenment (e.g., Best 1998: 164–65). If this were Paul's meaning, however, we would expect a καί (*kai*, also) before πεφωτισμένους to make clear that he wanted it to function as the beginning of a clause that names the second direct object of δώῃ (Lincoln 1990: 47).

It is more likely, therefore, that πεφωτισμένους modifies δώῃ adverbially and describes what will happen when God gives the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to Paul's readers: the eyes of their heart will be enlightened. This enlightenment will, in turn, prepare them to know the hope of God's calling (v. 18b), the immense glory of his inheritance among the saints (v. 18c), and the massive power he has used for the benefit of believers (v. 19).

If this is the correct reading of πεφωτισμένους, however, why is it in the accusative rather than the dative case? Normal rules of Greek syntax lead us to expect that the case of the participle will agree with the case of its subject, and in this instance the subject of πεφωτισμένους is the dative ὑμῖν that precedes it. The nineteenth-century grammarian G. B. Winer offered a satisfactory explanation for this long ago. "If a sentence is continued by means of participles," he observed, "these, when at a distance from the governing verb, not unfrequently [*sic*] assume an abnormal case."[11] In this instance, πεφωτισμένους has assumed the accusative case because it is a long way from the main verb δώῃ with its object ὑμῖν and because in the purpose clause

10. Cf. the use of ἐπίγνωσις in Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9–10; and Philem. 6. Each of these statements, like Eph. 1:17, appears in the intercessory prayer report of a captivity epistle. On this, see O'Brien 1999: 133.

11. Winer 1881: 572. See examples in Eph. 1:18; 4:1–2; Col. 2:2; 3:16.

for which πεφωτισμένους prepares the way, the case of ὑμῖν switches to the accusative form ὑμᾶς.

When Paul speaks of the enlightenment of the eyes of his readers' hearts, he uses imagery that was common in both the Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds for gaining religious knowledge and insight. Ovid describes a mystic from Samos who could not see the gods with his physical eyes but "still approached them with his thought" and "feasted" on them "with the inner eye" (*oculis ea pectoris*; *Metam*. 15.60; *TNTGH* 2.1:596). In the *Corpus hermeticum* (4.11b; cf. 7.1a) Hermes tells his son Tat that he should gaze "with the eyes of your heart" (τοῖς τῆς καρδίας ὀφθαλμοῖς, *tois tēs kardias ophthalmois*) on the likeness of God that Hermes has painted for him in his discourse.[12] The Qumran *Community Rule* instructs the priests to bless the community with the prayer that God may "illuminate your heart with the discernment of life" (1QS 2.3, trans. García Martínez and Tigchelaar 1997).

Later Paul will speak of his readers' conversion as a movement from darkness to light (5:8–14; cf. 4:18, 20; Col. 1:13). Here in 1:18a, however, he probably does not have in mind his readers' conversion (*pace* Lincoln 1990: 58), still less their baptism (*pace* Schlier 1957: 80–81). Instead, he is thinking of the work of God's Spirit within his readers to help them understand both what God intends for them as his people and the power that God has made available to them.

1:18b Paul expresses the content of the knowledge that he prays his readers will gain in three indefinite clauses, each more elaborate than the one preceding it. The first two of these clauses pick up themes that appeared in the benediction. The final clause (in v. 19), separated from the first two by καί, introduces the new theme of the mighty power of God that is available to Paul's readers in the present. Paul will explain this theme more fully in the long relative clause and concluding sentence of the intercessory prayer report (vv. 20–23).

First, Paul prays that his readers will understand the ἐλπίς (*elpis*, hope) that God's κλῆσις (*klēsis*, calling) gives them. In the NT, the concept of "calling" is especially characteristic of the Pauline literature (BDAG 549; Schmidt, *TDNT* 3:491–92), which makes clear that the believer's call comes at God's initiative and stands in close connection with God's sovereign choice of his people (Rom. 11:29). It originates, therefore, in God's grace and prior decision (Rom. 8:28–30; 2 Tim. 1:9). Those who are called must, nevertheless, live in a way that is worthy of this calling (2 Thess. 1:11), and their calling will be fully realized only in the future (Phil. 3:14). The concept appears three times in Ephesians, once here in 1:18 and then again in 4:1 and 4:4. These three occurrences mesh neatly with the use of the idea elsewhere in the Pauline literature. In 1:18 and 4:4 "calling" is connected

12. Cf. the expression ἠνεῴχθησαν ἡμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ τῆς καρδίας in 1 Clem. 36.2 (cf. 59.3), which may (Hoehner 2002: 261) or may not (Best 1998: 165) reflect a dependence on Ephesians.

with hope, emphasizing its future fulfillment, and in 4:1 Paul admonishes his readers that they must walk in a way that is worthy of the calling they have received.

The calling of God, Paul says, gives rise to ἐλπίς. For Paul, "hope" does not involve an uncertain expectation that things might turn out well, but a firm conviction, against all appearances to the contrary (Rom. 4:16–18), that God will be gracious to his people because of what he has already accomplished for them in Christ (Rom. 5:5; cf. Eph. 1:12; 2:12–13). In Colossians, Paul is so certain that the Christian's hope will be realized that he can describe it as in some sense already laid up for believers in heaven (1:5; cf. 1 Pet. 1:3). When Paul speaks of "the hope of [God's] calling" here in 1:18b, therefore, he describes something that, although future and therefore invisible, arises from God's call and is bound to happen (cf. Rom. 8:24–25). Paul's readers have this hope (1:12), but Paul prays that the Spirit will illumine the eyes of their heart so that they might see it clearly.

1:18c

Second, Paul prays God would give his readers an understanding of their status as God's very glorious inheritance. In the benediction Paul has already said that his readers, as God's adopted children, are his heirs (1:5, 11) and have been sealed with the Holy Spirit as a down payment of their coming inheritance (1:14). Now we learn that God too has an inheritance, and it is his people[13]—οἱ ἅγιοι (*hoi hagioi*, the saints), as Paul calls them (cf. 1:1, 15; 2:19; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18).[14] In a similar way, the benediction had emphasized the glory of God and of his grace (1:6, 12, 14), and Paul has just described God as the Father, or origin, of glory (1:17). Now we learn that believers too are glorious; indeed, they have a wealth of glory.[15] Paul wants his readers to

13. Cf. the LXX of, e.g., Deut. 32:9; 1 Sam. 10:1; 26:19; 2 Sam. 14:16; 20:19; 21:3; 1 Kings 8:53 [8:12–13 MT, Eng.], 51; 2 Kings 21:4; Pss. 28:9; 33:12; 78:62, 71; 94:14; 106:40; Isa. 19:25; 47:6; Joel 2:17; Mic. 7:18. Also see Add. Esth. C (13:15–17); F (10:12); Sir. 24:12; Pss. Sol. 14.5.

14. Some commentators (e.g., Schnackenburg 1991: 75; Pokorný 1992: 79–80; Best 1998: 167–68; MacDonald 2000: 218) believe that οἱ ἅγιοι here refers to heavenly beings with whom the readers of the letter are, or will be (Sellin 2008: 133), spiritually united. In the Judaism of Paul's time, the term could certainly refer to "holy ones" in the heavenly world (Ps. 88:6, 8 LXX; Sir. 42:17; Tob. 12:15; Jub. 31.14; 1 En. 1.9; 12.2; 14.23; 39.5; 47.2; 57.2; 61.10, 12; cf. Dan. 8:13; Tob. 11:14; Jude 14), and Paul may use it this way in 1 Thess. 3:13. The Qumran community offers precedent for thinking that God's people on earth dwell in the company of such beings (1QH^a 3.10; 11.21–22; 1QM 12.1–2, 4), and in 1QS 11 the speaker describes how his "eyes" have observed "wisdom, . . . knowledge and prudent understanding," that these have been "a well of strength," and that the community to which he belongs has "an inheritance in the lot of the holy ones." The "holy ones" here are then defined as "the sons of the heavens" to whom the earthly community is united (lines 5–8, trans. García Martínez and Tigchelaar 1997). Despite these significant similarities with the language of Ephesians, we should probably understand Paul's use of οἱ ἅγιοι here in 1:18 through the lens of his use of the term in 1:1; 3:18; 4:12; 5:3; and 6:18, and in those places it must refer to earthly Christians. See also Lincoln 1990: 60; Aletti 2001: 99; and Muddiman 2001: 86.

15. The phrase ὁ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ, with its string of genitives, is similar to the phrase ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ in 1:6. Like that phrase, this one has the rhetorical effect of slowing the discourse and lending solemnity to the ideas it expresses.

know, therefore, that they are of great value to God: they are rich in glory and they are his inheritance.[16]

1:19 Third, Paul prays that they will understand the vast magnitude of God's power and that God has put this power into effect for the advantage of all believers. He lends solemnity and emphasis to this thought by piling up words for power in two phrases.

In the first phrase, he refers not simply to God's power but to τὸ ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ (*to hyperballon megethos tēs dynameōs autou*, the surpassing greatness of his power). The term ὑπερβάλλον means "surpassing," "outstripping," "excelling," "exceeding all bounds," and even, in a negative sense, "overbidding," "excessive" (LSJ 1860). Μέγεθος (*megethos*) can simply denote "magnitude," "size," or "height" (LSJ 1089), and this is its most frequent meaning in the LXX (1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Kings 6:23; 7:21; 2 Kings 19:23; Ezek. 19:11; 31:3, 5, 10, 14). Often, however, the term means "greatness" or "strength" with the connotation that the measurement of the strength to which it refers is very great (cf. BDAG 624–25). It appears twice in the LXX in prayers that God would use the "might" or "strength" of his arm to defeat the enemies of his people (Exod. 15:16; 2 Macc. 15:24), and as the context will show (Eph. 1:20–23), this is the sense in which Paul thinks of God's might here. Paul therefore could simply have spoken of "the greatness of his power" (τὸ μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ), but he wanted to place special emphasis on the enormous size of God's power and so instead says that God's power is surpassingly great.

The second phrase is a prepositional construction that begins with κατά (*kata*, according to) and its object ἐνέργειαν (*energeian*, effect) and then further qualifies ἐνέργειαν with two synonyms for this word in the genitive case. The whole phrase qualifies the term δυνάμεως and describes the norm against which the "surpassing greatness" of God's "power" should be measured.[17] God's power should be calculated κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ (*kata tēn energeian tou kratous tēs ischyos autou*, according to the effect of the might of his strength). Greek philosophers distinguished between δύναμις (*dynamis*), which they understood as potentiality or capacity, and ἐνέργεια (*energeia*), which they viewed as the outworking of this potentiality (Urmson 1990: 47). In the rest of the letter, there is some evidence that Paul distinguished between the two terms in a similar way when he used them together (3:7, 20; cf. Col. 1:29), and such a distinction fits well here. We should keep in mind, however, that Paul is probably also preparing for his statement in 1:21 that God has placed Christ over every δύναμις, meaning a powerful being. There

16. The thought is similar to that of 1 Clem. 29, which speaks of God as "our gentle and compassionate Father, who has made us his chosen portion [ἐκλογῆς μέρος] for himself" and then quotes Deut. 32:8–9, which speaks of Israel as God's "inheritance" (κληρονομία); cf. Deut. 4:34.

17. On this use of κατά, see BDAG 512, and on the appropriateness of this meaning here, see Hoehner 2002: 269.

it will become clear that God's subjection of the δυνάμεις (*dynameis*, powers) to Christ is one way in which his own δύναμις (potential power) has become ἐνέργεια (effective power).

It is also possible to assign distinct meanings to κράτος (*kratos*) and ἰσχύς (*ischys*) and then to think of Paul as saying something like "the potential power of God can be measured by the norm of the effective power of his inherent ability to overcome resistance."[18] We probably do more justice to Paul's intentions in this complex genitive construction, however, if we resist the temptation to parse the logic of the phrase and the meaning of its terms precisely. Where the phrase "the might of his power" or something similar appears elsewhere in Jewish and early Christian literature, it is simply a full way of speaking of the greatness of God's power (cf. 1QS 11.19–20; 1QH^a 12.32; 23.8; Isa. 40:25–26 LXX; 1 Clem. 27.5), and that is probably how we should take the similar phrase here.[19] Paul wants his readers to understand the magnitude of God's power, and he prays that God might open his readers' eyes to this spiritual reality.

Paul's ultimate purpose in describing the greatness of God's power, however, is to inform his readers that this power is εἰς ἡμᾶς τοὺς πιστεύοντας (*eis hēmas tous pisteuontas*, for us who believe). He uses εἰς in this phrase as a substitute for the dative of advantage: God's power, he says, is for the advantage of believers (BDAG 290). Paul's sudden switch from the second-person-plural "you" (vv. 16, 17, 18) to the first-person-plural "we/us" emphasizes the inclusiveness of this thought; there are no exceptions. God has placed at the disposal of all believers, both Paul and his readers, the great power that Paul has just described in general terms (Best 1998: 168). Now, in verses 20–23 he will show his readers precisely how God has exercised his great power on their behalf.

Summary

In 1:15–19 Paul's praise of God for the salvation of his readers through their hearing and believing the gospel gives way to thanksgiving to God for the report Paul has heard of their sound commitment to the gospel. This thought, in turn, becomes intercession on their behalf. Paul's thanksgiving was motivated by his particular interest, as apostle to the Gentiles, in the genuineness of his Gentile readers' conversion. His intercession for them was probably motivated by their discouragement (3:13) and is Paul's primary concern in his prayer report. Paul's intercessory prayer for his readers focuses on his request that the Spirit might reveal the knowledge of God to them. He is concerned that they understand, in particular, three theological truths: (1) that they have a firm hope for a bright, eternal future

18. Distinguishing carefully between the meanings of κράτος and ἰσχύς in this passage has a long interpretive history. See, e.g., Calvin 1965: 135; Alford 1857: 82; Ellicott 1859: 26–27; Abbott 1897: 31; and Westcott 1906: 25.

19. Cf. Theodoret (R. Hill 2001: 2.37; *PG* 82:517), "This is surely the reason that the divine apostle is quite carried away [ὑπεραγασθείς]: he first praises the surpassing greatness of his power, then the operation of the power of his might; and he looks for terms capable of expressing the baffling character of the reality."

because God has called them to be his people; (2) that, as God's people, they are his glorious inheritance; and (3) that God has put his vast power into effect for their benefit. Paul is especially concerned that God should grant his readers an understanding of this third theological truth, which is so important that Paul explains it further in an elaborate relative clause (1:20–23) that concludes his intercessory prayer report and that we will examine in the next section.

Additional Notes

1:15. The question of whether Paul included a reference to love in verse 15 or spoke only of faith in the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints is one of the letter's more difficult textual problems. The earliest and best witnesses to the letter's text omit the reference to love and have only τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους. These include 𝔓[46], א, A, B, P, 33, 1739, 1881, 2464, Origen, Jerome (who followed Origen's commentary closely), and a number of Bohairic witnesses.

This reading is also the most difficult to understand and therefore can explain most easily how the construction τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην τὴν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους arose. Scribes who were puzzled by what "faith toward all the saints" might mean may have relied on Col. 1:4 (ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχετε εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους) and Philem. 5 (ἀκούων σου τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν, ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους) to reshape Eph. 1:15 so that it too referred to both faith in the Lord Jesus and love toward all the saints. The reading in the minuscule manuscripts 81, 104, 326, 365, and 1175 (τὴν ἀγάπην εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους), and the reading in the uncials D, F, and G (τὴν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους ἀγάπην), may be even more stylistically pleasing attempts to accomplish the same goal. Best (1998: 169) was convinced by this evidence and accepted the shorter reading as what Paul actually wrote (cf. Barth 1974: 146–47).

The problem with this otherwise sensible approach becomes clear when we try to interpret the phrase τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους. The grammar is clear enough: the second τήν puts the prepositional phrase εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους into the attributive position with respect to πίστιν, and so the phrase refers to the readers' faith. This faith, then, is both "in the Lord Jesus" and "toward all the saints." Is Paul saying that his readers exercise faith toward all the saints?

So far in Ephesians, πίστις has always referred to the trust that Paul's readers have exercised in the sphere, or spiritual context, of Christ Jesus. In both 1:1 and 1:13 they have placed their trust in the gospel, and they have done this "in Christ Jesus" or "in Christ." The first reference to faith in the short text of 1:15 fits perfectly within this understanding of faith: Paul has heard of the trust that his readers have placed in the gospel as people who are "in the Lord Jesus" (cf. Col. 1:4a). If we accept this as the proper understanding of the phrase τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ, however, then the faith that Paul's readers have "toward all the saints" would also have to be this kind of trust. Paul would be thankful for the report that his readers trust both the gospel and one another. Unless we take Rom. 1:12 (συμπαρακληθῆναι ἐν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ) as a reference to mutual trust in one another, which is unlikely, there is no precedent in the Pauline literature for using πίστις in this way. In the New Testament and early Christian literature, πίστις in the sense of "trust, confidence, and faith" is "directed toward God and Christ, their revelations, teachings, promises, their power and readiness to aid" (BDAG 819).

Best (1998: 160) believes that we should interpret πίστις not as "trust" but as "loyalty," and Barth (1974: 146–47) similarly thinks that we should understand πίστις here as something close to "love."

This makes good sense in itself (Paul's readers would then be loyal both to Christ and to one another, or showing love to both Christ and one another), but it does not seem to agree with the use of faith as a concept in 1:1 and especially in the very close 1:13.

Because of this interpretive difficulty, it seems best to adopt (with some hesitation) the longer reading of the text as original. This longer reading appears in the majority of Greek manuscripts, the entire Latin tradition, the seventh-century Syriac version translated by Thomas of Harkel, the Sahidic version, and a number of Bohairic witnesses. In addition, it is the reading of the second corrector of א (working in about the seventh cent.), the first corrector of D (working in the sixth–seventh cent.), and Ψ (from the eighth–ninth cent.). Although these witnesses are neither as early nor as generally reliable as the witnesses to the shorter reading, they are numerous and geographically widespread.

How did the shorter reading arise? A scribe's eye may have skipped from the first to the second τήν in the phrase τὴν ἀγάπην τὴν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους, thus leaving out the crucial terms τὴν ἀγάπην (Abbott 1897: 24; Metzger 1994: 533). The two variations of the longer reading found in 81, 104, 326, 365, and 1175 (τὴν ἀγάπην εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους) and in D, F, and G (τὴν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους ἀγάπην) may simply be attempts to improve on the style of the longer reading by leaving out a redundant article (Metzger 1994: 533; Lincoln 1990: 47).

1:17. The form rendered δώῃ in NA[27] is in the subjunctive mood. Since the ι subscript would not have appeared in the earliest texts of Ephesians, however, we might just as easily read δῴη as δώῃ. Δῴη is an optative and would lend a slightly more uncertain and formal air to Paul's prayer report. Most grammarians and commentators reject this reading (e.g., Best 1998: 155, 162; Aletti 2001: 95n27). Moulton (MHT 1:196–97) says that by the time of the NT writers, the optative mood after a ἵνα that introduces a purpose clause (a "final" ἵνα) was becoming obsolete and would have looked "artificial," like an attempt to resuscitate the elegance of the bygone era of Attic literary accomplishment (cf. Hoehner 2002: 255–56).

A few scholars have disagreed with the majority, although they have often not argued the case at all, or done so only briefly.[20] Several considerations, however, weigh in favor of this minority position. First, the ἵνα preceding this optative is at least as much a conjunction meaning "that" as it is the introduction to a purpose clause (BDAG 476). Second, when Paul uses the aorist subjunctive of δίδωμι elsewhere in Ephesians, he always uses the form δῷ rather than δώῃ.[21] The appearance of ΔΩΗ here, therefore, probably signals a different mood, not simply a different spelling of the aorist subjunctive. Third, Paul probably uses the aorist optative of δίδωμι in Rom. 15:5, again in the context of prayer.[22] This shows that Paul felt comfortable with using the optative in prayer contexts. Fourth, in a sentence that may have been familiar to Paul from the LXX (1 Chron. 22:12), David tells his son Solomon, δῴη σοι σοφίαν καὶ σύνεσιν κύριος καὶ κατισχύσαι σε ἐπὶ Ισραηλ ("May the Lord grant you wisdom and understanding and strengthen you over Israel"; NETS).[23] Here there can be no

20. See, e.g., Westcott (1906: 22), who offers no reasons for his decision to read the optative; Robertson (1923: 309, 326, 983, 994), who correctly abandons the notion that this is the optative after final ἵνα but limits his arguments primarily to finding precedent for "the optative of future wish" following ἵνα in classical Greek; and Gnilka (1971: 89), who believes that the author's use of the optative betrays an affinity with early patristic modes of prayer (cf. 1 Clem. 64; Barn. 21.5).

21. Some scribes (B, 1739, 1881, and a few other manuscripts) shortened δώῃ to the more familiar form δῷ. Cf. the same variation in the manuscript tradition of 2 Tim. 2:25.

22. *Pace* Gnilka (1971: 89), therefore, a comparison of the author's δῴη to 1 Clem. 64 and Barn. 21.5 is not evidence that the author of Ephesians wrote in the subapostolic period.

23. Cf. Barn. 21.5: Ὁ δὲ θεός, ὁ τοῦ παντὸς κόσμου κυριεύων, δώῃ ὑμῖν σοφίαν, σύνεσιν ("And may God, who rules over the whole world, give you wisdom, understanding," trans. Holmes 2007: 440–41). As Prostmeier (1999: 571–72n45) explains, whether to read δῴη or δώῃ

doubt that δῴη should be read rather than δώῃ since it is paired with the optative κατισχύσαι. As with Paul's use of the form in Eph. 1:17, moreover, the context is one of a prayer-wish, and the prayer-wish is for wisdom. For these reasons, Paul probably intended to use the aorist optative rather than the aorist subjunctive when he dictated ΔΩΗ in 1:17.

is also a problem here. The manuscript tradition does not make clear whether the understood ι should go beneath the ω or the η. Prostmeier believes that Barnabas is echoing Eph. 1:17 at this point, but it seems equally likely that both Paul and Barnabas were independently echoing the language of 1 Chron. 22:12.

B. God's Great Power Displayed in Christ and for the Church (1:20–23)

To his thanksgiving and intercessory prayer report, Paul now attaches a lengthy relative clause (vv. 20–21) and a new sentence (vv. 22–22), which explain how God put his mighty strength into effect for believers. The entire section, therefore, functions as an explanation of the third and final "what" clause of Paul's intercessory prayer report. In this third clause, Paul has just told his readers how he prays that God might, by his Spirit, cause them to know "what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe" (v. 19). Now Paul explains the immense proportions of that power and how it is applied to those who believe. God's power raised Christ from the dead and seated him, victorious, at God's right hand, with all enemy forces conquered and beneath Christ's feet (1:20–22a). God has also given Christ to the church in his capacity as victorious, authoritative head over all these forces (1:22b–23).

This small paragraph provides an important function in the design of the letter. At the level of the letter's argument, it spells out more precisely how God has shown his great power and how he has used these manifestations of his power for the benefit of believers. At the level of the letter's epistolary form, it provides a transition from the letter's prayer section into the letter's main theological discussion in chapters 2 and 3. It does this in a way so compatible with the prayer report, however, that we are not surprised to find Paul returning to his prayers in 3:1 and 14.

The progress of thought in the passage is clear, although its grammatical structure is slightly disorganized and at places ambiguous. Grammatically, the first part of the passage is closely linked with the third "what" clause (1:19) of the intercessory prayer report by the relative pronoun "which" (ἥν, *hēn*) and so continues the long sentence that began the thanksgiving and intercessory prayer report section in verse 15. A new sentence does not begin until verse 22. The expansion of the third "what" clause of the prayer report is so long, however, that the NA[27] and most English translations place a period at the end of verse 19 and start a new sentence, or even a new paragraph, at verse 20. This way of construing the structure correctly recognizes that the third "what" clause of the prayer report announces Paul's primary concern in the report itself, and an important topic in the letter, a topic that Paul immediately explains in more detail in the new section. What is lost in organizing the sentence this way is the run-on quality of Paul's language and therefore the emotional engagement and emphasis that this characteristic of Paul's style in Ephesians communicates.

The loose connection between grammatical form and logical argument continues in verses 22–23, where Paul does begin a new sentence, albeit connected with the preceding clause with καί (*kai*, and). The thought, however, simply continues that of verses 20–21. Not until the second half of verse 22 does Paul introduce a new thought and bring the section full circle back to the announcement of his theme in verse 19. The grammatical structure of this new thought ("and he gave him"), however, is identical to the grammatical structure of the first half of the verse ("and he subjected all things"). In other words, Paul does not carefully match the flow of his thought with the grammatical structure of his language: primary and subordinate thoughts are not correlated with main and subordinate clauses. Moreover, Paul concludes the section with one of the most difficult clauses in the letter to interpret, variously translated "the fullness of him who fills all in all" (NRSV), "the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way" (NAB; cf. TNIV), "the fullness of him who is filled, all in all" (NJB), and "the fullness of him who is filling the universe in all its parts" (REB).

For all the ambiguity at the level of the grammar, however, the basic thought of the passage is not only clear but also highly organized and coherent. Paul's third "what" clause in the intercessory prayer report stated that God has used his power for the benefit of those who believe the gospel. In verses 20–22a, Paul shows precisely how God has used that power. He has raised Christ from the dead and seated him at God's right hand, far above all inimical heavenly powers. These powers lie conquered beneath Christ's feet.

The terminology Paul uses to communicate this truth is a skillful blend of language from Israel's Scriptures and language from the Greco-Roman environment that surrounded Paul's readers. Paul uses the language of Pss. 110:1 (109:1 LXX) and 8:6 (8:7 MT, LXX) to say that just as "the Lord" in Ps. 110 gave a military victory to the king and in Ps. 8 subjected all creation to human beings, so God has given his anointed king Jesus, the Messiah, victory over all forces ranged against him.[1] When Paul lists the heavenly powers that God has conquered for his Messiah, he uses terms that in the religious environment of his readers typically referred to the gods who were thought to control the fate of human beings and the destiny of nations. Fear of such powers was common, as was the belief that honoring the deities who controlled the fates of nations could bring social and individual prosperity. Paul prays that his readers might understand that God has given the Christ, in whom they believed when they embraced the gospel, victory over all such powers. This is specifically how God has displayed "the surpassing greatness of his power" and "the might of his strength" that Paul mentioned in verse 19.

1. Paul most often uses ὁ Χριστός simply as a name for Jesus in Ephesians, but because in 1:20 it appears within an allusion to Ps. 110:1, it probably carries its literal royal meaning, "the Anointed One," or in Hebrew, "Messiah." Cf. BDAG 1091.

Paul also said in verse 19, however, that God uses his power "for us who believe," and so in verses 22b–23 he explains in fuller detail what this means. The headship over all things, which God gave to Christ when he raised him and seated him high above his enemies, is a headship that he exercises for the church, the congregation of those who have believed the gospel, wherever they might be. The church, Paul says, is Christ's body, and since all things—especially all inimical powers—are subject to Christ, they are also subject to the church. The great power that God exerted in Christ to make him victorious over his enemies, therefore, is also a power God has exerted on behalf of the church.

Exegesis and Exposition

[20]. . . which [effect] he effected in the Messiah by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavenly places, [21]high above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age, but also in the one to come, [22a]and he subjected all things under his feet [22b]and gave him as ⌜head⌝ over all things to the church [23]which is, in truth, his body, that which is full of the One who is continuously and completely filled.

1:20–22a

In 1:20–22a, Paul illustrates the effect of God's great power by reminding his readers of God's resurrection and exaltation of the Messiah. In these powerful acts, God gave his anointed king the victory over all his enemies. Paul begins with the relative pronoun ἥν, whose antecedent is the noun ἐνέργεια (*energeia*, effect) in verse 19, as the cognate verb ἐνήργησεν (*enērgēsen*, he effected) shows. God put into effect his effective power in the Messiah when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand.[2]

Here Paul alludes to Ps. 110:1 MT, Eng. (109:1 LXX), and specifically to the reference in that psalm to the king's exaltation to God's right hand (v. 1a). The psalm probably played a role in first-century debates about the identity of the Messiah even beyond Christian circles, as Jesus's use of it in debates with his opponents and at his Jewish trial implies (Moritz 1996a: 16–17).[3] Quotations of and allusions to it appear frequently in the NT, where the main interest is the exaltation of Jesus to God's right hand (Hay 1973: 163–66). Usually in those texts the emphasis lies on the vindication of Jesus after his crucifixion, or on his highly exalted status as God's vice regent (Acts 2:33–35; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3–4, 13; 8:1; Rev. 5:1, 7; cf. Rom. 8:34).

Those connotations may be present for Paul here, but his chief concern in alluding to the psalm lies not in the location of the king at God's right hand, but in God's defeat of the king's enemies in the second half of the verse (Ps.

2. Ἐγείρας and καθίσας are adverbial participles of means. See the comments on identifying this kind of participle in Wallace 1996: 629; cf. Hoehner 2002: 274.

3. See Mark 12:35–37; Matt. 22:41–46; Luke 20:41–44; and Jesus's conflation of Dan. 7:13 with Ps. 110:1 (109:1 LXX) in Mark 14:62; Matt. 26:64; and Luke 22:69.

110:1b [109:1b LXX]), the part of the psalm to which Paul does not explicitly allude.[4] Paul implies this idea in the next two prepositional phrases, and then he states it explicitly in verse 22a, using the language of Ps. 8:6 (8:7 MT, LXX) rather than Ps. 110:1b.

He says that Christ was seated at God's right hand ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις (*en tois epouraniois*, in the heavenly places), an expression that we have already examined in the comments on 1:3. The phrase is a blanket term describing the "dimension" in which all spiritual powers exist, whether good, as in 1:3 (cf. 2:6), or inimical to God's purposes, as in 6:12 (cf. 3:10; W. H. Harris 1991: 86, quoting Hanson 1980: 138).

Paul also says that Christ was seated at God's right hand ὑπεράνω (*hyperanō*, high above) a long list of powerful beings: πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ κυριότητος καὶ παντὸς ὀνόματος ὀνομαζομένου (*pasēs archēs kai exousias kai dynameōs kai kyriotētos kai pantos onomatos onomazomenou*, all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named). The position of the Messiah ὑπεράνω these powers in a context where Ps. 110:1 is in the air shows that they are inimical powers and that God has given the Messiah Jesus victory over them (cf. 6:12).

As the introduction to the commentary explains, Paul probably included among these powers not only the demonic forces that many people in western Asia Minor during this period tried to control through magic (Arnold 1989; 1995), but also the alliance between present earthly political rulers and the deities of the transcendent realm. This becomes even more likely when Paul adds the comment that Christ's victory is effective οὐ μόνον ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι (*ou monon en tō aiōni toutō alla kai en tō mellonti*, not only in this age, but also in the one to come). Many interpreters correctly draw attention to the Jewish nature of the idiom Paul uses here (e.g., Robinson 1904: 121; Lincoln 1990: 65). Jewish and early Christian literature often distinguishes between the present age and the age to come.[5] Paul, too, frequently speaks of the present age elsewhere in his letters, although this is the only place in the Pauline corpus where the full contrast between the two ages is explicitly expressed.[6]

Since the eschatology of Ephesians emphasizes the present realization of God's triumph over evil (1:3; 2:6, 13; 3:9–10), and since Paul has just spoken of this triumph in language that emphasizes its completeness (1:20–21a), a number of interpreters have concluded that Paul (or the author) does not mean by this phrase that there is any coming age in which Christ will continue to exercise authority. He is using traditional language, they argue, only to emphasize the completeness of Christ's triumph (e.g., Lindemann 1975: 210–11;

4. Yet cf. 1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 10:13, where the words of Ps. 110:1b (109:1b LXX) explicitly appear. See the discussion in Lincoln 1982: 41–42.

5. See, e.g., Mark 10:30; Matt. 12:32; Luke 18:30; 2 Esd. (4 Ezra) 6:9; 7:12–13; 8:1; *m. Pe'ah* 1.1; *m. Qidd.* 4.14; *m. Sanh.* 10.3; *m. 'Abot* 4.1, 17; 5.19. Cf., e.g., 1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 8:38; 2 Bar. 48.50. Cf. Schürer 1979: 537n86.

6. 1 Cor. 1:20; 2:6, 8; 3:18; Gal. 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rom. 12:2; 1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:10; Titus 2:12.

Schnackenburg 1991: 78–79; Best 1998: 174). In response, a number of other commentators have observed that although the Paul of Ephesians does lay special emphasis on the presence of God's triumph over evil in Christ's resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand, he still affirms that this triumph will be completed only in the future (1:10, 14; 2:7; 4:30; 5:27; 6:8, 11–12; O'Brien 1999: 143; Hoehner 2002: 281–82; cf. Sellin 2008: 144).

It may be important for understanding Paul's intentions in penning this phrase to keep in mind the Greco-Roman context of his language about time, both here and elsewhere in the letter. Coins, statuary, reliefs, inscriptions, and the calendar of Asia tempted Paul's readers to think that time was organized around the imperial authority of Rome and that Rome's authority was eternal. One Ephesian house, recently excavated, featured the graffito, "Rome, the ruler of all, your power will never die." A decree of the city of Assos, issued in AD 37, speaks of "the most pleasant *age* for humanity that is *now present*" (τοῦ ἡδίστου ἀνθρώποις αἰῶνος νῦν ἐνεστῶτος, *tou hēdistou anthrōpois aiōnos nyn enestōtos*).[7] In a culture where such statements were prevalent, Paul reminds his readers that God has organized time around Christ (1:10) and that Christ holds supreme authority over all inimical powers both now and forever (1:21b).

The challenge to all powers that either are opposed to God's people or claim an authority that belongs only to the Messiah continues in verse 22a. Here, just as he did in 1 Cor. 15:25–27, and like some other early Christian writers (1 Pet. 3:22; Heb. 1:3, 13; 2:6–8), Paul supplements his allusion to Ps. 110:1 (109:1 LXX) with a paraphrase of Ps. 8:6 (8:7 MT, LXX).[8] It is possible that Paul simply followed an early Christian exegetical tradition that sometimes linked Ps. 110:1 (109:1 LXX) with Ps. 8:6 (8:7) and did not have the wider contexts of these psalms or their subject matter in mind when he alluded to them (e.g., Abbott 1897: 43; Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 65; Lincoln 1982: 41–42).

In light of what we have seen of the religious and political environment in which Paul wrote Ephesians, however, Paul may have been thinking of Ps. 8 in its entirety when he alluded to Ps. 8:6 here, although his point is different than that of the psalm. Psalm 8 (NRSV) portrays human beings as "a little lower than God" (v. 5a), "crowned . . . with glory and honor" (v. 5b), and given "dominion" over God's creation (v. 6)—in other words, as exercising a divinely given sovereignty over all the earth. The kind of linkage between divine and human rule that the psalm found between human beings and God (cf. Gen. 1:26), and that many people in Roman Asia believed Augustus and his successors exemplified, Paul finds instead in the Messiah Jesus.[9]

7. For the house graffito, see Trebilco 2004: 34n151; for the Assos inscription, see Sasse, *TDNT* 1:207, citing *SIG* 797.9.

8. Paul in Eph. 1:22: καὶ πάντα ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ
Paul in 1 Cor. 15:27: πάντα γὰρ ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ
LXX of Ps. 8:7 (8:6): πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ
MT of Ps. 8:7 (8:6): כֹּל שַׁתָּה תַּחַת־רַגְלָיו

9. On the relationship between Ps. 8 and Egyptian conceptions of a connection between the king and the divine, see Kraus 1993a: 183–84.

1:22b Paul's thought now comes full circle, back to verse 19 (Lincoln 1990: 67). There he told his readers of his prayers that God would open the eyes of their hearts so that they might understand the great magnitude of the power that God had exerted "for us who believe." After expanding on the greatness of God's power in verses 20–22a, Paul now tells his readers how God has used this power for the advantage of the company of believers, a group that Paul now calls "the church": καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ (*kai auton edōken kephalēn hyper panta tē ekklēsia*, and he gave him as head over all things to the church).

The term ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*) referred primarily to a political assembly in ancient Greek literature (e.g., Aristotle, *Pol*. 3.14 [3.1285a.11]; Herodotus, *Hist*. 3.142), and this made it a natural choice for the LXX translators when they needed a word to refer to "the assembly [קָהָל, *qāhāl*] of the Lord" (Deut. 23:2; 1 Chron. 28:8; Mic. 2:5), "the assembly of God" (Neh. 13:1), or "the assembly of the Most High" (Sir. 24:2). Since Paul did not think of the church as a political assembly, and ἐκκλησία was not the obvious term for a society or club in the Roman world (Wilken 1984: 33), he probably reflects the use of the word in the LXX. He seems to have thought of the multiethnic church of his own time as, in some sense, continuous with the "assembly of the Lord" in Israel's Scriptures (1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:4; 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16; 15:9; Gal. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:1).[10] Although that thought will become more prominent in Eph. 5:25–27, it is not his concern here (see the comments on 5:27). The context shows that when Paul speaks of "the church" in 1:22b, he means those who have heard and believed the gospel (1:13, 19), "the collection [σύλλογος, *syllogos*] of the faithful," as Theodoret puts it (R. Hill 2001: 2.237).

Here and elsewhere in Ephesians, Paul uses ἐκκλησία in the sense of the universal church, a meaning that is especially prominent in the later letters of the Pauline corpus, whose Pauline authorship is disputed.[11] The more general use of the term does find precedent in Paul's earlier and undisputed correspondence (1 Cor. 10:32; 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6), however, and a change in the nature of Paul's ministry in the later letters rather than a change to

10. The earliest Christians probably also considered themselves the "vanguard" (*Vorhut*) of the eschatological ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ. Cf. the use of the phrase קהל אל in 1QM 4.10 and the perspective of Stuhlmacher 1992: 357, taken up and expanded in Gehring 2004: 160. Horbury (1997: 13) observes that the word is used in the LXX both for Israel in its entirety and for other assemblies. This varied usage, he says, may have made it an especially appropriate term for the church, with its elements both of continuity and discontinuity with historic Israel.

11. The early Pauline letters often use the word ἐκκλησία to refer to the individual gatherings of God's people in a particular house, city, or region. Paul can speak of the "church" that meets in the house of Prisca and Aquila (Rom. 16:5), to the church that meets in Philemon's house (Philem. 1:2), and the "church" (in the singular) in the cities of Thessalonica (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1), Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1), and Laodicea (Col. 4:16). When he moves to the regional level, he speaks of the "churches" (plural) in Judea (1 Thess. 2:14; Gal. 1:22), Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1; Gal. 1:2), Asia (1 Cor. 16:19), and Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1).

pseudonymous authorship probably best accounts for the increase in general uses of the term.[12]

Some interpreters, apparently startled by the notion that Christ is described here as a gift to the church, have translated ἔδωκεν (*edōken*, he gave) as if it were ἔθηκεν (*ethēken*, he appointed) and rendered the phrase "he made him head" or something similar.[13] It is possible that δίδωμι carries this meaning on rare occasion, but the standard examples of this meaning are all debatable (Num. 14:4; Acts 13:20; Barn. 14.7; Isa. 42:6; BDAG 242). This makes it far more likely that Paul used the verb in its normal way here to say that God gave Christ to the church.[14]

Although it is unusual within the NT to see Christ described as a gift to the church (Muddiman 2001: 91–92), it is reasonably easy to understand what Paul is saying, especially if we take seriously his qualification of this thought with the phrase κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα (*kephalēn hyper panta*, as head over all things). God has given Christ to the church in Christ's capacity as head over all things. Paul has just shown his readers that God worked powerfully in Christ's resurrection and exaltation to give him victory over all inimical forces in the heavenly realms, and he has just summarized this description with a paraphrase of Ps. 8:6 that speaks of God subjecting πάντα (*panta*, all things) under Christ's πόδες (*podes*, feet). He now moves from feet to head: if all things are beneath Christ's feet, then he is the head of all things.[15] Moreover (and this is Paul's main point), he is the head of all things for the benefit of the church (cf. Roose 2005: 139). Later Paul will say that Christ is the head of the church (5:23; cf. Col. 1:18) and that Christians should "grow up to him in every respect, who is the head" (Eph. 4:15; cf. Col. 2:19).[16] Here his point is

12. As Best (1998: 626; cf. 190–91) comments, Colossians forms something of a bridge between the two groups of letters since it speaks both of the local church (1:2; 4:15) and of the church universal (1:18, 24). Gehring (2004: 154–55) observes helpfully that if Nympha's church was located in Laodicea (and the context makes this probable), then Col. 4:15–16 shows us that Paul considered οἱ ἀδελφοί in Laodicea to constitute the whole church in that city and considered the church that met in Nympha's house (ἡ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῆς ἐκκλησία) to be one expression of that church. Cf. 1 Cor. 14:23; Rom. 16:23 (written from Corinth); and the analysis of Gehring 2004: 155–65.

13. See, e.g., Calvin 1965: 138; Barth 1974: 157–58; Dunn 1992: 153n1; BDAG 242; RSV; NRSV; TNIV.

14. This is the majority position among commentators. See, e.g., Alford 1857: 83; Ellicott 1859: 30; Eadie 1883: 104–5; Abbott 1897: 34; Gnilka 1971: 97; Caird 1976: 48; Lincoln 1990: 66; MacDonald 2000: 220; and Hoehner 2002: 85.

15. "Head" and "foot" were commonly used together in antiquity to describe the whole physical person, just as they are in the English expression "from head to foot" (Lev. 13:12 LXX; Job 2:7 LXX; Homer, *Il.* 23.169). They also formed a natural pair when used in figures of speech (1 Cor. 12:21) and could be used together to mean "completely everything." See, e.g., Aristophanes, *Plut.* 649–50: τὰ πράγματα ἐκ τῶν ποδῶν εἰς τὴν κεφαλήν σοι πάντ' ἐρῶ (I will tell you everything from feet to head). Cf. LSJ 945; Schlier, *TDNT* 3:674–75; LEH 338. Dawes (1998: 141n68) observes correctly, however, that Paul does not use the feet metaphor from Ps. 8 in the same way that he uses the head metaphor: "Christ *has* feet, but he *is* the head."

16. Cf. the exegesis of, e.g., Howard 1974: 353; Lincoln 1990: 67–68; Dawes 1998: 141, 245–46; O'Brien 1999: 145–46; and Aletti 2001: 103–4. A warm debate surrounds whether

different: he wants to emphasize that Christ is the head over all the inimical forces of the universe and that he serves in this capacity for the benefit of the church (cf. Col. 2:10).

1:23 Paul now adds a thought in two parts, which describes the church in greater detail. The first part is relatively straightforward. The church to which God gave Christ as head over all things is the church ἥτις ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ (*hētis estin to sōma autou*, which is, in truth, his body). Although the indefinite relative pronoun is often used simply for the relative pronoun in the NT (BDF §293), Paul shows in Ephesians that he can distinguish between the two (4:19). The ἥτις here, therefore, probably does not merely mean "which" but carries a qualitative force and should be translated "which, in fact" (Abbott 1897: 34) or "which in truth" (Eadie 1883: 107; cf. BDAG 729–30). If this is right, then Paul wants to place special emphasis on his statement that the church is Christ's body: it is *indeed* his body.

Prior to Colossians, Paul compares the church to a body in letters to Corinth and Rome as a way of urging Christians in those cities to set aside their divisiveness and seek unity with one another. "Is Christ divided?" Paul asks in 1 Corinthians (1:13). Later he develops at length the notion that the church consists of many members, but that, just as with the human body, all these members belong to the same body and so should work together humbly, not elevating people with a highly desirable gift above others (1 Cor. 12:12–31). In this discussion, Paul assumes that the body of which he speaks is Christ and that all believers have been baptized "into" (εἰς, *eis*) this "one body" (ἓν σῶμα, *hen sōma*, 1 Cor. 12:12–13, 27; cf. 10:16–17), but this aspect of the metaphor falls into the background in order to emphasize the need for unity in the divided Corinthian church by comparing it with a body whose members work together harmoniously.[17]

In Romans, Paul makes the same comparison between the human body and the body of believers with its different "members" (μέλη, *melē*), each gifted by God and each connected to the other. "We who are many," Paul says, "are one body in Christ" (οἱ πολλοὶ ἓν σῶμά ἐσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, *hoi polloi hen sōma esmen en Christō*; Rom. 12:4–6). His use of the metaphor in Romans is less elaborate than his use of it in 1 Corinthians, however, and does not make the explicit statement that Christians, considered together, comprise the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12, 27).

When we move to Colossians, we find Paul developing the metaphor in two new directions. First, the idea that the ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*, church) is the body of Christ rises to prominence. In Colossians the notion that the church is a

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κεφαλή sometimes means "source" in the NT, particularly in relation to Paul's figurative use of the term in 1 Cor. 11:3 and Eph. 5:23, where the husband is said to be "head" of the wife. Here in Eph. 1:22, however, the term must mean "a being of high status" or "superior rank" (BDAG 542; Best 1998: 630–31; Dawes 1998: 139).

17. On the two elements of the metaphor, the church as a harmoniously working body of many parts and the church as the body of Christ, see Dunn 1992: 148–53.

harmoniously working body is present (3:15; cf. 2:19) but is less prominent than the idea that the church is the body of Christ (1:18, 24).[18] Second, instead of equating his readers simply with the body of Christ, which possesses, for example, a foot, a hand, an eye, an ear, a nose, and a head (1 Cor. 12:15–21), Paul now introduces the more complex notion that Christ is the head of his church-body (Col. 1:18). This body grows (like the human body), and Christ, as its head, is the source of this growth (2:19).

The false teaching that had troubled the Colossian church seems to have prompted this second development (Bruce 1977: 421; O'Brien 1982: 49–50; Murphy-O'Connor 1996: 246). The false teachers placed Christ alongside other spiritual powers and insisted that these other powers needed to be placated with various ascetic rituals (Col. 2:16–19). Against this diminution of Christ's significance, Paul asserts Christ's preeminence and uses the "head" metaphor to do this. Christ is the head of the church so that he might have preeminence in all things (1:18), and the false teachers have failed to hold fast to this head (2:19).

In Ephesians, Paul's use of the metaphor is reminiscent of his use of it in all three of the other letters, but it also receives some further development. In Ephesians, just as in 1 Corinthians and Romans, the church is made up of various members who should work together harmoniously as a "body" (4:4, 11–13, 15–16, 24–25; 5:30), although the figure of a single body with many harmoniously working parts is not as prominent as it is in those earlier letters (Dunn 1992: 149–50; Best 1998: 193). Just as in Colossians, Christ is the head of his church-body, and as the head, he supports his body's growth (Eph. 4:15–16; 5:23; cf. Col. 1:18; 2:19).

Two new uses of the metaphor, however, emerge in Ephesians. First, in 2:15–16 Paul will describe the unity of Gentile and Jewish Christians through the cross as a union of the two groups in "one body." He then implies that this "one body" is a new human that replaces the fallen Adam.

Second, as we have just seen in the exegesis of 1:22, Paul in Ephesians uses the head metaphor independently to speak of Christ's victorious rule over the inimical powers of the cosmos. In this specific capacity as head over all things (particularly the inimical powers), God has given Christ to the church. Here the metaphor takes a direction unique in the Pauline corpus. Christ is the head over all things, and God has given him this role for the benefit of the church. The church, moreover, is the body of this Christ who is head over all things. Christ is not said to be head over all things and therefore head of the church, but head over all things and, since the church is his body, identifiable with the church. The church, then, is also in some sense head over all inimical powers, and they lie conquered beneath its feet, just as they lie conquered beneath Christ's feet. Paul will make this point more explicitly in 2:6, where

18. The metaphor moves, therefore, in the opposite direction to its movement in 1 Corinthians, where, as we have just seen, the idea of a harmoniously working body of many parts is more prominent than the idea of the church as the body of Christ. See Best 1998: 192–93.

he says that his readers have been raised with Christ and seated in the heavenly places "in Christ Jesus" at God's right hand.[19]

This now helps us to make sense of the difficult expression τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου (*to plērōma tou ta panta en pasin plēroumenou*, that which is full of the One who is continuously and completely filled). This statement is difficult because the noun πλήρωμα (*plērōma*) can be taken actively ("that which makes something full") or passively ("that which is full of something"; BDAG 829–30), and the participle πληρουμένου (*plēroumenou*) could be in the middle voice ("the one who fills for himself"), in the active voice but with a middle form ("the one who fills"), or in the passive voice ("the one who is filled").

Although an ancient reading of the phrase takes it to mean that the church in some sense completes Christ (e.g., Origen [Heine 2002: 116–17]; Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.*, hom. 3; *NPNF* 13:62; *PG* 62:26; cf. Calvin 1965: 138), this is probably not what Paul meant. Elsewhere in the letter where the word πλήρωμα or its verbal cognate πληρόω (*plēroō*, fill) appears in connection with believers, they are filled with God's fullness (3:19) or in the Spirit (5:18), and by growing, they expand to the size of Christ's fullness (4:13). Christ fills all things (4:10). In other words, believers play a passive or neutral role (they are filled or grow to match Christ's fullness), whereas Christ plays an active role (he fills; cf. Schnackenburg 1991: 81; Best 1998: 188). Here, then, Paul probably meant that the church was "that which is full of" something or someone.

What or who fills the church? Again, we should probably understand πληρουμένου in a passive sense. It could be in the active voice despite its middle/passive form (e.g., Moule 1953: 25; BDAG 828; Lincoln 1990: 77; O'Brien 1999: 151), but elsewhere in Ephesians Paul chooses the appropriate form and voice of this verb for what he wishes to say (4:10; 5:18).[20] If we then move to the middle voice (e.g., Winer 1881: 258; Eadie 1883: 114; Robertson 1923: 805–6; Howard 1974: 351–52), we produce the idea that the church is that which is filled by Christ, who fills everything for himself. Such a reading, however, would make the statement stick out from the flow of Paul's thought like a sore thumb. The passage emphasizes how God's action through Christ

19. Cf. Roose (2005: 138–41), who sees this as a post-Pauline development of 1 Cor. 15:27 and one that breaks the boundaries of Pauline theology. In 1 Corinthians and Romans, she argues, the metaphor is used in a "democratizing" way to emphasize the unity and equality of all believers, but in Ephesians the church, as Christ's body, is given hegemony over the entire cosmos (Roose 2005: 117–20, 140–41). If the "all" of Eph. 1:22 refers primarily to the evil powers listed in 1:21, however, the change in emphasis is less dramatic and more understandable as an organic development from the way the metaphor is used in the undisputed letters. It has simply been employed in a situation where the letter's audience was tempted to fear the inimical powers and needed to be reassured that their incorporation into Christ had given them victory over these powers.

20. Best 1998: 184; Hoehner 2002: 298. In opposition to this argument, Lincoln (1990: 77) claims that Paul can use καρποφορέω (active) in Col. 1:10 and καρποφορέομαι (passive) in Col. 1:6 with no apparent difference in meaning (cf., e.g., Moule 1957: 50; O'Brien 1982: 23). It is not clear, however, that this example proves Lincoln's point (Lightfoot 1879: 135; Haupt 1902a: 9).

benefits the church, not how Christ's action benefits himself (cf. Lincoln 1990: 77). The passive voice, therefore, makes the best sense: the church is that which is filled by the One who is himself filled, presumably Christ (e.g., Best 1998: 188; Dawes 1998: 241, 244–45; Hoehner 2002: 298–99).[21] Since the participle is in the present tense, moreover, Paul probably intends his readers to understand this filling as something that takes place continually.

What or who fills Christ? Paul does not say explicitly, and this adds to the ambiguity of the expression. Colossians provides some help, however, since there the fullness of deity dwells continuously in Christ (Col. 2:9; cf. 1:19). The church, therefore, is filled by Christ, and Christ himself is filled by God.[22]

We now need to fit the phrase τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν (*ta panta en pasin*) into the puzzle, and this too poses some difficulty. Paul uses the phrase twice elsewhere (1 Cor. 12:6; 15:28). In these other occurrences, part of the phrase (τὰ πάντα) serves as the direct object of an active-voice verb, and part of it (ἐν πᾶσιν) modifies that verb adverbially: the same God works "all things [i.e., gifts of service] in everyone" (1 Cor. 12:6), and God will be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).[23] If we take the participle πληρουμένου as a passive-voice participle, however, then the phrase cannot function in the way it does in these other two passages. As a passive, πληρουμένου cannot take a direct object, and so the entire phrase τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν must modify πληρουμένου adverbially: "the one who is filled entirely." This use of the phrase would be unusual, but in light of the difficulties involved in taking πληρουμένου as anything but passive, this solution seems to be the best choice. If the phrase is used adverbially, then it probably functions in the same way as the classical expression παντάπασι, an adverb meaning "entirely, wholly, altogether" (LSJ 1299; Moule 1959: 160; Best 1998; cf. BDAG 783).[24]

If we now put all this together, Paul is saying that the church, as Christ's body, is filled by Christ who is himself continually and completely filled (by God). The thought is close to Paul's comment in Col. 2:9–10. There Paul tells the Colossians they should not fall under the spell of human fabrications parading as "philosophy": ". . . because in [Christ] all the fullness [πλήρωμα]

21. It is significant that Origen, himself writing in Greek, simply assumes that the participle is passive (Heine 2002: 116–17).

22. This is the conclusion of a number of interpreters. See, e.g., Lightfoot 1879: 263; Dawes 1998: 237–48; Hoehner 2002: 299–301.

23. Cf. Col. 3:11, where πάντα seems to function as a predicate nominative ("Christ is all things") and ἐν πᾶσιν as an adverbial prepositional phrase ("in all kinds of people"). *Pace* Hoehner (2002: 295–96), an adverbial use of the entire phrase does not seem to be a viable option in either 1 Cor. 12:6 or 15:28. See also T. Ab. 13.14 (rec. A), τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν ἐν πυρὶ καὶ ζυγῷ δοκιμάζονται, which Allison (2003: 275) translates as "all things in everybody are tested by fire and balance."

24. There may be some precedent for this in Dio Chrysostom, *De philosopho* (*Or.* 71) 1, εἰσιν οἵ φασι δεῖν πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν εἶναι περιττὸν τὸν φιλόσοφον, which might be rendered "There are some who say that it is necessary for the philosopher to be excellent *in every way*." The phrase is slightly different from what we find in Ephesians, since πάντα lacks the article, but the similarity is still close.

of the Deity dwells bodily [σωματικῶς, *sōmatikōs*], and you have been filled [πεπληρωμένοι, *peplērōmenoi*] in him, who is the head of all rule and authority [ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας, *hos estin hē kephalē pasēs archēs kai exousias*]." Why did Paul express himself in such a difficult way in Ephesians when he could have spelled out his meaning as clearly as he had in Colossians? Alliteration using the *p* sound was a highly prized rhetorical device in the first and second centuries, and he may have been more concerned with the majestic rhetorical effect that he created with the phrase τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου (*to plērōma tou ta panta en pasin plēroumenou*) than with making the phrase easy to understand.[25] The basic point was clear enough: the messianic king, whom God has made victorious over all the cosmic forces ranged against his people, is united with the church, which because of this union is also victorious over these evil forces.

Summary

In 1:20–23 Paul explains more fully what he meant by saying in 1:19 that he prayed for his readers to understand the greatness of the power that God had exercised on behalf of the church. In 1:20–22a he explains more specifically what he means by God's great power: it is the power that has raised Christ from the dead, seated him victorious at his right hand, and placed all the cosmic enemies of God beneath Christ's feet. In 1:22b–23 Paul explains more specifically what he means in saying that God used his power for the church. God has given Christ to the church in his role as victor and head over all things, including the enemies of God and his people. Christ and the church, his body, are one; thus Christ's victory is also the church's victory.

Additional Note

1:22. A vigorous and sometimes heated debate surrounds the figurative meaning of the term κεφαλή in the NT. The debate was sparked by Paul's use of the term with respect to the relationship between husbands and wives in 1 Cor. 11:3 and Eph. 5:23. One side argues that in ancient Greek generally, κεφαλή rarely carried connotations of authority or leadership (e.g., B. Mickelsen and A. Mickelsen 1986; Cervin 1989; Perriman 1994). The other side maintains that the term carried these connotations frequently enough that they would not have seemed foreign to first-century Greek speakers (e.g., Grudem 1985; 1991; 2002; Fitzmyer 1989; 1993). Some scholars have argued that κεφαλή could be used metaphorically to refer to the "source" of something rather than its authoritative head. They have then connected this meaning with the use of the creation narrative in the wider contexts of 1 Cor. 11:3 and Eph. 5:23 (1 Cor. 11:8, 12; Eph. 5:31). Although this understanding of the term originated outside the debate over what the NT teaches about the roles of husband and wife in marriage (Bedale 1954; 1956), it was nevertheless drawn into the debate by those who argued that

25. For alliteration with the letter *p*, see, e.g., the frequently recurring phrase πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως or its equivalent (Philo, *Drunkenness* 170; Heb. 1:1a; Maximus of Tyre, *Dialexeis* 1.2b) and the use of words with initial *p* in Melito of Sardis, *Peri Pascha* (e.g., §§1, 4, 17). Cf. Attridge 1989: 37n17; Witherington 2007: 245–46; Sellin 2008: 154n211.

κεφαλή did not carry connotations of authority (e.g., B. Mickelsen and A. Mickelsen 1986: 105–6). A reasonable case can be made that in Eph. 4:15–16 the κεφαλή of the body is the source of its strength (Dawes 1998: 144–47), although it is difficult to escape additional connotations of authority for the term in that passage.

Perriman (1994: 618) believes that the evidence for either "authority" or "source" is unimpressive and that the term basically meant "that which is most prominent, foremost, uppermost, pre-eminent." He also observes, however, that the critical element in determining the meaning of the metaphor in any particular instance is the literary context of that particular use (1994: 613, 617; cf. Dawes 1998: 127). Here in 1:22 the context emphasizes Christ's authority over all things as a result of the victory that God has given to him, and so this must count as an example of the use of κεφαλή to communicate the authority of the person who is the head (cf. LXX: Judg. 11:11; 2 Sam. 22:44).

IV. From Children of Wrath to New Creation (2:1–10)

In 2:1–10 Paul shows his readers how the mighty power of God, demonstrated in the resurrection and victorious enthronement of his Messiah, affects them individually. Paul has just said that God gave Christ, in his capacity as victor over the inimical heavenly powers, to the church, and now he wants to make especially clear to his readers that, since they have believed the gospel, they have experienced personally the effects of this victory. It is true (Lincoln 1990: 85) that Paul continues to speak in corporate terms: he describes his readers' plight in cosmic language and uses plural pronouns. Yet there is a personal character to the passage also.[1] Paul describes his readers as people with cravings, flesh, desires, and thoughts (v. 3). They receive salvation through faith (v. 8), and it comes as a gift lest "anyone" (τις, *tis*; singular) should boast (v. 9).

The passage shows how, in personal terms, the great power of God, exhibited in the resurrection and enthronement of Christ, took Paul's readers from existence under the power of the world, the Ruler of the demonic realm, and their own disobedient nature (vv. 1–3) into a position of victory over these forces (vv. 4–7). It describes how they moved from being objects of God's justified wrath against those who disobey him (v. 3) to products of God's re-creative handiwork (v. 10), from walking in trespasses and sins (vv. 1–2) to walking in the good works that God created them to do (v. 10). This movement has happened by their union with the living, risen, and enthroned Christ (vv. 5–6). It came to them as an entirely free gift (v. 5), received by faith (vv. 8–9), and as the result of God's richly merciful and loving character (v. 4).

The passage can be divided into three sections, corresponding to its three leading thoughts. In 2:1–3 Paul describes his readers' former plight as objects of God's wrath. In 2:4–7 he describes God's salvation of his readers from that plight by the application to them of the power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him, victorious over the inimical spiritual powers of the universe, in the heavenly places (cf. 1:19–23). In 2:8–10 he emphasizes the gracious nature of this salvation.

As Lincoln (1990: 85) has perceptively observed, 2:5 is the central statement of the passage. It gathers together its three main themes and its three parts, first summarizing the plight of Paul and his readers in terms of death in trespasses, next introducing the idea of their union with Christ's new life, and last, anticipating the final discussion of God's grace.

1. Cf. Hoehner's title (2002: 305) for the section: "New Position Individually."

This logical and balanced conceptual structure, however, is expressed in a syntactically disjointed way, probably betraying the occasional and oral nature of the letter's origin. Paul apparently began writing the section intending to say something similar to Col. 2:13 (cf. Eph. 2:1 and 2:5–6). Perhaps having formulated the sentence in Colossians fairly recently, he began 2:1 in much the same way but then realized that his desire to stress the abundance of God's grace to the readers of Ephesians required a more detailed description of their preconversion plight (2:1–3). Finally satisfied with his expression of the plight, he turned to God's gracious solution to that plight (2:4), summarized the plight again (2:5a) to contrast it vividly with God's gracious rescue, and then finally completed the sentence (2:5b–7). Before the sentence was complete, however, he interjected the declaration "By grace you are saved" (2:5b) in anticipation of his fuller discussion of God's grace (2:8–9). Finally, he described the gracious and accomplished nature of salvation and briefly summarized its ethical results in the lives of the saved (2:10).

A. Children of Wrath Like All the Rest (2:1–3)

In 2:1–3 Paul concentrates on what his believing readers "once" (ποτέ) were (vv. 2–3). The passage falls into three parts. In 2:1 Paul uses the second-person address in turning to his readers and applying God's powerful actions in Christ on behalf of the church (described in 1:19–23) directly to them: "And you, when you were dead in your transgressions and sins. . . ."[1] Before their conversion, Paul tells them, they had lived in rebellion against God, transgressing his law and sinning against him.

In 2:2 Paul, apparently unsatisfied with the brevity of the description of his readers' preconversion plight in 2:1, begins to digress from his original sentence and digs more deeply into the nature of their plight.[2] He does this in three ways. First, he describes their death in sin as a living death: they walked around in their sins. Second, he says that his readers lived according to the standards of a world in rebellion against God. Third, he claims that the chief of the spiritual powers inimical to God had the letter's readers under his control.

In 2:3 Paul continues his digression but marks the start of a new thought with a clause whose beginning is similar to the start of 2:2.[3] This new turn both broadens and deepens his description of his readers' plight. He describes the plight as affecting everyone, not merely his readers. All believers, including Paul, at one time lived in rebellion against God, and all unbelievers, without exception, also live in this way. He also describes the human plight as something that affects the entire person. By birth, human beings possess flesh and thoughts that lead to sinful desires and sinful actions. In sum, he argues that rebellion against God is a state integral to the human condition apart from the gospel: it affects everyone without exception, and it affects everyone profoundly.

Exegesis and Exposition

[1]And you, when you were dead in your transgressions and sins, [2]in which you once walked according to the ⌜Course⌝ of this world, according to the Ruler of the realm of the air, [the Ruler] of ⌜the spirit⌝ now powerfully working within the sons of disobedience; [3]among whom we all also once conducted our lives in the cravings of

1. Cf. 1:13–14, where Paul applies the blessings of God described in 1:3–12 directly to his readers and again shifts into second-person address.

2. This original sentence was probably similar to Col. 1:13 or Eph. 2:5a.

3.

Verse 2:	ἐν αἷς	ποτε		περιεπατήσατε		κατὰ . . .
Verse 3:	ἐν οἷς		καὶ ἡμεῖς πάντες	ἀνεστράφημέν	ποτε	ἐν . . .

our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the thoughts, and we were by nature children of wrath, just like the rest.

2:1 Having described how God has made his power effective for all believers (εἰς ἡμᾶς τοὺς πιστεύοντας, *eis hēmas tous pisteuontas*, for us who believe) by giving Christ the victory over all inimical heavenly powers (1:19–22), Paul again addresses his readers directly (καὶ ὑμᾶς . . . ὑμῶν, *kai hymas . . . hymōn*, and you . . . your; cf. 1:18) to remind them of how they in particular have benefited from the grace of God (Calvin 1965: 139; Alford 1857: 85; Schnackenburg 1991: 90; Hoehner 2002: 307).[4] Paul begins the new section with an adverbial clause that he will not complete with a main verb (συνεζωοποίησεν, *synezōopoiēsen*, he made [us] alive together) until 2:5. "You were," he tells his readers, νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν (*nekrous tois paraptōmasin kai tais hamartiais hymōn*, dead in your transgressions and sins). The adjective νεκρός (*nekros*, dead) was sometimes used metaphorically in Greek literature and philosophy to refer to those who were "morally or spiritually deficient" (BDAG 667; cf. Bultmann, *TDNT* 4:893). Epictetus (Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 3.23.28) says, for example, that unless the philosopher makes clear to those who would study with him their ignorant and unhappy state, then both the philosopher and the one to whom he appeals is νεκρός (cf. Luke 15:24, 32). Jesus could use the term to refer to those who did not follow him (Matt. 8:22; Luke 9:60),[5] and he could call the movement from unbelief to belief in him a change from death to life (John 5:24).[6] The early Christian hymn Paul quotes in Eph. 5:14 also used the term this way.

When Paul connects death with sin in Romans, however, he is thinking of death as the biblical penalty for sin, especially sin against the commandment of God (Gen. 2:16–17; 3:3–4; Deut. 30:19; Rom. 1:32; 5:12–14, 18–21; 6:23; 7:9–11; 8:2, 13), and that is probably also the thought here (cf. Col. 2:13).[7] The penalty of death for disobedience could be taken to mean literal, physical death (e.g., Jub. 4.29–30; Sir. 25:24), but Paul was not alone in thinking that it referred also to the general chaos created by sin (e.g., L.A.E. 44) and to separation from God both now and in eternity (e.g., 2 Esd. [4 Ezra] 7:46–61).

4. He does not, however, mean "you Gentiles" (Barth 1974: 211–12; Bruce 1984: 280; O'Brien 1999: 156), since at this point in the letter Paul has not yet started to distinguish between his readers as Gentiles and Jews. See the comments above on 1:12 and 1:13. Gombis (2004: 404–5, 407, 410) believes that in 2:1–16 the author is defending his claim in 1:20–23 that Christ has been exalted to the status of king and victor over his enemies, following the pattern of divine-warfare narratives in the ancient Near East. If this were correct, however, we would probably find a more explicit indication in 2:1 that Paul is defending his claim in 1:20–23 against those who might doubt it.

5. For this understanding of Matt. 8:22 and Luke 9:60, see Bultmann, *TDNT* 4:893; and Fitzmyer 1983: 835–36.

6. Later, in 1 John 3:14, John says that this movement from death to life proves itself in love for fellow Christians.

7. The νεκρὰ ἔργα of Heb. 6:1 and 9:14 are probably also deeds that deserve death because they are sins. See Attridge 1989: 164.

Before they believed the gospel, Paul's readers experienced a living death in the vicious way of life they pursued (4:17–19; 5:3–8, 11, 12, 16; cf. Rom. 1:18–32; Col. 1:21). The impending outpouring of God's eschatological wrath on the final day also hung over their heads like the sword of Damocles (1:14; 5:6; cf. 1 Thess. 1:10; Rom. 2:5–9; Col. 3:6–7).

The double reference to παραπτώματα (*paraptōmata*, transgressions) and ἁμαρτίαι (*hamartiai*, sins) may be still another example of the redundancy that is so characteristic of the style of Ephesians (Lincoln 1990: 93; Aletti 2001: 120n21),[8] or it may echo the language of Scripture.[9] In either case, Paul intends to emphasize the sinfulness of his readers' condition prior to their conversion rather than to make any distinction between "transgressions" and "sins," as older commentators sometimes thought.[10] When Paul speaks of sin in the undisputed letters, he conceives of it most often in the singular and as a power that holds humanity under its sway and leads them to death. The use of the plural here is sometimes thought to be "wholly unpauline" (Luz 1998: 131; cf. Pokorný 1992: 97; Hübner 1997: 156). This assessment is considerably overstated: Paul can use the plural in his undisputed letters (1 Thess. 2:16; 1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:4; Rom. 4:7; 7:5; 11:27) and even link the resurrection of Christ with rescue from "sins" (ἁμαρτίαι; 1 Cor. 15:17) just as the resurrection of Christ is linked here with rescue from "transgressions" (παραπτώματα; Eph. 2:5).[11]

2:2 Paul's readers once "walked" (περιπατέω, *peripateō*) in their transgressions. This is a characteristically Pauline word for behaving in a particular way and

8. So far, Paul has used the following phrases:

1:4 ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους
1:5 τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ
1:8 σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει
1:11 τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ
1:17 σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως
1:19 τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ

Schlier (1957: 101) is probably correct that the phrase is a "redundancy typical of preaching" (ein predigtmässiger Doppelausdruck).

9. See the LXX of Ps. 18:13–14 (19:12–13 Eng.); Ezek. 3:20; 18:24; and cf. Rom. 5:20.

10. Origen and Jerome (Heine 2002: 120), for example, believed that παράπτωμα referred to the beginning of sin and ἁμαρτία to the complete act. Eadie (1883: 118–19) suggests that the two terms refer to flagrant sin and sinful thoughts respectively. Seeing the two terms as synonymous receives confirmation in Col. 2:13, which makes basically the same point as Eph. 2:1 and uses almost identical language to do so: καὶ ὑμᾶς νεκροὺς ὄντας [ἐν] τοῖς παραπτώμασιν. Instead of following this phrase with καὶ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν, however, Col. 2:13 has καὶ τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν. In Ephesians, Paul will take up the issue of his readers' status as the ἀκροβυστία later (2:11). Here he is concerned simply with their sin against God's law. For Gentile knowledge of τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ and culpability for disobeying it, see Rom. 1:32; 2:14–16.

11. Porkorný (1992: 97) and Hübner (1997: 156) claim that these uses of the plural are only in "citations" or "traditional material." For all but three of them (1 Cor. 15:3; Rom. 4:7; 11:27), however, that is a matter of debate. It would be very difficult to make a case for the use of traditional material in Rom. 7:5.

is especially prominent in Colossians (1:10; 2:6; 3:7; 4:5) and Ephesians (2:10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15).[12] In the Pauline corpus, the term is nearly always followed by a prepositional phrase, an adverbial phrase, or a word in the dative case that more closely identifies the mode of living to which the word refers (Seesemann, *TDNT* 5:944; BDAG 803). Here Paul uses three such phrases.

The phrase ἐν αἷς (*en hais*, in which) refers back to the transgressions and sins Paul has just mentioned.[13] His readers have walked in them in the sense that, before they believed the gospel, sin dominated their lives (4:17–19; 5:3–8, 11, 12, 16; cf. Col. 1:21; 3:7).

The expression κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (*kata ton aiōna tou kosmou toutou*, according to the Course of this world) shows that their plight was even deeper than anything their own sin could have produced. As the additional note on αἰών (*aiōn*) indicates, this term could have a chronological meaning and simply refer to what Paul elsewhere calls "the present evil age" (ὁ αἰὼν ὁ ἐνεστὼς πονηρός, *ho aiōn ho enestōs ponēros*; Gal. 1:4). This is the way Paul uses the term αἰών in the rest of the letter (1:21; 2:7; 3:9, 11, 21), and his use of the term here is sandwiched between two clearly chronological uses (1:21; 2:7). At about the time that Paul wrote Ephesians, however, αἰών was beginning to take on personal connotations, and Paul's use of it here seems to participate in that movement. The "αἰών of this world" is not identical with "the Ruler of the realm of the air" in the next κατά phrase, but it is nevertheless something more powerful than simply the period of time that the world lasts in its present condition. It is a powerful mode of existence characterized by rebellion against God (cf. Schlier 1957: 102; Porkorný 1992: 99; Schwindt 2002: 382–83), something like Paul's personification of sin in Rom. 5:12–8:3.[14] It is the "Course" that a world in rebellion against God takes. Prior to their conversion, Paul's readers were at its mercy and, as the preposition κατά brings out, lived their lives according to its standards.

The phrase κατὰ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος (*kata ton archonta tēs exousias tou aeros*, according to the Ruler of the realm of the air) takes the plight of Paul's readers deeper still. The term ἐξουσία (*exousia*) is sometimes used of the "domain" or "realm" of a king (2 Kings 20:13 LXX; Luke 23:7) and metaphorically of the "realm" that the devil, or Satan, rules (Luke 4:6; cf. 22:53; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13). The domain of which Paul speaks here is the ἀήρ (*aēr*, air). In ancient Aristotelian cosmology, the ἀήρ was the region below the moon and above the earth (Urmson 1990: 10), and in much ancient thinking, it was also the habitation of spiritual powers. Plutarch (*Mor.* 274b), describing an ancient view with which he seems to agree, says that "the open air" (ὁ

12. It appears thirty-three times in the Pauline corpus, and every use is metaphorical. In the rest of the NT, only John comes close to this with two metaphorical uses in the Gospel and ten in the Epistles. Cf. the use of הָלַךְ in the OT in such passages as Isa. 33:15 and Ps. 15:2 (*HALOT* 1:247).

13. The relative pronoun αἷς is feminine, to agree with the closest of its two antecedents, ἁμαρτίαις.

14. On this element of Paul's theology in Romans, see Dunn 1998b: 111–14.

ὕπαιθρος ἀήρ, *ho hypaithros aēr*) is "full of gods and demons."[15] Diogenes Laertius (*Vit. phil.* 8.32), describing the view of Pythagoras, says that "all the air [ἀέρα, *aera*] is full of souls [ψυχῶν, *psychōn*], and these are also called [ὀνομάζεσθαι, *onomazesthai*] demons [δαίμονας, *daimonas*] and divinized, departed human beings [ἥρωας, *hērōas*]."[16] These powers were thought to send people dreams and visions. They needed to be placated and wooed with "purifications and lustrations . . . divination, and the like" (*Vit. phil.* 8.32).[17] They were also the object of magical incantations that sought to control them. Clearly, the powers that inhabited the air were widely feared.[18]

For Paul, the "air" was probably part of the "heavenly places" and the location, within them, of "every name that is named" (πᾶς ὄνομα ὀνομαζόμενος, *pas onoma onomazomenos*, 1:21). These names signified the inimical spiritual powers over whom God had given Christ the victory when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand (1:20–21; cf. 6:12). Christ's place in the heavens is high above them (1:21; 4:10), and they are beneath his feet (1:22). Before they believed the gospel, Paul's readers lived according to the norms of the Ruler of these evil beings, and in Ephesians, this Ruler could only be "the devil" (4:27; 6:11–12).[19]

The devil is not only the ruler of the air but is also the ruler τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ νῦν ἐνεργοῦντος ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας (*tou pneumatos tou nyn energountos en tois hyiois tēs apeitheias*, of the spirit now at work within the sons of disobedience). As the additional note on τοῦ πνεύματος explains, this term probably refers to the evil, spiritual force that is at work within οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς ἀπειθείας (*hoi hyioi tēs apeitheias*, the sons of disobedience; cf. 1 Cor. 2:12). The word ἀπείθεια (*apeitheia*) carries the connotation not merely of disobedience to a command but also of unbelief, a heartfelt refusal to place one's confidence in something (BDAG 99; cf. 4 Macc. 8:7–9; Rom. 11:30). In Ephesians, therefore, "the sons of disobedience" are those who have not believed "the word of truth, the gospel of . . . salvation" (1:13) and who, because of this, stand under the wrath of God (5:6; cf. 1:14; 2:3).[20] A spiritual force is powerfully at work (ἐνεργοῦντος, *energountos*, working) in these people, and the Ruler of the realm of the air, in

15. I have used, but slightly modified, the translation of Babbitt 1927–36.

16. My trans.; text in BDAG 23. Cf. the second-century-BC treatise *De universi natura* (*On the Nature of the Universe*), which divides the world into the heaven, where the gods live; earth, where human beings live; and the "airy place" (ἀέριον), where the demons live.

17. I have used, but modified, the translation of Hicks 1980.

18. See Arnold (1989: 60–61), who quotes from *PGM* 4.2699: "Protect me from every demon of the air."

19. Cf. 1 Tim. 3:6–7, 11; 2 Tim. 2:26; 3:3; and Titus 2:3. In addition to ὁ διάβολος (*ho diabolos*, the devil) Paul uses the names ὁ σατανᾶς (*ho satanas*, the Adversary, Satan; 1 Thess. 2:18; 2 Thess. 2:9; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:14; 12:7; 1 Tim. 1:20; 5:15), βελίαρ (*Beliar*, Beliar; 2 Cor. 6:15), and ὁ πειράζων (*ho peirazōn*, the tempter; 1 Thess. 3:5) for this spiritual being. Cf. Arnold 1989: 65.

20. The phrase οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς ἀπειθείας (also present in 5:6; cf. 5:8) preserves a Semitic use of the noun בֵּן to mean "one of a group or type, with a certain destiny" (*HALOT* 1:138). See, e.g., Num. 17:25 MT (17:10 Eng.); 2 Sam. 3:34; and Hos. 10:9; 1 Thess. 5:5.

which God's spiritual enemies are active, also presides over this spiritual force, which influences the behavior of those in rebellion against God.

In summary, before Paul's readers heard and believed the gospel, they were walking in their own transgressions of God's law. They also walked according to the standard set by the world around them and according to the norms of the one who rules both the demonic realm and the spiritual force that powerfully pervades that realm.

2:3 Paul now emphasizes that this plight affected every human being, including himself (ἐν οἷς καὶ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἀνεστράφημέν ποτε, *en hois kai hēmeis pantes anestraphēmen pote*, among whom we all also once conducted our lives). A vast company of interpreters has argued that the phrase καὶ ἡμεῖς (*kai hēmeis*, we also) means "we Jews also," and that Paul now broadens his description of his Gentile readers' plight to include in it all humanity, even the Jewish people.[21] Paul certainly does this in Romans (2:17; 3:19, 22b–23), but in Ephesians ethnicity does not enter the argument until 2:11.[22] Here in 2:3, those who first heard this letter read would have no way of knowing that the first-person plural meant anything other than what it meant when it last appeared in the text. There it had clearly referred to Paul and his readers (ἡμᾶς τοὺς πιστεύοντας, *hēmas tous pisteuontas*, "us who believe," 1:19), not to Paul and his fellow Jews. Here, then, Paul shifts to the first-person plural and repeats the substance of 2:2a (ἐν αἷς ποτε περιεπατήσατε, *en hais pote periepatēsate*, in which you once walked) in order to show that the plight he has just described has affected every Christian, without exception, himself included. It is not as if his readers lived especially evil lives before they believed the gospel: every human being was numbered among "the sons of disobedience" of verses 1 and 2.[23] It is a plight, therefore, that all believers, no matter who they are, once shared with "the rest" (οἱ λοιποί, *hoi loipoi*) of unbelieving humanity.

In this verse Paul also extends his description of the plight his readers and all Christians suffered before they believed the gospel. He does this in two ways. First, he says that the human plight covered the entire person: mind and flesh, thoughts and deeds. Before they believed the gospel, Paul and his readers lived in the "cravings" (ἐπιθυμίαις, *epithymiais*) of their flesh, performing the "desires" (θελήματα, *thelēmata*) of the flesh. They also performed the desires of their "thoughts" (διανοιῶν, *dianoiōn*).

Paul can occasionally use the term ἐπιθυμία (*epithymia*) to refer to a "desire" for something good (Phil. 1:23; 1 Thess. 2:17), but most of the time he uses

21. E.g., Calvin 1965: 141; Abbott 1897: 43; Robinson 1904: 49; Westcott 1906: 30; Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 66; Barth 1974: 116–17; Bruce 1984: 283; Porkorný 1992: 100; Hübner 1997: 159–60; O'Brien 1999: 161; cf. Muddiman 2001: 105–6; Yee 2005: 46–56.

22. Hoehner 2002: 317–18; cf. Alford 1857: 87–88; Ellicott 1859: 35; Eadie 1883: 130–31; Haupt 1902a: 53; Lincoln 1990: 97; Schnackenburg 1991: 92; Best 1998: 207–8.

23. Although the two clauses ἐν αἷς (v. 2a) and ἐν οἷς (v. 3) are rhetorically parallel to one another, the relative pronoun οἷς does not refer back to παραπτώμασιν (v. 1) in the same way that αἷς refers back to ἁμαρτίαις. The antecedent of οἷς is instead the much closer noun υἱοῖς (v. 2b).

it in a negative way.[24] In Galatians and Romans, he connects ἐπιθυμία closely with "flesh" (σάρξ, *sarx*), and he draws a contrast between Christian existence and behavior on one hand and the cravings of the "flesh" on the other (Gal. 5:16, 24; Rom. 13:14). In its only other use in Ephesians (4:22), Paul connects it, as he does here, with the old "manner of life" (ἀναστροφή, *anastrophē*) that his readers were taught to abandon when they heard and believed the gospel. There he adds that ἐπιθυμίαι (*epithymiai*, cravings) are "deceitful" (τῆς ἀπάτης, *tēs apatēs*) and connects them with the "continual corruption" (φθειρόμενον, *phtheiromenon*) of humanity. Here, then, "the cravings of our flesh" are the deceitful, evil desires that arise from the human tendency toward rebellion against God and subsequent self-destruction.

The term θέλημα (*thelēma*, desire), at least in the Pauline corpus, is a more neutral word than ἐπιθυμία. God (1:9; 6:6; cf. 1 Thess. 4:3; Rom. 2:18; 12:2; Col. 1:9; 4:12), Christ (5:17; cf. 1 Thess. 5:18), the devil (2 Tim. 2:26), and people generally (1 Cor. 16:12) all will or desire that certain events happen (BDAG 447). Here, however, the term's link to both ἐπιθυμία and σάρξ gives it a clearly negative connotation. Since θέλημα appears in 1 Cor. 7:37 with the meaning "sexual desire" (cf. John 1:13), and since in Eph. 5:3–6 Paul expresses concern that his readers not lapse into the inappropriate sexual conduct of "the sons of disobedience" (cf. 2:2), it is possible that the term also carries a hint of that meaning here (Schrenk, *TDNT* 3:61). Here it makes a rare appearance in the plural, a form in which it can refer to sexual desires in the magical papyri.[25]

The term διάνοιαι (*dianoiai*, thoughts) describes the result of mental processes or reflections (Behm, *TDNT* 4:963–64). "The converse of the soul with itself, without speech, is what we called thought [διάνοια]," says Plato (*Soph.* 263e, quoted from Urmson 1990: 41). It is not normally a negative part of the human psychological makeup, but in this context it clearly has negative connotations of mental decisions that run counter to what God desires (cf. 4:18; Num. 15:39 LXX; Sir. 29:16; 2 Macc. 2:2; 1 Esd. 4:26). Paul elsewhere calls this "the mind of the flesh" (τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός, *to phronēma tēs sarkos*), which is "at enmity with God" (ἔχθρα εἰς θεόν, *echthra eis theon*), is unable to submit to his law (Rom. 8:5, 7; cf. Rom. 1:21, 28; Col. 2:18), and needs to be renewed (Rom. 12:2).[26]

The cravings and desires of the flesh and the desires of the thoughts gave way, Paul says, to actions (ἀνεστράφημεν . . . ποιοῦντες, *anestraphēmen* . . .

24. 1 Thess. 4:5; Gal. 5:16, 24; Rom. 1:24; 6:12; 7:7–8; 13:14; Col. 3:5; Eph. 4:22; 1 Tim. 6:9; Titus 2:12; 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:22; 3:6; 4:3.

25. See Schrenk (*TDNT* 3:53), who points to the use of the term in *PGM* 4.1521 (cf. 1532): τὰ ἐμὰ θελήματα πάντα ποιείτω, *ta ema thelēmata panta poieitō*, let her perform all my desires). In the NT, θέλημα occurs in the plural only here in Eph. 2:3 and in the quotation of Isa. 44:28 in Acts 13:22 (Hoehner 2002: 321), but the idiom ποιεῖν θελήματα occurs fairly frequently in the LXX: Isa. 44:28; 58:13; 2 Macc. 1:3.

26. In Rom. 12:2 Paul uses the term νοῦς (*nous*, mind). Cf. Abbott 1897: 44; Bruce 1984: 284; and Marshall 2004b: 320n22.

poiountes, we lived . . . doing). The whole package—flesh and mind, deeds and thoughts—placed everyone squarely among the "sons of disobedience" (cf. 4:17–19).

Paul's description of the flesh as "ours" (ἡμῶν, *hēmōn*) and his use of the basically neutral terms θέλημα and διάνοια in this passage show that he thinks of neither the flesh nor the mind as outside powers that have driven people, against their will, into rebellion against God.[27] All humankind has chosen willfully and thoughtfully to live among the sons of disobedience and to act on their rebellious cravings, desires, and thoughts.

This is not the whole story, however; so Paul adds a second element to his description of the human plight in verses 1–2. All (including himself) are τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς (*tekna physei orgēs*, children of wrath by nature). Ὀργῆς (*orgēs*, of wrath) is a "genitive of destination," describing the destiny of the children (cf. Rom. 9:22).[28] Before Paul and his readers embraced the gospel of salvation (1:13), they were destined for the eschatological outpouring of God's wrath upon the disobedient (cf. Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rom. 2:5, 8; 3:5; 5:9; 12:19; Col. 3:6), a process that Paul believed had already begun (Rom. 1:18; Eph. 5:6).

This destiny, moreover, was theirs φύσει (*physei*, by nature). This term referred to the condition into which someone was born, and the dative singular of the word, the form Paul uses here, often meant "by birth."[29] Paul uses the term here, therefore, to emphasize that although unbelieving human beings are culpable for their sinful cravings, desires, and thoughts (vv. 1–3a), they have chosen this path inevitably, in agreement with the state into which they were born (cf. Rom. 5:12; 2 Esd. [4 Ezra] 7:62–69, 116–18).[30]

27. This is confirmed by the other uses of the term σάρξ in Ephesians, all of which regard σάρξ as either neutral (2:11; 6:5, 12) or positive (2:14; 5:29, 31). Best (1998: 209) sees a difference between Ephesians and the undisputed letters in the use of the personal pronoun (our) with σάρξ here in 2:3. Paul, he argues, rarely if ever (Rom. 7:18?) uses σάρξ with a personal pronoun when he connects σάρξ with sin. The author uses the personal pronoun here, he says, to make clear that σάρξ is not a cosmic power outside of human beings. Dunn (1998b: 66–67) observes perceptively, however, that in Rom. 7–8 there is a close connection between the "I" and the "flesh," and yet Paul makes clear that it is "sin," not the "I" (and therefore not the "flesh"), that stands outside of humanity and pushes human beings to rebel against God. If Dunn is correct, then there is agreement between Romans and Ephesians on this very subtle point, an agreement that actually favors the authenticity of Ephesians.

28. On the "genitive of destination," see Wallace 1996: 101. The expression "children of wrath" probably preserves the Semitic use of בֵּן to refer to "one of a group or type, with a certain destiny" (*HALOT* 1:138). See note 20 above and 1 Sam. 26:16; Pss. 79:11 MT, Eng. [78:11 LXX]; 102:21 MT [101:21 LXX; 102:20 Eng.]; 2 Thess. 2:3; and 1 Pet. 1:14. For hesitations about seeing the expression with τέκνα as a Semitic idiom, see Jobes 2005: 115.

29. See, e.g., Gal. 2:15 (φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι, Jews by birth); Sophocles, *Oed. col.* 1295 (φύσει νεώτερος, younger by birth); *Aj.* 1301 (φύσει . . . βασίλεια, a queen by birth); and Herodotus, *Hist.* 7.134.2 (φύσι . . . γεγονότες εὖ, noble by birth).

30. The term φύσει sometimes referred to someone's origins "by birth" (φύσει) in contrast to who they were "by adoption" (θέσει; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil.* 9.25). In light of the important role that "adoption" (υἱοθεσία) plays in the benediction (1:5; cf. 1:11, 14), it is tempting to find an implicit contrast here with the status of believers as adopted children of God.

Summary

In 2:1–3 Paul begins to describe how God's great power has benefited individuals within the church by emphasizing the depth of the sinful plight in which everyone was mired. This plight was all-encompassing. Everyone, without exception, chose to sin. They received encouragement to do this by the norms laid down within the rebellious system of this world and by the invisible Ruler of the cosmic realm of evil. They also received encouragement to sin by their own tendency to rebel against God, a tendency that came naturally to them and was expressed in the outworking of their thoughts and desires. In a way reminiscent of Rom. 1:18–3:20, Paul has described the plight of human rebellion against God in the bleakest terms. There are no exceptions to it and, humanly speaking, no escape from it. Just as in Rom. 3:21–26, then, the description of the grace of God in 2:4–10 comes as an immense relief.

Additional Notes

2:2. The meaning of the term αἰών in 2:2 is not entirely clear. It can mean "a segment of time as a particular unit of history, *age*" (BDAG 32). This meaning is common in other writers of Paul's period, whether Christian, Jewish, or pagan, and Paul often uses the term this way.[31] Paul has already used it with this temporal sense in 1:21 and seems to use it again this way in 2:7, so the decision to read the term as "age" in 2:2 at first seems obvious (Lincoln 1990: 94–95; O'Brien 1999: 158–59; Hoehner 2002: 310). Since αἰών can have a spatial meaning ("world") as well as a temporal meaning ("age"), the qualifying reference to the κόσμος would simply be another example of Paul's (or the author's) redundant style in this letter (Masson 1953: 158n3; Lincoln 1990: 95; Muddiman 2001: 103).[32] This reading of the phrase is reasonable and may well be correct.

The redundant style of Ephesians, however, might also support reading αἰών here as the name of an invisible being. Paul's next words comprise another prepositional phrase, headed by κατά, that describes the former lives of his Christian readers as lived "according to" a being that Paul says is a "ruler." This invisible power is probably identical with "the devil," which Paul mentions later in the letter (4:27; 6:11). If this κατά phrase stands parallel to the first κατά phrase, then it describes again the object of that phrase and does so in unmistakably personal terms. The resulting translation of both phrases would then be "according to the Aeon of this world, according to the Ruler of the realm of the air. . . ." The terms "aeon" and "ruler" would refer to the same inimical spiritual power.

The theory that a god called αἰών was worshiped as early as 200 BC in Egypt (e.g., Reitzenstein 1921: 188–207; Sasse, *TDNT* 1:198; Bruce 1984: 282; Lincoln 1990: 94; cf. Barth 1974: 214; Muddiman 2001: 103) is based on evidence of uncertain historical worth (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 51.22.8–10; *Historia Alexandri Magni* 30.6) and is probably not correct (Nock 1934: 92–97; Fraser 1972: 336–37; Drijvers, *DDD* 13–14).[33] At least by the early second century AD, however, the term was used to refer to deity,

31. Among the texts listed in BDAG 32, see especially T. Benj. 11.3; 1 Cor. 1:20; 2:6; 3:18; Gal. 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rom. 12:2; 1 Tim. 6:17; Titus 2:12; 2 Tim. 4:10; Ign. *Eph.* 17.1; 19.1; *SIG* 797.9.

32. By the first century AD, the Hebrew term עוֹלָם and the Aramaic term עָלְמָא could mean both "age" and "world," and the use of αἰών with these two senses in the NT may originate with this development. See Sasse, *TDNT* 1:204.

33. Epiphanius wrote in the late fourth century AD, and the earliest manuscript of the *Alexander Romance* comes from the third century AD. Stoneman (1991: 8–17) argues forcefully that the

if not to a particular deity with its own cult. Epictetus (Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 2.5.13) can say, "I am not αἰών but a human being, a part of everything as an hour is a part of a day." Does he mean that he is not "eternal"?[34] If so, it seems odd that he used the noun αἰών rather than the adjective αἰώνιος. Still, he uses the term later in a clearly temporal sense to refer to a statue that does not move "for the whole αἰών" (Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 2.8.20).

A similar ambiguity occurs at about the same time in Ignatius. He uses the term primarily in a temporal sense (*Eph.* inscr.; 8.1; 17.1; 19.1; *Magn.* 1.2; 6.1; *Trall.* 4.2; *Rom.* 6.1; 7.1; *Phld.* 6.2; *Smyrn.* 1.2), but in *Eph.* 19.2, just after speaking of "the ruler of this age" he asks, "How then was he [Christ] manifested to the aeons"?[35] This could be a temporal reference, but it makes somewhat better sense as a reference to inimical spiritual powers, Aeons. By the second century, "the name Aion was in the air" (Nock 1934: 97): it began to appear on coins in connection with the Roman emperor, it cropped up as a deity or class of deities, especially within gnosticism (e.g., Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.1.1; 1.30.2, 11; Hippolytus, *Haer.* 6.14.6; *PGL* 56), and it appeared in the magical papyri (Nock 1934: 78, 83–84; Arnold 1989: 59). Evidence such as this has led a number of commentators to see Paul's use of αἰών in 2:2 as a reference to an evil personal power—"the god of this age" (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου), as he calls him in 2 Cor. 4:4, or "the devil," as he will call him in Eph. 4:27 and 6:11 (e.g., Gnilka 1971: 114; Schnackenburg 1991: 91; Best 1998; BDAG 33).[36]

Against this interpretation, it is commonly said that Paul always uses the term αἰών elsewhere in its temporal sense and has done so in the immediate context of 2:2 (cf. 1:21; 2:7). To suddenly use it here of a personal power, the argument goes, would be confusing (Arnold 1989: 59; O'Brien 1999: 158–59; cf. MacDonald 2000: 229; Hoehner 2002: 310). As we have just seen, however, this is exactly the state of affairs with Ignatius, and something similar happens with Epictetus. Every use of the term in Ignatius is temporal, except *Eph.* 19.2, and that one use occurs directly after a temporal use of the term. Epictetus uses the term only twice in his extant corpus, but here too a use that seems to mean "god" (Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 2.5.13) is followed by a clearly temporal use (2.8.20).

In light of the ambiguous evidence, a firm decision on the meaning of αἰών in 2:2 does not seem possible. It is probably best to conclude, with the author of one of the most thorough discussions of the issue (Schwindt 2002: 379–83), that already in the undisputed writings of Paul the terms αἰών and κόσμος overlap, just as they do here, to describe less a chronological concept than a powerful sphere of existence that is opposed to God (1 Cor. 1:20; 2:6; 3:18). In the second half of the first century and the first half of the second century, the term was beginning to gather around it the connotations of personal power that would eventually become explicit in the second half of the second century.

2:2. The genitive phrase τοῦ πνεύματος is ambiguous and has been understood in a number of different ways. It could stand in apposition to τὸν ἄρχοντα, with the result that the ruler is renamed as "the spirit now at work among the sons of disobedience" (Masson 1953: 158; Gnilka 1971: 115n4; cf. Robinson 1904: 154–55). Since nouns in apposition to each other normally occupy the same case, and since τὸν ἄρχοντα is accusative whereas τοῦ πνεύματος is genitive, it is necessary, on this

Alexander Romance contains much ancient material, and he believes that the section describing Alexander's establishment of the worship of Serapis at Alexandria (which also mentions the cult of "Aion") dates to the early Ptolemaic period (30.6). As Stoneman says, however, the *Alexander Romance* was the object of much editorial activity over many centuries. Any early dating for the reference to organized worship of "Aion" must, therefore, remain very uncertain.

34. W. Oldfather (1925–28) translates the relevant phrase, "For I am not eternal, but a man."

35. On Ignatius's use of the word, see Schoedel 1985: 63n2, 91n24.

36. According to Yee (2005: 49–53), the author uses αἰών in an "ethnographic" sense as if it were the national god of the Gentiles, who stands in contrast to the true, Jewish God.

explanation, to believe that the genitive-case words immediately before and after τοῦ πνεύματος have driven it into the genitive case.

If this seems implausible, and we choose to follow normal Greek grammar and syntax exactly, τοῦ πνεύματος would stand in apposition to the genitive case noun that immediately precedes it, τοῦ ἀέρος. Τοῦ πνεύματος would then mean that the evil "atmosphere" over which the devil rules is a spiritual atmosphere of resistance to the gospel (Schlier 1957: 104–5). In this passage, however, ἀήρ seems to be the geographical location of the ruler's realm. It is the place where evil spiritual beings dwell, not the evil atmosphere that they produce (cf. Haupt 1902a: 51).

Perhaps, then, τοῦ πνεύματος is closely related to τῆς ἐξουσίας and refers to the evil spirits that exist in the devil's realm, conceived as a single group at work in those who are rebellious against God (Alford 1857: 87; Eadie 1883: 129; E. Scott 1930: 163). Here again, however, grammar stands in the way: if Paul intended to speak of evil "spirits," why did he use the singular?

Probably we should take τοῦ πνεύματος as syntactically parallel to τῆς ἐξουσίας and dependent, like τῆς ἐξουσίας, on τὸν ἄρχοντα. Τοῦ πνεύματος might then point backward to τῆς ἐξουσίας and refer to the evil "spirit" that pervades the devil's realm, that the devil presides over as ruler, and that is also at work in those who are disobedient to God (Ellicott 1859: 34; Abbott 1897: 42; Haupt 1902a: 51–52; Lincoln 1990: 97). Alternatively, τοῦ πνεύματος might point forward to τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας and refer to the interior life of those who rebel against God: the ruler not only presides over the realm of the air but also over the spiritual aspect of people who are disobedient to God (Hoehner 2002: 315; Wallace 1996: 103). Paul can use the term "spirit" in Ephesians of the spiritual faculty within human beings (4:23), and this may be the way he is using it here. On balance, however, it seems more likely that Paul would speak of an evil force "working" (ἐνεργοῦντος) within the disobedient than of the inward, spiritual part of the disobedient being at work in them. If we see "spirit" here as a reference to an evil force, then it forms an antithetical parallel to God himself, who "effected" (ἐνήργησεν) the resurrection and exaltation of Christ (1:20; cf. 2 Cor. 4:12) and in doing this defeated the inimical powers that populate the devil's realm (Eph. 1:21–22).

B. Objects of God's Mercy (2:4–7)

Paul now offers the positive counterpart to the dark shadows of the human plight described in 2:1–3. Although sin, encouraged by human rebellion, evil spiritual forces, the flesh, and the mind, had made Paul and his readers objects of God's justified wrath (2:1–3), God has responded to their situation by uniting them to the risen and victorious Christ (2:5–6).

In 2:4–7 Paul wants to emphasize two elements of this response. First, he wants his readers to understand that God's response has arisen from his persistently merciful, loving, and gracious character. Paul communicates this in both explicit and subtle ways. He speaks in explicitly effusive language of God's "rich" mercy, his "great" love, and the "surpassing wealth" of his grace. He also clearly attributes the motive for God's saving work on behalf of believers to God's character. He has rescued them "because" of his mercy and "on account of" his great love (v. 4) and to "show" them his abundant grace for eternity (v. 7).

On a more subtle level, Paul repeats the substance of the desperate plight he has just described in 2:1–3 immediately before speaking of God's saving action (2:5a). He seems to do this, in part, to place the depths of the plight and the lavishness of God's response in striking contrast to each other. In his repetition, moreover, he brings the expression "when you/we were" forward (cf. 2:1, 3; Col. 2:13) to place special emphasis on the timing of God's mercy: God has rescued believers precisely when they could do nothing to help themselves (cf. Rom. 5:6, 8, 10). When Paul breaks into his own discourse in 2:5b, therefore, with the statement that "by grace you are saved," it is not surprising that the term "grace" appears first in the phrase. This is where Paul wants the emphasis to lie.

Second, Paul focuses on the critical role of Christ in God's saving work on his readers' behalf. He draws a studied parallel between, on the one hand, God's use of "the might of his strength" to raise Christ from the dead and seat him, victorious over his cosmic enemies, at God's right hand in heavenly places in 1:19–21 and, on the other hand, his rescue of believers by making them alive together with Christ and raising and seating them together with him in heavenly places. This implies that just as Christ became victorious over death and over the inimical spiritual forces ranged against him (1:21–22a; cf. 6:12), so believers have become victorious over their spiritual death and over "the Ruler of the realm of the air, [the Ruler] of the spirit now powerfully working within the sons of disobedience" (vv. 1–2). This does not mean that believers have become victorious in the same way Christ has—Paul is careful not to say that believers have been exalted

to God's right hand (cf. 2:6 with 1:20)—but the victory that God has given to Christ he has also graciously given to believers because they are "in Christ Jesus" (v. 6) and are therefore united "with" him in his victory over the enemies of God's people.

Exegesis and Exposition

[4]But God, because he is rich in mercy, on account of his great love with which he loved us, [5]even when we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together ⌜with Christ⌝—⌜by grace⌝ you are saved—[6]and raised us together with him and seated us together with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus [7]in order that he might show in the coming ages the surpassing wealth of his grace by kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

2:4 With the phrase ὁ δὲ θεός (*ho de theos*, but God), Paul now begins to describe God's response to the seemingly hopeless plight into which sin, the flesh, the mind, and the demonic world have plunged humanity (2:1–3). Although Paul and his readers deserve God's wrath (v. 3), God has made it possible for them to escape this otherwise inevitable destiny and to share Christ's victory over evil (vv. 5–6). Paul begins by announcing the primary theme of the section, a theme that he will pick up again at its conclusion (v. 7): God did this because of his overwhelmingly merciful and loving character. The participle ὤν (*ōn*, because he is) stands parallel to the causal prepositional phrase διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀγάπην αὐτοῦ (*dia tēn pollēn agapēn autou*, because of his great love) and, like it, indicates the cause of the action described in the sentence's three main verbs (συνεζωοποίησεν . . . συνήγειρεν . . . συνεκάθισεν, *synezōopoiēsen . . . synēgeiren . . . synekathisen*). God united Paul and his readers with Christ in his new life, resurrection, and exaltation to God's right hand because of something about his character: he is rich in mercy and possesses much love.

In emphasizing the abundance of God's mercy and love, and his willingness, out of this mercy, to rescue his people when they deserve his wrath, Paul is echoing themes familiar from OT, early Jewish, and early Christian contexts. The OT frequently describes the Lord as "abounding in steadfast love" (רַב־חֶסֶד, *rab-ḥesed*), a phrase that the LXX persistently renders with the single word πολυέλεος (*polyeleos*, very merciful).[1] In most of the passages where this phrase occurs, God is said to be abundantly merciful precisely within a context where he might justifiably pour out his wrath upon his people or, in the case of its occurrence in Jon. 4:2, on the people of Nineveh (exceptions

1. LXX: Exod. 34:6; Num. 14:18; 2 Esd. 19:17 (Neh. 9:17 MT, Eng.); Pss. 85:5, 15 (86:5, 15 MT, Eng.); 102:8 (103:8 MT, Eng.); 144:8 (145:8 MT [גדל חסד], Eng.); Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2; Sir. 2:11; 3 Macc. 6:9; 1QS 4.4; 1QH[a] 15.27; 19.28; 20.14; 23.5. Cf. 1 Pet. 1:3 (κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος). For the translation of πολυέλεος as "very merciful," see LSJ 1438 and LEH 505. On the parallels between the language of abundant mercy in Ephesians and the Qumran texts, see especially Kuhn 1968: 119; and on the terms ἐλεέω and ἔλεος generally, see *TLNT* 1:471–79.

are Exod. 34:6; Pss. 86:5, 15; 145:8). The phrase is so common in the OT that it was probably used in Jewish liturgy prior to the Second Temple period and has remained in liturgical use in the synagogue in the form of the so-called Thirteen Attributes of God (Exod. 34:6–7) down to the present (Sarna 1991: 216). The concept, if not the precise language, also shows up in Jesus's parable of the unjust slave, where the king, who represents God, speaks of how he "had mercy" (ἠλέησα, *ēleēsa*) on a slave who owed him the unimaginable sum of 10,000 talents (Matt. 18:33).

Paul follows his description of God's rich mercy with a reference to ἡ πολλὴ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ (*hē pollē agapē autou*, his great love). Love is an important theme in Ephesians: Paul speaks of God the Father's love for Christ Jesus (1:6), of God's love for believers (here in 2:4),[2] of Christ's love for believers (3:17, 19; 5:1–2, 25), of the love of God and of Christ as the basis for the love that believers should have for one another (5:2, 25, 28; cf. 1:4, 15; 4:2, 15–16; 6:23), and of the love of believers for the Lord Jesus Christ (6:24). The language of love here in 2:4 is intended to reexpress the idea of God's mercy, and so we should not distinguish between the two concepts, but Paul's use of ἀγάπη (*agapē*) and ἀγαπάω (*agapaō*) to explain God's mercy, and the emphasis he places on the concept of love through the cognate accusative construction (τὴν . . . ἀγάπην . . . ἣν ἠγάπησεν, *tēn . . . agapēn . . . hēn ēgapēsen*, the love with which he loved),[3] show the concept's importance and prepare the way for the prominent place of love in chapters 3–6.

2:5–6

Before getting to the set of three main verbs on which everything in 2:1–5a depends grammatically, Paul repeats the substance of 2:1.[4] This not only recalls the train of thought that Paul interrupted in 2:2–3 but also throws the bleakness of the human plight and the lavishness of God's mercy and love into dramatic juxtaposition. Paul makes this juxtaposition especially prominent by bringing the ὄντας (*ontas*) forward and so emphasizing that it was precisely "when we were" dead that God intervened (cf. Rom. 5:6, 8, 10).[5]

2. It is possible that 1:4; 3:17; and 5:1 also belong in this category.

3. Robertson (1934: 478) further specifies this as a cognate accusative of "inner content," meaning that the accusative form is not the object of the verb but the means of its accomplishment. In these instances, the addition of "with" in English translation is appropriate. Cf. Eph. 4:1, τῆς κλήσεως ἧς ἐκλήθητε, although here the accusative relative pronoun has been attracted to the genitive case of its antecedent.

4. Eph. 2:1 καὶ ὑμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν

Eph. 2:5 καὶ ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν

Col. 2:13 καὶ ὑμᾶς νεκροὺς ὄντας [ἐν] τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν

5. Ellicott 1859: 37–38; Schnackenburg 1991: 94. The καί, then, is probably ascensive ("even when we were dead"), as, e.g., Eadie 1883: 141; Abbott 1897: 47; Porkorný 1992: 102; and Hoehner 2002: 329 believe. Others have taken it as concessive (Aletti 2001: 126–27), as a simple repetition of the καί in 2:1 (Dibelius and Greeven 1954: 67), as part of an early Christian liturgical phrase that also appears in Col. 2:13a (J. Sanders 1965: 220, 222–23), or as simply a reformulation, like Eph. 2:1, of Col. 2:13a (Best 1997a: 78).

Paul then describes God's gracious response to the human plight and, in doing so, finally provides the main verbs that govern the opening participial phrase in 2:1. Rescue from the plight described in 2:1–3 and 5a comes through the union of believers with Christ's new life, his resurrection, and his exaltation to God's right hand. Just as God used "the might of his strength" to raise Christ from the dead and seat him at his right hand "in the heavenly places" (1:19–20), so he has already raised and seated Christians together with him "in the heavenly places" (Allen 1986: 103–4). Paul uses three verbs that begin with the prepositional prefix σύν (*syn*) to communicate this, and although in their compounded form the verbs are unusual, the ideas conveyed by the compounded forms are not uncommon in the New Testament.

The first verb, συζωοποιέω (*syzōopoieō*, make alive together with), appears only here and in the closely related Col. 2:13 in all known Greek literature prior to the Pauline Letters.[6] The Paul of the undisputed letters, however, is fond of verbs compounded with the preposition σύν (e.g., 1 Cor. 4:8; 12:26; Gal. 2:19; Phil. 3:10; 2 Cor. 7:3; Rom. 6:4, 6, 8; 8:17), and uses the verb ζωοποιέω to speak of the link between Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of believers (Rom. 8:11; cf. 1 Cor. 15:22; Best 1998: 214). He can also use the preposition σύν with the verb ζάω (*zaō*, live) either separately (1 Thess. 5:10) or in a compounded form (Rom. 6:8), to speak of Christians living with the resurrected Christ. The second σύν verb, συνεγείρω (*synegeirō*, raise together with), appears only here and in Colossians (2:12; 3:1) in the NT; yet again, the idea that the believer's resurrection from the dead is closely linked to Christ's resurrection is common coinage in early Christian literature and is especially characteristic of Paul (1 Cor. 15:12–22, 48). The third term, συγκαθίζω (*synkathizō*, sit together with), appears only here in a transitive sense in the NT (cf. Luke 22:55), but the thought that the people of God will reign with God or Christ in heaven is not uncommon in literature from the period (Aune 1997: 261–62).[7] The most unusual element about all three verbs is their past tense: here the Christian's life, resurrection, and royal position with Christ are events that have already happened.[8]

Between the first verb (συνεζωοποίησεν) with its object (τῷ Χριστῷ, *tō Christō*, with Christ) and the other two verbs, Paul breaks into the sentence with a direct second-person address to his readers that both summarizes what he is trying to say and anticipates the theme of his next paragraph (χάριτί ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι, *chariti este sesōsmenoi*, by grace you are saved). Χάρις (*charis*, grace) recalls the rich mercy and great love of God that Paul has already described in 2:4 and carries these concepts further by emphasizing the absolutely free nature of God's action on behalf of believers: he acted out of no obligation whatsoever, but only out of his own generosity (cf. 2:7–8; Rom. 3:24;

6. The articles on the word in LSJ 1670 and BDAG 954 imply this, and a search of the *TLG* seems to confirm it.

7. Dan. 7:9; 2 Tim. 2:12; Mark 10:37; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; Rev. 3:21; 4:4, 10; 11:16; 4Q521 2.7; cf. Wis. 3:8; 1 Cor. 6:2–3.

8. Col. 2:12–13 and 3:1–2 express similar ideas, but mention of the believer's heavenly reign with Christ is unique to Ephesians. See Allen 1986: 105.

11:6; Titus 3:7; BDAG 1079). As we have just seen (in the comments on 2:4), the language of God's abundant mercy and graciousness appears frequently in the OT and Second Temple Judaism. The language specifically of χάρις also surrounded people who lived in the urban areas of the Roman Empire in the first century as a common term used in inscriptions to describe the massively generous benefactions of the Julio-Claudian emperors (Harrison 1999: 83–90; 2003: 48–49).[9] Paul and his readers would have been familiar with this language, and Paul may have intended his audience to see in his own use of it here the implicit claim that in Christ, God's benefaction toward his people has outstripped anything Rome had to offer (Whitlark 2003).[10]

The phrase ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι is a perfect periphrastic construction that, in this context, describes a present state of being: Paul's readers are saved.[11] The term σῴζω (*sōzō*) often refers to rescue from destruction (1 Cor. 1:18; 3:15; 2 Cor. 2:15; Rom. 9:27; Mark 8:35; BDAG 982–83) and is therefore a particularly apt word to use for God's merciful, gracious, and loving deliverance of believers from the desperate situation Paul has described in 2:1–3.

When Paul speaks of salvation in the undisputed letters, he normally refers to it as something believers will experience in the future, presumably at the final day (1 Thess. 2:16; 1 Cor. 3:15; 5:5; 10:33; Rom. 5:9–10; 9:27; 10:9; 11:26), although he can also describe it as an ongoing event in the present (1 Cor. 1:18; 15:2; 2 Cor. 2:15) and say, "Now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2; cf. Isa. 49:8; Best 1998: 602). In one passage he uses the verb in the aorist tense (ἐσώθημεν, *esōthēmen*, we were saved) but in a context that emphasizes the future orientation of salvation (Rom. 8:24). In passages where he speaks of persuading others of the truth of the gospel as "saving" them, it is unclear whether salvation is something that happens in the present when the person believes the gospel or in the future (1 Cor. 1:21; 7:16; 9:22; Rom. 11:14).

This evidence means that, like Paul's use of the aorist tense for the resurrection of believers and their seating with Christ, the use of the perfect tense in Eph. 2:5 and 8 for salvation is unusual. Here salvation is something that is emphatically present for believers.[12] They have already been made alive with Christ, already raised with him, and even already seated with him in heavenly places.[13] Their resurrection has, in some sense, already taken place (cf. Col. 3: 1).

9. The following example, from Ephesus sometime after AD 14, is typical: "By the favor ([χάρι]τι) of Caesar Augustus God from the holy revenues which he himself gave to the goddess the road was made level in the proconsulship of Sextus Appuleius" (Harrison 2003: 49). The goddess is Ephesian Artemis.

10. This understanding of the background for Paul's use of grace terminology in 2:5, 7–8 seems more plausible than the specifically Ephesian background that Harrison 2003: 242–47 finds for it in magic and the cult of Artemis.

11. Campbell (2008a: 107) comments, "Sometimes the context can create stative *Aktionsart* even if the lexeme is not itself stative. Stative perfects are normally present in their temporal reference."

12. If the disputed letters are included in the analysis of the evidence, however, this perspective is less unusual. See 2 Tim. 1:9 and Titus 3:5.

13. When Paul touches on the believer's resurrection from the dead elsewhere in his letters, he never refers to it explicitly as an event that has already taken place, even when he correlates

Moreover, there is no mention of Christ's cross here, but only of his resurrection and victorious exaltation, something that stands out all the more when we compare the passage to Rom. 5:6–11 and Col. 2:11–15, passages whose language Eph. 2:5–6 seems to echo. In Rom. 5 Paul describes the plight of people before they embrace the gospel, just as he does in Eph. 2:1 and 5a, by using a form of ὤν (*ōn*, being) adverbially to emphasize that it was precisely while they were in the grip of weakness (Rom. 5:6), sin (5:8), and hostility to God (5:10) that God rescued them. The rescue of sinners comes not through Christ's resurrection, however, but through his death (5:6, 8–9a, 10a), and although justification lies in the past (5:1), final salvation is still future (5:9).

In Colossians the rescue comes in part through the union of believers with Christ's resurrection, but believers are also united, through baptism with Christ's burial (2:12), and the crucifixion of Christ plays a large role in the triumph of believers over the powers (2:14–15).[14] Rather than depicting believers as already reigning with Christ, moreover, in Colossians the life of believers is hidden with Christ, who sits at God's right hand, only to be revealed when Christ himself is revealed in the future (3:1–3; cf. 2 Cor. 13:4).

Is all this a sign that Ephesians comes from a time in which Paul's apocalyptic outlook (with its expectation of the resurrection and future salvation) has faded and now salvation is accomplished, albeit still by God's grace, through baptism into the church (Luz 1976: 369–75)? Does this passage show a decided retreat from the Pauline, and even Colossian, teaching on suffering with Christ, a retreat driven by the author's concern to see baptism as the union between the believer and Christ in his role as "head" (Hahn 2002: 363–64; cf. Berger 1995: 568–69)?

If we have already decided that Ephesians is a pseudonymous production of second-generation Christianity, then we can plausibly answer yes to these questions. There is a striking difference between Ephesians and the seven undisputed Pauline letters in the emphasis placed on dying with, or suffering with, Christ.[15] That difference fits neatly into a particular construal of the history of early Christianity that sees the post-Pauline period as a time when, even among Paulinists, the cross, the Spirit, and apocalyptic elements faded from view and were replaced with ecclesiological and christological emphases.

If Ephesians is Paul's own, however, then we need imagine nothing more than a shift of emphasis in this particular letter in order to address a particular pastoral situation. Ephesians' lack of emphasis on suffering with Christ is certainly unusual in light of the prominence of this element in the undisputed letters. If Paul were addressing Christians who were tempted for various reasons to fear the rulers and authorities in heavenly places and to placate

it with the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 4:14; Rom. 6:5, 8; 8:11; Phil. 3:10–11). He speaks of it only as a future event (1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:12–58; 2 Cor. 4:16–5:10; Rom. 8:23, 29; 11:15; Phil. 3:21; 2 Tim. 2:18).

14. See especially Lincoln 1983: 621–22.

15. Cf. 1 Thess. 2:14–15; 1 Cor. 1:18–2:5; 4:8–17; 5:7–8; 6:7; 9:19–23; 10:31–11:1; Gal. 2:19; Phil. 3:10; 2 Cor. 4:7–12; 8:8–9; Rom. 6:5–6, 11; Philem. 1 ("a prisoner of Christ Jesus").

them with worship, however, then it is reasonably easy to see why he might express himself this way (cf. Arnold 1989: 147–50, 171). He has prayed that God would enlighten the eyes of his readers to the great power that God has placed at their disposal in raising Christ from the dead and seating him in the heavenly places, victorious over the inimical spiritual powers of the cosmos (1:17–23), and now he shows precisely how God has done this: he did it through their conversion. When they heard and believed the gospel (1:13–14), Christ's victory over the evil powers became their victory also, for they were released from captivity to the Ruler of the realm of the air (2:2; Arnold 1989: 148). God brought them to life, resurrected them, and seated them with the victorious Christ in heavenly places.

In addition, we should keep in mind that, on one hand, Ephesians is not entirely devoid of the theme of suffering with Christ, and on the other hand, in places the undisputed letters come close to identifying the life of the believer with the resurrected life of Christ. In Ephesians, Paul is a "prisoner of Christ Jesus" (3:1), an "enchained ambassador " (6:20), and his suffering for his readers, he says, leads to their glory (3:13). The substance underlying these statements, while not as dramatically phrased, is identical to 2 Cor. 2:14 ("But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession [i.e., as a prisoner] in Christ") and 2 Cor. 4:12 ("Death is at work in us, but life in you"). In 2 Corinthians, Paul says not merely that he carries around the death of Jesus in his body but that he does this so that "the life of Jesus might be visible in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10; cf. 1 Cor. 4:18–21; 2 Cor. 13:3–4).[16] In Romans he says not only that "the body" of believers "is dead because of sin" but also that "the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:10; cf. 6:4, 13).[17] In Philippians he can say that the "citizenship" of believers "is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20).[18] Although he never speaks elsewhere of the enthronement of Christians with Christ, he can speak of Christ living in Christians (Gal. 2:20) and of Christians sharing the heavenly glory of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:30; Hübner 1997: 161–62). None of this means that Ephesians and the undisputed letters have the same balance between realized and future eschatological expressions: Ephesians clearly emphasizes the realized aspect of the tension. Nevertheless, what we find in Ephesians does not stand in contradiction to the theology of the undisputed letters but places emphasis on one side of the typical Pauline eschatology because of the situation that the letter addresses.[19]

16. If, as is likely, we should read φορέσωμεν rather than φορέσομεν at 1 Cor. 15:49, moreover, Paul instructs the Corinthians to bear the image of the heavenly last Adam in the present.

17. See further Ridderbos 1975: 537–39 and Arnold 1989: 148.

18. See already Origen (Heine 2002: 126) and many commentators after him, e.g., Jerome (Heine 2002: 127); Alford 1857: 90; Westcott 1906: 32; Bruce 1984: 287; and O'Brien 1999: 171n72.

19. As I. Marshall (1996: 344–45) says, the mistake in the notion that the soteriology of Ephesians differs from that of the undisputed letters lies in "assuming that the thrust of Paul's thought is towards the future rather than being firmly rooted in what God has done in Christ."

2:7 Paul now describes the reason why God has joined believers to Christ's new life, resurrection, and exaltation. He did this so that for all eternity he might show them, in Christ Jesus and by his kindness, the wealth of his grace. Paul has already spoken of how the costly redemption of believers through the death of Christ demonstrated the abundance of God's grace (1:7). He has also said that God considers his people to be his abundantly glorious inheritance (1:18) and that God's purpose for his people is to provide them with an inheritance (1:11; cf. 1:14; Col. 1:12). Now Paul draws these threads together. The phrase ἵνα ἐνδείξηται (*hina endeixētai*, in order that he might show) indicates the purpose of all four preceding verbs (συνεζωοποίησεν, ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι, συνήγειρεν, and συνεκάθισεν), and the term ἐνδείκνυμι (*endeiknymi*), a favorite of Paul's, most often refers to something people reveal about themselves.[20] Sometimes, however, it refers to God's own demonstration of his character (Rom. 9:17, 22; cf. 1 Tim. 1:16; Rom. 3:25–26), and this is how Paul uses it here.

God saved Paul and his readers for the purpose of demonstrating not merely his grace but "the surpassing [ὑπερβάλλον, *hyperballon*] wealth of his grace" (cf. 2 Cor. 9:14). For those who first read Ephesians, or heard it read, this language might have recalled the effusive language used in inscriptions recognizing the benefactions of emperors of the Augustan age. Here too forms of the verb ὑπερβάλλω (*hyperballō*) were used to describe the emperor's εὔνοια (*eunoia*, goodwill), φιλανθρωπία (*philanthrōpia*, benevolence), ἀνδρεία (*andreia*, courage), φιλοδοξία (*philodoxia*, love of fame), φιλοτιμία (*philotimia*, love of honor), μεγαλοφροσύνη (*megalophrosynē*, greatness of mind), σωφροσύνη (*sōphrosynē*, moderation), ἀρετή (*aretē*, merit), and φιλοτειμία προγονική (*philoteimia progonikē*, ancestral honor), all of them specific manifestations of the emperor's χάρις (Harrison 2003: 231n73; Whitlark 2003).

The three prepositional phrases—ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσιν τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις (*en tois aiōsin tois eperchomenois*, in the coming ages), ἐν χρηστότητι (*en chrēstotēti*, by kindness), and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (*en Christō Iēsou*, in Christ Jesus)—all modify the verb ἐνδείξηται and describe three different elements of God's demonstration of his surpassing grace.

First, ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσιν τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις describes how long this demonstration will last. A few interpreters have linked this phrase with the interpretation of αἰών in 2:2 and 3:9–10 as a personal power and claimed that Paul (or the author) thought of God as displaying to "the attacking Aeons" his graciousness to his people.[21] Paul's reference to "the [age] to come" (τῷ μέλλοντι [αἰῶνι],

20. Out of the fifteen uses of ἐνδείκνυμι and its cognate noun ἔνδειξις in the NT, only two (Heb. 6:10, 11) fall outside the Pauline Epistles.

21. The word ἐπέρχομαι can refer to the coming of a disaster or attack (BDAG 361–62). For this understanding of the phrase, see, e.g., Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 67 and Lindemann 1975: 129–30; cf. Schlier 1957: 112–18 and Barth 1974: 222–23. Best (1998: 198) takes this interpretation very seriously, and at one point seems to adopt it, although eventually he concludes that "there is no easy solution" to the proper reading of the phrase (1998: 223–24). The idea seems to have its origins in Reitzenstein (1921: 234–37), who interprets the αἰών and αἰῶνες in Eph. 2:2, 7; 3:9 and in Ign. *Eph*. 8.1 and 19.2 as personal powers. He believes this religious concept

tō mellonti [*aiōni*]) in 1:21 and the use of the phrase ὁ αἰὼν ὁ ἐπερχόμενος (*ho aiōn ho eperchomenos*) elsewhere (Mark 10:30; Herm. *Vis.* 4.3.5) clearly to mean "the coming age," however, make this idea unlikely.[22] Paul intends to say that God has saved believers so that he might show his surpassing grace to them in all future ages.

Second, the phrase ἐν χρηστότητι ἐφ' ἡμᾶς (*en chrēstotēti eph' hēmas*, by kindness toward us) tells Paul's readers how God will display his grace. The term χρηστότης (*chrēstotēs*, kindness) appears commonly in Jewish and Christian literature as an attribute that God exercises "toward" (ἐπί, *epi*) his people (e.g., Pss. Sol. 5.18; 9.7; 18.1; Rom. 11:22; cf. 2:4; Titus 3:4). When the word is used of God in the LXX of the Psalms, it stands parallel to his mercy (ἔλεος, *eleos*; 24:7 [25:7 MT, Eng.]; 118:65 [119:65 MT, Eng.]), his righteousness (δικαιοσύνη, *dikaiosynē*; 144:7 [145:7 MT, Eng.]), and his willingness to help the erring by teaching them his commandments (118:68 [119:68 MT, Eng.]). In other literature, the word is often associated with a mildness (ἡμερότης, *hēmerotēs*), charitable disposition (κοινωνία, *koinōnia*), magnanimity (μεγαλόνοια, *megalonoia*), benevolence (φιλανθρωπία, *philanthrōpia*), and even cheerfulness (εὐθυμία, *euthymia*), which fits the temperament of God toward his people as Paul describes it in the opening benedictory prayer (1:5–8).[23]

Third, the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (*en Christō Iēsou*, in Christ Jesus) describes the sphere in which God's grace and kindness work on behalf of his people. In the context of 2:5–6, Paul probably has in mind especially the identity of believers with Christ in his life, resurrection, and position with God in heaven.

Summary

In 2:4–7 Paul paints a bright portrait of God's grace that stands in dramatic contrast to the dark landscape of human sin in 2:1–3. By giving believers life with Christ, raising them with Christ, and seating them with Christ in

is indebted to Persian mysticism and dualism, a theory that, as we saw above in the additional note on 2:2, is unlikely to be correct.

22. Admittedly, as Lindemann (1975: 129) and Best (1998: 223) observe, the phrase in these instances is in the singular, whereas in Eph. 2:7 it is in the plural. The plural expression ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν appears in Col. 1:26, however, and as the term γενεῶν indicates, the whole phrase should probably be understood temporally (R. Wilson 2005: 176–77). Cf. also Jude 25 and 1 Tim. 1:17 (Abbott 1897: 50).

23. See Philo *Sacrifices* 27; *Virtues* 84; *Moses* 1.249 (Weiss, *TDNT* 9:490). Jerome describes χρηστότης as "a mild, tender, tranquil virtue, prepared to share its goods; it invites to friendship; it is sweet in its speech. . . . [It differs from goodness] in that goodness can be a bit somber, frowning in moral austerity, no doubt doing good and giving what is asked but without being sweet and without attracting people by its mildness" (*PL* 26:420, as quoted and translated in Spicq, *TLNT* 3:515n20). The definition "simplicity, silly good nature" in LSJ 2007 seems to be based on a mistaken reading of Pseudo-Plato, *Def.* 412e. The editors of LSJ believe that this passage defines χρηστότης as ἤθους ἁπλαστία μετ' ἀλογιστίας (simplicity of character with thoughtlessness), but the text of *Definitiones* here actually says the opposite: ἤθους ἁπλαστία μετ' εὐλογιστίας (simplicity of character with prudence).

his place of victory, God has demonstrated the overwhelmingly merciful, loving, and gracious nature of his character. This demonstration of his character was not something that happened as a side effect of his gracious saving work, but was the very purpose for which he did this work. He rescued those who are in Christ from the domination of the world, the devil, and the flesh so that he might demonstrate forever the overwhelmingly gracious nature of his character.

Additional Note

2:5. Two textual problems arise here in close proximity to one another. First, some manuscripts of primarily the Alexandrian text type (𝔓[46], B, 33) and some Western witnesses among the versions and Fathers (a few Old Latin manuscripts, Victorinus of Rome, Ambrose) place the preposition ἐν in front of the phrase τῷ Χριστῷ (συνεζωοποίησεν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ). If this were correct, it would be exegetically significant since συνεζωοποίησεν would then refer not to the union of Christians with Christ's new life but to the union of Christians whom, together, God had made alive "in Christ." It might then anticipate the theme of the unity of Gentile and Jewish Christians in 2:11–22.

The concentration of the manuscripts with this reading in the Alexandrian text type and the lateness of the Western witnesses, however, make this reading a poor choice in comparison to the simple τῷ Χριστῷ, which appears in early Alexandrian (א, A) as well as Western (D, F, G) and Byzantine witnesses (L, and a range of minuscules).[24] The additional ἐν arose either as an echo of ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ at the end of 2:6, or (more probably, since the phrase in 2:6 comes later) from a mistaken repetition of the final syllable of the preceding συνεζωοποίησεν.

Second, the reading χάριτι immediately after τῷ Χριστῷ appears in the Alexandrian manuscripts 𝔓[46], א, B, and in many Byzantine manuscripts. It therefore has early and wide attestation and is, with the highest probability and with virtually no controversy, the correct reading. The two variations from this reading come from late manuscripts, and each is limited to a single text type. They are interesting mainly because they seem to show how grammatically difficult some native Greek speakers found Paul's outburst about the grace of God. A number of late, Byzantine manuscripts (e.g., 256, 365, 436, 1319, 1573, 2127) have χάριτι γάρ. This would have approximated the grammar of 2:8 (τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι) and smoothed out the sentence slightly ("he made us alive together with Christ, for you are saved by grace"). Two ninth-century uncial manuscripts with a Western text type (F, G) have οὗ χάριτι, and D has οὗ τῇ χάριτι.[25] Here too the concern may have been to attach χάριτί ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι somehow to its grammatical context ("he made us alive together with Christ, by whose grace you are saved").[26]

24. *Pace* Lindemann (1975: 119), who accepts ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ as original.

25. Barth (1974: 220) surprisingly says that this variant merits "some consideration," although he does not conclude that it is correct.

26. Gnilka (1971: 118n5) thinks that the motivation was rather to specify the grace as the grace of Christ.

C. The Nature and Consequences of God's Grace (2:8–10)

Paul now explains in greater detail the grace that he had mentioned briefly in 2:5 and that provides the foundation for the saved status of his readers. Their present existence as people who have been made alive together with Christ (2:5), who have been raised with him, and who have been enthroned with him in heavenly places (2:6)—this existence is entirely a product of that grace. Its foundational importance, therefore, demands further explanation.

In various ways throughout the paragraph, Paul emphasizes that the salvation he has just described in 2:4–7 came entirely at God's initiative and as a free gift. The vocabulary he uses brings out the utterly free nature of salvation: Paul describes it as an act of "grace" (χάρις, *charis*) and as a "gift" (δῶρον, *dōron*). It is received "through faith" (διὰ πίστεως, *dia pisteōs*), and for Paul, this means that no meritorious human effort was involved. Even the good works that arise as a consequence of salvation, and that Paul and his readers should do, God "prepared beforehand" (προητοίμασεν, *proētoimasen*), presumably from before the foundation of the world.

Paul's syntax works toward the same goal. When Paul says that God's grace has saved his readers, he positions the term "grace" near the front of the clause (as he had already done in v. 5) to give it special emphasis. In addition, when he says that salvation is the gift of God, he places the word "God" before the word "gift" to put the emphasis on God (θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον, *theou to dōron*, God's gift). Similarly, in his description of himself and his readers as God's creation, he puts the possessive pronoun (αὐτοῦ, *autou*, his) first in the clause to make clear that "we are *his* handiwork."

The paragraph can be divided into two parts. First, in 2:8–9 Paul describes the completely free nature of salvation and concludes from it that no one can boast. The implication is clear: the only appropriate boasting in connection with salvation must be a boast in God for what he has done for those who are saved. This not only recalls the frequent concern with boasting in the theology of the undisputed Pauline letters (Gal. 6:14; 1 Cor. 1:26–31; 4:7; Phil. 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:12; 12:9–10; Rom. 3:27; 4:1–2; 5:2–3) but also picks up the threefold claim in the benediction that God included Paul and his readers among his people by his grace and to the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). If Paul's readers do not understand that their salvation is entirely God's doing, with no contribution from themselves, then God will fail to receive from them the glory that is rightfully his.

Second, in 2:10 Paul tells his readers that he and they were created by God for the purpose of doing the good works that God prepared in advance for

them to do. The completely gracious nature of salvation does not mean that Paul and his readers are passive creatures but that they are new creations and should accomplish what God, their re-creator, designed them to do. By introducing this ethical theme and expressing it in the language of a new creation (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15), Paul prevents any misunderstanding that the gracious nature of salvation implies that believers "should do evil that good may come" (Rom. 3:8; cf. 6:1, 15). He also prepares his readers for the development of the new-creation theme in the next section (2:15) and for the ethical implications of the theme he brings out in the second main part of the letter (4:13, 22, 24).

Despite the shift of attention to the "good works" that believers do, Paul continues to emphasize God's gracious initiative. Even when they live in the way God created them to live, Paul and his readers remain God's creation and are only doing the good works that God prepared long ago for them to accomplish. Thus, the praise even for their good works goes to God.

Paul ends this second part of the paragraph, and with it the entire section (2:1–10), with language that recalls the human plight outside of Christ as he described it in 2:1–3. In this way, he emphasizes the stark contrast between what he and his readers once were and what God has now made of them. In 2:1–3 he said that his readers used to "walk" (περιπατέω, *peripateō*) "in" (ἐν, *en*) transgressions and sins (vv. 1–2). He now says that when God rescued them from this desperate plight, he re-created them and put them on a new ethical path: they now should "walk" (περιπατέω) "in" (ἐν) the good works he intended them to do from before the foundation of the world.

Exegesis and Exposition

[8a]For by that grace you are saved, through faith; [8b]and this is not from yourselves; [9]it is God's gift, not from works, so that no one might boast. [10]For we are *his* handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand in order that we might walk in them.

2:8a The first sentence of the new section shows why (γάρ, *gar*, for) God is able to demonstrate his gracious character throughout eternity to Paul and his readers. Paul states the reason in language that repeats the wording of his brief outburst about God's grace in 2:5 (χάριτί ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι, *chariti este sesōmenoi*), but with two significant additions. Each addition emphasizes the foundational importance of God's grace to the set of events that brought them salvation.

First, he adds the article before the word χάριτι and in this way points back to "that" grace of which he spoke in 2:5 and 7 (Wallace 1996: 250). That grace united Paul and his readers with Christ, making them alive with Christ and seating them with Christ in heavenly places (i.e., it "saved" them). Because

(γάρ) God united them with the enthroned Christ by his grace and will show his grace to them for eternity, it is indeed by grace that they are saved.[1]

Second, Paul adds that on the human side, salvation comes "through" the response of "faith" (διὰ πίστεως, *dia pisteōs*). God offers salvation to his human creatures abundantly and freely, but as Paul implies in Rom. 5:17, they must "receive" it. They must trust God that his free provision for them in Christ will actually accomplish their salvation (cf. Rom. 3:24–25; 4:19–22). For the readers of Ephesians, this means trusting "the word of truth, the gospel of [their] salvation" (1:13; cf. 1:19).

It did not mean, as Theodoret thought, that Paul's readers "had only faith to offer, but divine grace worked with it" (R. Hill 2001: 2.39). In Paul's thinking, faith is not something that people offer to God and with which God's grace then cooperates to save them. Rather, faith is aligned with grace, and both faith and grace stand over against anything that human beings can offer God: it is neither a work deserving payment nor a ground for boasting (Rom. 4:2–5, 16). To say that salvation comes "through faith," therefore, is to further enhance the notion that it arises from the grace of God (Haupt 1902a: 65).

2:8b–9

Paul makes this theme explicit in his next two statements, each of which contrasts the impotence of human nature and activity with God's generosity and glory in salvation. The first statement (v. 8b) denies that "this" (τοῦτο, *touto*) salvation of which Paul has just spoken arose from anything within Paul's readers (ἐξ ὑμῶν, *ex hymōn*).[2] How could it? They were "dead in transgressions and sins" (v. 1; cf. v. 5a) and were "by nature children of wrath" (v. 3). Their salvation, therefore, had to come as God's δῶρον (*dōron*, gift).[3]

The second statement (v. 9) denies that salvation comes "from" any "works" they might accomplish (ἐξ ἔργων, *ex ergōn*). Prior to their conversion, "the Ruler of the realm of the air" was powerfully at work (ἐνεργοῦντος, *energountos*) in them, and they followed the cravings of their fallen flesh and mind (vv. 2–3). Accomplishing their own salvation, therefore, was impossible. God's purpose in arranging salvation as his accomplishment alone was ἵνα μή τις καυχήσηται (*hina mē tis kauchēsētai*, so that no one might boast). This seems to be an allusive way of saying, "so that all might boast in God alone." The thought is similar to the line of argument in Rom. 4–5. If Abraham were justified before God "from" his "works" (ἐξ ἔργων), Paul says, he has a ground for boasting (Rom. 4:2; cf. 3:27; 4:6; 11:6). Since justification comes by faith,

1. For this understanding of γάρ, see Schlier 1957: 115.

2. Since τοῦτο is neuter, Paul was perhaps thinking of the neuter form τὸ σωτήριον (which he uses at 6:17) or already looking ahead to his use of the term δῶρον in the next clause. That the antecedent of τοῦτο is not πίστεως in 2:8a (as some earlier commentators thought) is clear from 2:9a, where Paul denies that τοῦτο is ἐξ ἔργων (*ex ergōn*, from works). It makes much better sense to say that "salvation" is not from works than to say that "faith" is not from works. See the especially thorough discussion in Eadie 1883: 152.

3. Cf. Rom. 5:15, 17, where, however, Paul uses the term δωρεά (cf. Eph. 3:7; 4:7) rather than δῶρον. This is the only use of δῶρον in the Pauline corpus.

however, the "boasting" (καυχώμενοι, *kauchōmenoi*) of the believer must be "in God" (ἐν τῷ θεῷ, *en tō theō*; Rom. 5:11).

Still, Rom. 4–5 differs from Eph. 2:8–9 in its use of the verb "justify" to describe what God has done for us and in its location within an argument that speaks not simply of human works generally but also of "works of the [Jewish] law" (3:20, 27–28; 9:12, 32; cf. Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10). Moreover, as with Eph. 2:5–6, here salvation is a present reality, not something whose completion lies in the future as it does in Rom. 5:9–10. Does this mean that Ephesians comes from a time long after the ethnic tension between Jewish and Gentile Christians had been resolved (Luz 1976: 372; 1998: 134; Lincoln 1983: 627–28)? Had the imminent expectation of the eschatological judgment of God faded and the theological accent in the Pauline school shifted from apocalyptically laden notions of justification and God's righteousness to general expressions of God's grace and of a salvation already accomplished (Luz 1976: 372)?

As with Eph. 2:5–6, there is again no compelling reason to travel this road. On one hand, the Paul of the undisputed letters can insist, outside of any struggle with Judaizing tendencies, that God's call and choice of the "foolish," the "weak," the "low," and the "nothings" of the world excludes human boasting (1 Cor. 1:26–30). He can ask the haughty and divided Corinthians, "What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast [καυχᾶσαι, *kauchasai*] as if you did not receive it?" (1 Cor. 4:7b). On the other hand, the Paul of Ephesians, in the climactic passage on the armor of God (6:10–17), can direct Christians to take "up the shield of faith" (v. 16) and to "receive the helmet of salvation" (v. 17) in light of the current struggle that they have with the "world rulers of this darkness" (v. 12). This assumes that salvation and faith, although in one sense accomplished gifts of God for the believer, must nevertheless be constantly appropriated in light of the present onslaught of evil.

The precise combination of words in Eph. 2:8–9 is certainly unusual: the Paul of the undisputed letters uses the language of "works" and the language of "boasting" together only when engaging Judaism polemically.[4] Still, the thought of Eph. 2:8–9 is Pauline, and it is not hard to imagine Paul expressing himself this way in a new setting. There is, moreover, some precedent for a redefinition of "works" in terms solely of human effort generally (rather than specifically Jewish effort to keep the law) in Rom. 4:1–8, where the discussion focuses on the "works" of Abraham and David rather than specifically on their obedience to the Jewish law (cf. Rom. 9:11–12; 11:6; I. Marshall 1996: 345n21).

2:10 Paul's next statement performs three functions. First, it gives the reason why Paul can say that salvation, in its entirety, is a gift of God: God created Paul and his readers anew. Second, by introducing this theme, it foreshadows the motif of the new creation that will play such an important role in the next section (2:14–15; cf. 4:13, 22, 24). Third, it brings 2:1–10 to a fitting close by

4. Even Titus 3:4–7 occurs in a context of polemics against οἱ ἐκ τῆς περιτομῆς (1:10).

implicitly contrasting the way Paul's readers used to "walk" (2:2) and the way that both he and they now "walk," thanks to God's gracious, saving work.

The salvation of Paul and his readers is entirely God's gift because (γάρ, *gar*) they are God's ποίημα (*poiēma*, creation).[5] The term ποιήμα can mean "artifact," "poem," or "literary production in prose" as well as simply "what is done" (LSJ 1429; LSJSup 253; BDAG 842). Its only other use in the Pauline corpus (indeed the NT), however, refers to the "works" (ποιήματα, *poiēmata*) of God at creation (Rom. 1:20). As Paul's next two clauses show, this is also how he uses the term here.[6] Paul's placement of the pronoun αὐτοῦ (*autou*, his) at the beginning of the clause is intentional and emphatic (Robinson 1934: 681; MHT 3:190). He wants to emphasize that the refashioning of people who were once dead in transgressions and sins and by nature children of wrath (2:1, 3) into a spiritually alive people, victorious over the evil cosmic powers ranged against them (2:4–6), is entirely a work of God. "We are," he says, "*his* creation."

The idea that Christians are part of a new, eschatological creation appears in the undisputed letters (Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17) and plays a role in the ethical admonitions in Colossians (3:10), where the theme of Christ as the agent of the original creation is prominent (1:15, 23). In Ephesians too, Christ is the agent of the new creation (2:15b), and the idea of a new creation lays the groundwork for some of the letter's ethical admonitions in its second section (4:13, 22, 24).

Perhaps with a side glance at the misunderstanding that sometimes plagued his theology of grace (Rom. 3:8; 6:1, 15; James 2:14–26; Jude 4; cf. 2 Pet. 3:15–17),[7] the apostle now asserts that good works are both integral to the existence of the people God has created and are themselves the products of God's gracious initiative on behalf of his people (cf. 1 Cor. 15:10). Christians were created ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς (*epi ergois agathois*, for the purpose of good works).

Interpreters often comment on the un-Pauline nature of the expression ἔργα ἀγαθά (*erga agatha*, good works).[8] The Paul of the undisputed letters can

5. Ephesians 2:10 gives the grounds for all of 2:8b–9 (καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον· οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἵνα μή τις καυχήσηται; Eadie 1883: 156; Abbott 1897; Best 1998: 229) and not merely for 2:9b (ἵνα μή τις καυχήσηται; Schnackenburg 1991: 98).

6. Cf. Aelian, *Nat. an.* 153, who thinks that the goat may be a "creation of [the god] Prometheus" (ποίημα Προμηθέως). Philo is fond of calling God "the Maker" (ὁ ποιητής; e.g., *Creation* 7, 9, 21, 53, 77, 88; *Worse* 86, 124) and at one point (*Worse* 125) develops an elaborate analogy between God and a poet, in which he calls the works of God's creation the "poems of God" (θεοῦ ποιήματα). Paul's use of the term, however, is not metaphorical and thus stands closer to Aelian's use. *Pace* Lincoln 1990: 114; O'Brien 1999: 178; and Muddiman 2002: 112, the term is never used unambiguously in the LXX of God's work at creation, although it is used of God's work generally.

7. Eadie (1883: 156) argues against this idea, claiming it is based on an "unwarranted assumption," but something must account for Paul's sudden introduction of this theme, and this idea at least has some historical precedent elsewhere in Pauline and other early Christian literature.

8. See, e.g., Lincoln 1990: 115; Schnackenburg 1991: 99; Best 1998: 231; MacDonald 2000: 234.

certainly speak in various ways of "doing good" (Gal. 6:10; 2 Cor. 9:8; Rom. 2:7, 10; 13:3; cf. Phil. 1:6), but within the Pauline corpus generally, the plural expression "good works" appears only in the Pastorals, letters whose Pauline authorship is disputed (1 Tim. 2:10; 5:10, 25; 6:18; Titus 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14).[9] This stylistic difference from the undisputed letters, however, is counterbalanced to some extent by the use of the expression as the object of a prepositional phrase using ἐπί and the dative to express purpose. The three NT appearances of this idiom belong to the Pauline corpus, and the thought of 1 Thess. 4:7, where it is also used, is close to the thought here (cf. Gal. 5:13; 2 Tim. 2:14).[10]

The point, in any case, is clear. God intended those whom he has saved by his abundant grace to live in the way later described in 4:1–6:20. These "good works" are neither the basis of salvation nor, as F. C. Baur (2003: 2.39–40) thought, given equal status with faith by a post-Pauline writer more in line theologically with James than with Paul. As the aorist participle κτισθέντες (*ktisthentes*, created) shows, this sentence conceives of good works as the consequence of a new creation that has already taken place (Haupt 1902a: 67–68; cf. Alford 1857: 92; Ellicott 1859: 42).

To keep the emphasis on God's gracious initiative, moreover, Paul speaks of God preparing beforehand (προητοίμασεν, *proētoimasen*) the works in which he intended his people to walk.[11] The term προετοιμάζω (*proetoimazō*) was used to refer to the thoughtful preparation of something: a "previously prepared supper" (τὸ προητοιμασμένον . . . δεῖπνον, *to proētoimasmenon . . . deipnon*; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Apoph. lac.* 230 E), for example, or accusations in a legal case "prepared beforehand" (τὰ . . . προητοιμασμένα, *ta . . . proētoimasmena*; Josephus, *Ant.* 17.121). In Hellenistic Jewish literature, it could be used in a theological context to refer to God's preparation, at the creation of the world, for people and institutions that would come later (Wis. 9:8; Philo, *Creation* 77), or, as in its only other NT use, God's preparation of a people "for glory" (Rom. 9:23). The good works that God's people will do, therefore, have all been planned since the beginning of the world, just as the blessing of God's people and his plan for the universe were carefully determined "beforehand."[12] Therefore, even when believers "walk worthily of the calling with which" they were called (4:1), they have nothing to boast about before God: in this, too, God took the initiative by carefully preparing these good works before the foundation of the world.

Paul concludes with a comment on God's purpose in preparing these good works: he did so "in order that we might walk [περιπατήσωμεν, *peripatēsōmen*] in them." With this phrase Paul makes clear that Christians must accomplish

9. This counts appearances of both ἀγαθά and καλά with ἔργα.

10. Admittedly, 2 Tim. 2:14 occurs within one of the disputed letters. See BDAG 366; BDF §235.4; Moule 1953: 50; and Zerwick 1963: 43.

11. The relative pronoun οἷς is dative rather than accusative (ἅ) because it has been attracted to the case of its antecedent ἔργοις (Winer 1881: 149, 163; Robertson 1934: 716).

12. See the use of πρό in 1:4, προορίσας in 1:5, προέθετο in 1:9, and προορισθέντες . . . πρόθεσιν in 1:11, and cf. the use of πρόθεσιν in 3:11.

what God has prepared in advance for them to do. The use of the term περιπατέω (*peripateō*) for the first time since 2:2 leads Paul's readers back to the beginning of the passage and neatly concludes the entire section by offering a dramatic contrast between its beginning and its end. Paul's readers no longer walk in sin, according to the standards of the world and the prince of the demonic realm, but in the way carefully planned by the Creator for his creation from a time before the world began. The theme of the ethical plan the Creator intends his newly created people to fulfill prepares the way for the further development of the "new humanity" theme in the next section (2:11–22). It also foreshadows the long section of ethical instructions (4:1–6:20), with its frequent use of the verb περιπατέω (walk; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15) and its use of the new creation theme as an incentive for ethical behavior (4:13, 22, 24).

Summary

In 2:8–10 Paul further defines the overwhelming graciousness of God. He does this by affirming that the work of salvation belongs solely to God, who grants salvation as an entirely free gift and emphatically not on the basis of human effort. The human response of faith to this gift, far from constituting anything for which a human being can take credit, excludes by its very nature any element of human boasting. Those who receive this entirely free gift of God's salvation, however, do not remain unchanged. God re-creates them so that they do the work he planned for his people to do before the creation of the world.

With this final subsection of 2:1–10, Paul brings to a close his treatment of how God's great power in raising Christ from the dead and seating him in a position of victory at his right hand works for the benefit of the individual believer. God has rescued those who are in Christ from the desperate plight of sinful rebellion against God and subservience to the devil by uniting them with Christ in his new life and position of victory over the enemy forces of the transcendent realm. He has re-created them so that they now walk not in transgressions, sins, the course of the world, the evil desires of their minds, and in fealty to the devil, but as God created human beings to live from the beginning. God has done this in such a way that by it he has demonstrated the lavishly gracious nature of his character.

V. From Existence without God to Membership in the People of God (2:11–22)

In 2:11–22 Paul explains how the mighty power that God demonstrated in Christ (1:19) affects believers as a people (Best 1998: 235; Hoehner 2002: 305, 351; Aletti 2001: 113). The passage roughly follows the pattern of 2:1–10 (cf. O'Brien 1999: 183). It begins with a description of the plight of existence without God (vv. 11–12; cf. vv. 1–3) and then explains the divine response to that plight (vv. 13–18; cf. vv. 4–8). It ends with a description of the positive implications that God's response to the human plight has for present existence (vv. 19–22; cf. v. 10). The syntax of both passages is also similar. Both passages move from human plight to divine solution by posing a contrast between what "once" was and what "now" is (cf. Tachau 1972: 134–42), although in 2:1–10 the scheme is less explicit than it is in 2:11–22 (Lincoln 1990: 124). In both passages Paul also explains God's response to the plight in syntax that becomes difficult and broken (vv. 14–15a; cf. vv. 5b–6).

Despite these similarities, the two passages have important thematic differences. Whereas 2:1–10 focused on the plight of every human being without mention of ethnic or social tension (vv. 1–3), 2:11–22 now speaks of the special plight of the Gentiles as a people estranged from God because of their alienation from Israel (vv. 11–12). Whereas 2:1–10 emphasized the believer's union with Christ in his resurrection and ascension, providing a clear example of how God's powerful work in resurrecting Christ benefits Christians (1:19–21), 2:11–22 now emphasizes Christ's death as the divine solution (vv. 14–18).[1]

In short, the primary orientation of 2:1–10 is vertical, and the primary orientation of 2:11–22 is horizontal (cf. Aletti 2001: 113). The focus of 2:1–10 is God's powerful work through Christ's resurrection and ascension to orient the individual human believer away from the world, the devil, and the flesh and toward the Creator. The focus of 2:11–22 is the social alienation between Israel and the Gentiles and Christ's role in solving this problem through his death, which set aside the Mosaic law, with its tendency to divide Jews from Gentiles. Although the death of Christ also overcomes the hostility between God and humanity, this element of the passage serves the passage's more prominent theme of the peace that now exists between Jews and Gentiles. By overcoming the hostility between God and all human beings, Christ's death breaks down the wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles.

1. Christ's death, however, is still not a demonstration of weakness, such as we find in 1–2 Corinthians, but a powerful death that kills the enmity between God and human beings, whether Jewish or Gentile (v. 16).

The basic orientation of the two passages is evident in the different ways they use words compounded with the preposition σύν (*syn*, with). In 2:1–10 these compounds are oriented vertically, referring to the believer's union with Christ in his position of heavenly victory, but in 2:11–22 they are oriented horizontally, referring to the union of Gentile believers with their Jewish counterparts in God's household:

Ephesians 2:1–10 (vertically oriented)	**Ephesians 2:11–22** (horizontally oriented)
συνεζωοποίησεν (*synezōpoiēsen*, made alive together with; v. 5)	συμπολῖται (*sympolitai*, citizens together with; v. 19)
συνήγειρεν (*synēgeiren*, raised together with; v. 6)	συναρμολογουμένη (*synarmologoumenē*, joined together; v. 21)
συνεκάθισεν (*synekathisen*, seated together with; v. 6)	συνοικοδομεῖσθε (*synoikodomeisthe*, you are being built together; v. 22)

If we turn to the internal structure of the passage, we find that the primary theme of peace between Israel and the Gentiles and the subsidiary theme of peace with God progress together in three steps. In the first step (2:11–13) Paul describes the ethnic tension that has existed between his Gentile readers and the Jews with their special society, their way of life, and the promise in their Scriptures of the Messiah, or as he is called in Greek, ὁ Χριστός (*ho Christos*, the Christ). This alienation was so serious not merely because of the social tensions involved but also, as the final item in Paul's description of the plight reveals, because the social tension was closely bound up with the Gentiles' plight of being "without God in the world" (v. 12; cf. vv. 1–3). Paul concludes the first step by announcing God's solution to the especially bleak plight of his Gentile readers. God has brought them near: near to himself and near to each other "in Christ," and "by means of his blood" (v. 13). This concluding statement provides a springboard for the second step in the development of his theme.

The second step (vv. 14–18) explores precisely how Christ's death brought "peace" (vv. 14, 15, 17) to a divided humanity and to a humanity divided from God. The spotlight now falls on Christ himself rather than on God's action through Christ, and Paul shifts from speaking to his readers as a separate group ("*you* Gentiles," v. 11) to including himself, although a Jew, with them ("He himself is *our* peace," v. 14). Paul explains that the death of Christ on the cross tore down the dividing wall (the Mosaic law) that enclosed the Jews and separated them from the Gentiles. In the hands of sinful human beings, the law had become an instrument of hostility, but when Christ's death set it aside, he created in himself one new, undivided human being. Sinful human beings had also used the Mosaic law as an instrument of hostility against God (cf. Rom. 4:15; 5:20; 7:5, 7–8, 11), and the death of Christ also solved this problem for both Jews and Gentiles.

Following the same method he had adopted at the conclusion of the first step (v. 13), Paul closes this second step in a way that provides a springboard

to the third step. Believing Jews and Gentiles, he says, now have access to God as "Father" (v. 18), and this thought provides a skillful transition to the theme of God's "household," which dominates the third step in his argument.

This third step (vv. 19–22), with its progressive imagery of God's people as "household," "building," and "dwelling place," fully resolves the plight that Paul laid out in the first step (vv. 11–12). The tension and estrangement between Israel and the Gentiles and between the Gentiles and God has disappeared. Paul's Gentile readers are now part of the society of God's people, part of the household over which God presides as Father (v. 19), part of a firmly founded, tightly fitted building currently under construction (vv. 20–21a). Indeed, Paul says climactically, they help form the temple in which God's Spirit dwells (vv. 21b–22). In all this, they participate as "citizens together" with all the saints, whether Jewish or Gentile, because they are now part of a new people of God in which ethnic and national divisions have disappeared.

The theme of God's people as members of his household, which echoes throughout the passage in the repetition of words built on the syllable -οἰκ- (*-oik-*, -hous-; this syllable appears six times), both reaches back to the important statement in 1:10, where the term οἰκονομία (*oikonomia*, administration) occurs, and forward toward the use of this same term in 3:2, 9. Most fundamentally, this term means "management of a household" (LSJ 1204), and it probably continues to carry something of its original sense into these three metaphorical uses.[2] Paul may have been thinking of the universe as a household, and then alternately of God as the Father who administers the universe according to his will (1:10) and of himself as one who has the responsibility of carrying out the administrative plans of the Father (3:2, 9), much like a slave might serve as an administrator of household affairs on a large estate (cf. Luke 16:2–4). Perhaps in 2:19–22 Paul develops the metaphor of God's people as members of God's household and as the building or dwelling place of God in order to remind his readers that the church has played an important role in God's administration of the entire universe.

2. See the discussion of L. Johnson (2001: 148–49, 164, 174) on the use of the term in 1 Timothy.

V. From Existence without God to Membership in the People of God (2:11–22)
➤ A. The Special Plight of the Gentiles and God's Response (2:11–13)
B. Christ Is the Believing Community's Peace (2:14–18)
C. Gentile Christians as an Integral Part of God's Household (2:19–22)

A. The Special Plight of the Gentiles and God's Response (2:11–13)

Paul now advances his discussion of how "the surpassing greatness of God's power" (1:19) has affected his readers by speaking to them for the first time specifically as non-Jews (2:11). All people, Jews as well as Gentiles, stood under the terrible plight that Paul described in 2:1–3, and all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, have been rescued from that plight by the gracious, divine initiative Paul has just described in 2:4–10. Gentiles, however, were at a special disadvantage and should, accordingly, appreciate God's grace all the more. In 2:11–13, Paul outlines this specifically Gentile plight and then states God's solution to it in a concise way that prepares for a fuller development of it in 2:14–18 and 19–22.

The passage can be divided into two parts, the first describing what the Gentiles were "once" (v. 11) and "at that time" (v. 12), and the second explaining what has "now" happened to them (v. 13). The first part can also be divided into two parts. First, in 2:11 Paul describes the Gentiles' separation from Israel in physical and negative terms from the perspective of Judaism: Gentiles were "called 'foreskin'" by the Jews because they lacked circumcision, a physical marker recognized by both Jew and Gentile as distinctive of Judaism. The note of ethnic tension Paul sounds here prepares for the divine solution to this tension in the next section (vv. 14–15).

Second, in 2:12 Paul lists five theological disadvantages of the Gentiles, and all except the last, summative item ("without God in the world") are related to the Gentiles' lack of access to the Scriptures. Because Israel's Scriptures contain the promise of the Messiah and outline the way of life God expected his people to follow, Gentiles were left on their own, without real hope or guidance, a fate that we know from 2:1–3 placed them at the mercy of the world, the devil, and the flesh (cf. 4:17–19).

Despite its concern to show the theological advantages that belong to Israel, this passage is written from a Christian rather than a Jewish perspective. This is apparent in the last phrases of 2:11, with their negative evaluation of physical circumcision, and in the orientation of the list of Gentile disadvantages toward the Christian hope and promise of a Messiah in 2:12. The perspective is historical: 2:12 describes the sad state of Gentiles, when compared with Israel, prior to the coming of the gospel (Lincoln 1987: 615–17; 1990: 136).

Does this mean, as Lincoln (1987: 619–20; 1990: 134) has argued, that the passage comes from a post-Pauline period, when the separation of the

church from the synagogue was a fait accompli and the ardor of Paul's anguish over the irony of Israel's unbelief had long since cooled? MacDonald has correctly called this approach to the passage into question because it does not accurately reflect the post-Pauline situation. The late first century, she argues, appears to have been a time when some Christians sought to emphasize the Jewish character of their religion in order to avoid persecution (MacDonald 2004: 434–37).

If this was true of the late first century, however, it was also true of the mid-first century. Paul's Judaizing opponents in Galatia tried to compel the Gentile Galatian Christians to accept circumcision, he says, "only in order that they might not be persecuted for the cross of Christ" (Gal. 6:12). This may well have been an effort to avoid harassment by local magistrates through seeking the protection of Judaism.[1] In 2:11–13 Paul walks the tightrope of both affirming that all who have believed the gospel are indebted to Judaism and, at the same time, insisting that believers are now part of a new people not limited by ethnic boundaries.

Exegesis and Exposition

[11]Therefore remember that once you Gentiles in the flesh—those called "foreskin" by the so-called ⌜circumcision⌝ (⌜done by hand⌝ in the flesh)—[12]that you were, at that time, outside Christ, alienated from Israel's way of life and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. [13]But now, in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

2:11 Paul connects this new stage in his argument with the previous stage by means of the particle διό (*dio*, therefore). Διό normally draws an inference, sometimes from the immediately preceding statement (e.g., 4:8; 5:14), and sometimes from the preceding paragraph (e.g., 3:13). As with 3:13, Paul here draws an inference from all that he has said in 2:1–10: if God has graciously saved all who have faith in Christ from the world, the devil, and the flesh and has recreated them so that they do the good works God originally created humanity to do, then his Gentile readers should especially recall how far they have come. Later Paul will say that their former way of life as Gentiles was characterized by futility, darkness, alienation from God, ignorance, hard-heartedness, despondency, and extreme immorality (4:17–19). Here in 2:11, Paul urges them to "continue to remember" (μνημονεύετε, *mnēmoneuete*) what they "once" (ποτέ, *pote*) were as Gentiles as a way of further appreciating the magnitude of God's powerful work on their behalf.

Paul describes what they once were in two ways, each introduced with a ὅτι (*hoti*) recitative ("that"): first (here in v. 11) he explains how Jews defined

1. On this, see Winter 1994: 123–43; Hardin 2008; and the introduction to the commentary.

Gentiles, and second (in v. 12) he describes the privileges from which they were excluded since they did not belong to Israel (v. 12).[2]

First, then, Paul says that his readers did not have the physical mark of circumcision, which distinguished Jews from Gentiles. They were Gentiles ἐν σαρκί (*en sarki*, in the flesh) and were called ἀκροβυστία (*akrobystia*, foreskin) by the Jews. Paul's language echoes the LXX version of Gen. 17:11–12, where God tells Abraham to "be circumcised [plural] in the foreskin of your flesh" (LXX, περιτμηθήσεσθε τὴν σάρκα τῆς ἀκροβυστίας, *peritmēthēsesthe tēn sarka tēs akrobystias*) as a sign of the covenant between God and his descendants (cf. Jdt. 14:10; Sir. 44:20). Non-Jews, therefore, were literally "Gentiles in the flesh," for their males retained their "foreskin." The term λεγόμενοι (*legomenoi*, called) hints that ἀκροβυστία was used derisively and emphasizes the tension that existed between Jews and Gentiles over precisely this physical distinction between them (see the additional note). Paul's point, then, is that the Jews saw the Gentiles as excluded from their social group and therefore from the special relationship with God of which circumcision was the outward, physical marker.

Paul tells us that Jews, in contrast, are ἡ λεγομένη περιτομή (*hē legomenē peritomē*), "the so-called circumcision." Paul could mean this in either of two ways: (1) in the neutral sense that this is what they call themselves (Best 1998: 239; Muddiman 2001: 117),[3] or (2) in the negative sense that, despite their claim of being "the circumcision," they are not really circumcised since true circumcision is spiritual rather than physical (Ellicott 1859: 43; Abbott 1897: 56; Eadie 1883: 162; cf. Rom. 2:28–29; 3:3). Since Paul goes on to describe physical circumcision with the negative term χειροποίητος (*cheiropoiētos*, done by hand; see the additional note on this term), he probably also intends the adjectival participle λεγομένη negatively.

Real circumcision, Paul explains in Col. 2:11–12, is "not done by hand" (ἀχειροποίητος, *acheiropoiētos*) but involves identification with Christ's death. That means physical circumcision is only an operation done in the flesh (Phil. 3:2–3; Rom. 2:28–29). It is significant as a "sign" and "seal" of faith for Jewish Christians (Rom. 4:11), but in no way is it necessary for membership in God's people (Rom. 4:16; cf. Gal. 6:15; 1 Cor. 6:19).

Why does Paul introduce a note of distance between Christians and Jews precisely in a place where he is trying to remind his Gentile Christian readers that the Jews were closer to God than they had been as unbelieving Gentiles? The way Paul shapes his language here has to do with his historical presuppositions.

2. The two uses of ὅτι do not represent two separate, grammatically equal clauses. The second ὅτι resumes the first ὅτι after the lengthy interruption of 2:11 (cf. 2:5a). Rhetorically, then, much of 2:11 (οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου) is a parenthesis (see NAB; NJB). Conceptually, however, the two clauses beginning with ὅτι describe two main components of the Gentiles' plight (see TNIV; NRSV; ESV).

3. See the use of (ἡ) περιτομή in Gal. 2:7–9; Phil. 3:3; Rom. 3:30; 4:9, 12; 15:8; and Col. 3:11 and of οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς in Gal. 2:12; Col. 4:11 (οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς); Titus 1:10; and Acts 11:2. Cf. Acts 10:45; Justin, *Dial*. 1.3; *m. Ned*. 3.11.

Prior to the gospel's entrance onto the scene, the Jews had enormous religious advantages over the Gentiles, advantages that Paul will list in the next verse, but after the gospel's advent and the inclusion of Gentiles within God's newly constituted people, these advantages were overshadowed by the rejection of the gospel among most Jews and their perpetuation of social distinctions that God, through the gospel, had abolished.[4] Even as Paul reminds his readers of their exclusion from historical Israel, with its close relationship to God, therefore, he hints that Israel, although historically "near" to God, nevertheless needs to be reconciled to him through faith in the gospel (2:16–17).[5]

2:12 Paul now backs up to the main verb μνημονεύετε and launches the second part of his description of his readers' specifically Gentile plight. As Gentiles, they were deprived of five advantages in comparison with Israel, the people from whom, according to verse 11, they were excluded.

1. They were χωρὶς Χριστοῦ (*chōris christou*, outside Christ). This is the most important item in the list, as its position indicates: it is at the head of the list, outside the two couplets (each linked with καί [*kai*, and]) used to express the other four problems. If every spiritual blessing of 1:4–12 is available only to those "in Christ" (1:3), and if rescue from the grim plight detailed in 2:1–3 comes only to those "in Christ" (2:5–6), then being "outside Christ" poses a problem of the first rank. Since Christ was not yet present in any clear way in biblical Israel, Paul speaks here of the promise of the Messiah in Israel's Scriptures (cf. Rom. 9:5).[6]

What Scriptures might these be? Later he will say that Gentiles were alienated from "the covenants of promise," and the line of thought he develops in Gal. 3:16 and 29, where God's covenant promise to Abraham concerns the Messiah (cf. Gen. 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; 24:7), may be in the background.[7] Regardless of the precise allusion, his primary point is reasonably clear: prior to the gospel, Gentiles were separated from the hope that Jews had in the coming of the Messiah, a hope that was eventually fulfilled in Jesus.[8]

2. Unbelieving Gentiles were also ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραήλ (*apēllotriōmenoi tēs politeias tou Israēl*, alienated from Israel's way

4. *Pace* Lincoln (1987: 619–20), the perspective is not unlike that of Rom. 9:1–5 and 9:30–10:21.

5. *Pace* Barth (1959: 125; 1983: 46), but also *pace* Lincoln, whose 1987 article is organized around a polemical interaction with Barth. Although Lincoln would agree (against Barth) that the author assumes a distance between non-Christian Jews and Christians here, Lincoln nevertheless sees a coolness and detachment in the description of circumcision that reveals a post-Pauline setting.

6. Eadie 1883: 163–64; Schlier 1957: 120; Gnilka 1971: 135; Best 1998: 241; Hoehner 2002: 356.

7. See Paul's use of Ps. 110:1 in Eph. 1:20–22; his possible allusion to Exod. 17:1–7 and Num. 20:2–13 in 1 Cor. 10:4; his echo of such Scriptures as Isa. 11:1, 10 and Ezek. 34:23–24 in Rom. 1:2–4; and his possible allusion to Gen. 15:6 and Hab. 2:4 in Rom. 3:21.

8. On the messianic expectations of some Jews in Second Temple Judaism, see Collins 1995, and on the occasional interpretation of Ps. 110:1 in a messianic sense in non-Christian Jewish texts, see Juel 1988: 137–39.

of life). The verb ἀπαλλοτριόω (*apallotrioō*, alienate) refers to separation—of people from their property if they sell it (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.5.7; *I.Magnesia Sip.* 19 [*NewDocs* 3:24]), of wives from husbands (1 Clem. 6.3), of people from God (Col. 1:21), and in Ephesians, specifically of Gentiles from the life that God gives (Eph. 4:18; see LSJ 176; BDAG 96). The perfect participle functions as an adjectival predicate of ἦτε (*etē*, you were), like the adjective ξένοι (*xenoi*, strangers) in the next clause (ἦτε . . . ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι . . . καὶ ξένοι, *ēte . . . apēllotriōmenoi . . . kai xenoi*, you were . . . alienated . . . and strangers), not as part of a periphrastic construction.[9] This probably means that we should not find too many nuances either in the lexical meaning of ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι or in its tense. The term basically means here what ξένοι means in the next clause. Prior to the intervention of the gospel, Gentiles were separated from, or "strangers to," the πολιτεία (*politeia*) of Israel.

But what does πολιτεία mean? Traditionally, commentators have understood it in one of three ways. Origen and Jerome thought it meant the "way of life" of the Jewish people.[10] The term could certainly mean this in the first century (see, e.g., 2 Macc. 4:11; 8:17; 4 Macc. 8:7; 17:9; Josephus, *Ant.* 15.254), but modern commentators have curiously neglected this option. Instead, they tend to choose one of two other meanings: the special rights that belong to a particular social group ("citizenship"),[11] or a political body ("commonwealth").[12]

It may be a mistake, however, to distinguish these three meanings too sharply in this passage. That Paul has the privileges of citizenship in mind seems likely from his next phrase, where he expands on the estrangement of his Gentile readers from Israel. They were, he says, ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (*xenoi tōn diathēkōn tēs epangelias*, strangers to the covenants of promise),[13] and this is clearly a reference to divine privileges that belonged to those with "citizenship" in Israel. That Paul was thinking of Israel as a discrete people marked out by its own "way of life" also seems likely. As Cohen (1999: 110–19, 125–29) has shown, the term crops up in contexts where the subject is the relationship between the Jewish way of life, embodied in the Mosaic law, and the customs of other peoples (cf. Aletti 2001: 143). Josephus, writing within a few decades of Paul, for example, could use the

9. *Pace* Yee 2005: 98–99. On the difficulty of distinguishing the two constructions, see Wallace 1996: 647n83.

10. See Heine 2002: 132, although Heine's rendering "commonwealth" for both πολιτεία (Origen) and *conuersatio* (Jerome) obscures this nuance. "Way of life" seems to have been the most common meaning for πολιτεία among the Greek-speaking church fathers (*PGL* 1113–14). LSJ 1434 think that this is "perhaps" the meaning of the term in Eph. 2:12.

11. As in 3 Macc. 3:21, 23; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.119; Acts 22:28. See, e.g., Haupt 1902a: 71; Pokorný 1992: 114; Hoehner 2002: 256–57; MacDonald 2004: 438n42 (a change from her 2000: 242). Cf. Aletti 2001: 142–44.

12. As in Plato, *Resp.* 10.619c; Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.19.138. See, e.g., Abbott 1897: 57–58; Eadie 1883: 164–65; Robinson 1928: 159; Lincoln 1990: 137; O'Brien 1999: 189; MacDonald 2000: 242; BDAG 845. Cf. Best 1998: 241.

13. The genitives, both here and in the previous clause, are genitives of separation (BDF §180.1; BDR §180.1n2).

term to describe what happened when the Jewish high priest Hyrcanus annexed Idumea to Judea in the second century BC. Hyrcanus, he says, "altered their way of life [πολιτεία] and made them adopt the customs and laws of the Jews" (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.254).[14] Paul is probably also thinking of how unbelieving Gentiles, because they were separated from the people who had access to Israel's Scriptures and governed their affairs by them (cf. Rom. 3:2; 9:4), were alienated from their "way of life."[15]

3. Israel's Scriptures contained not only directions for living as God's people but also αἱ διαθήκαι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (*hai diathēkai tēs epangelias*, the covenants of promise), and Paul's readers, as Gentiles, were also deprived of the privileges that came with these covenants. What covenants did Paul have in mind? He was probably thinking first of God's promises to Abraham of descendants and land in Gen. 13:14–16; 15:5, 18; 17:8; and 24:7. The language of covenant occasionally appears in these passages (Gen. 15:18; 17:9–14, 19–21), and Paul explicitly describes God's promise to Abraham "and to his seed" as a "covenant" in which God gave "promises" (Gal. 3:15–18). The only other covenants Paul mentions in his letters are the Mosaic covenant (Gal. 3:17; 4:24; 2 Cor. 3:14–15) and the new covenant (1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 11:27). Since Paul sets the promissory character of God's covenant with Abraham in contrast to the Mosaic covenant (Gal. 3:17–18; 4:23; cf. Heb. 8:6), and since he implies that the Mosaic covenant has passed away (Eph. 2:14–15; cf. Gal. 3:19; 2 Cor. 3:7–11; Rom. 7:6), "the covenants of promise" are probably the covenant with Abraham and the new covenant.[16]

What "promise" do they give? He may simply be thinking generally of the promissory character of the biblical covenants (Lincoln 1990: 137). If Paul (or a disciple steeped in his correspondence) wrote the letter, however, he may well have been thinking more specifically of "the promise of the Spirit" (Gal. 3:14; cf. 2 Cor. 3:6), the promise of the Messiah (cf. Gal. 3:16; Rom. 9:5; and "outside Christ" above), or both.[17] Since Paul has previously said that his readers were sealed with "the promised Holy Spirit" when they received the gospel (1:13), he may have had biblical references to the eschatological gift of the Spirit uppermost in mind (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26–27; 37:14; Joel 3:1–2 MT, LXX [2:28–29 Eng.]; cf. Eph. 2:18, 22; Gal. 3:14; Acts 1:4; 2:33; see the comments on Eph. 1:13).

14. Here I am following Cohen 1999: 110–19, 125–29 and the application of Cohen's discussion to Eph. 2:12 in Aletti 2001: 143–44.

15. Cf. 4:18, where the Gentiles' alienation (ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι) from "the life of God" seems to mean alienation from the way of living that God requires and that leads to life.

16. Cf. Schlier 1957: 120–21; Best 1998: 242. This approach is not uncontroversial. Some commentators believe that Paul (or the author) refers to a series of covenants with various people such as Abraham, Isaac, Israel, Jacob (e.g, Gnilka 1971: 136; Lincoln 1990: 137; Aletti 2001: 143; Muddiman 2001: 121). Others think that he refers only to covenants in which God unilaterally promises blessing without any condition: the Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, and the new covenant (Hoehner 2002: 359).

17. Eadie (1883: 166) and Schnackenburg (1991: 110) believe that Paul refers to the Messiah. Cf. Muddiman 2001: 121.

In any case, Israel's possession of "the covenants of promise" was a significant privilege because these covenants marked out the pathway of God's saving purposes (cf. Rom. 3:2; 9:4; 2 Tim. 3:15). Gentiles, because of their position outside Israel, had no access to Israel's Scriptures and therefore no clear access to the saving purposes of God.[18]

4. If Gentiles had no access to Israel's Scriptures with their promise of blessing (in the Abrahamic covenant) and of a restored relationship between God and his people (in the new covenant), then they also had no hope. The present tense of the participle (ἔχοντες, *echontes*) implies that outside Israel and before the coming of the gospel to them, Gentiles constantly existed in a state of hopelessness. This does not mean that they felt despair all the time (so, correctly, Best 1998: 242–43), but that from the perspective of a Christian looking back on Gentile existence outside Israel, their future held only "the wrath of God" that "comes upon the sons of disobedience" (5:6; cf. 2:2 and the notes on 1:13).

5. They also were ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ (*atheoi en tō kosmō*, without God in the world). From their own perspective, many Gentiles would have claimed to be piously devoted to the gods (cf. Jerome [Heine 2002: 133]). The very term Paul uses here, ἄθεος (*atheos*, without God), was used with disdain by Gentiles to describe the Jews, who refused to worship their gods (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.148), and in later times was a favorite slander against Christians for the same reason (Justin, *1 Apol.* 6.1; 13.1; 46.3; Athenagoras, *Leg.* 6.3; Mart. Pol. 3.2).[19] Paul's perspective here, however, is similar to that of the author of the Martyrdom of Polycarp. The author tells us that when the proconsul commanded the aged bishop to renounce his faith by uttering the anti-Christian slogan "Away with the atheists," Polycarp turned to the rabble of pagans (ἐθνῶν, *ethnōn*) gathered to watch him die and, waving his hand toward them, said, "Away with the atheists" (9.2).[20]

Paul has already described existence in "this world" apart from God in 2:1–3. It means living as one of the "sons of disobedience" and therefore under the sway both of this world with its tendency toward evil and of the prince of the demonic realm, the devil himself.

This echo of the terrible plight of those outside of Christ according to 2:1–3 brings to a fitting close Paul's description of the desperate situation of Gentiles prior to the gospel's advent. Israel was God's people and the repository of God's Word. Prior to the coming of the gospel, only those within the boundaries of Israel had hope for salvation from the wrath that God would pour out on the disobedient. As uncircumcised Gentiles, however, Paul's readers were by definition excluded from this people and this hope and were therefore in an especially desperate position of hopelessness.

18. A small percentage of Gentiles had access to Israel's Scriptures and Israel's hope through attendance at the synagogue (e.g., Luke 7:4–5; Acts 10:2, 22; 13:6, 26, 43; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7), but Paul is speaking here of what was typically the case.

19. See BDAG 24; *PGL* 44; and MacDonald 2004: 430–32.

20. Cf. 1 Cor. 8:4–6 and 10:20–22, where Paul assumes that the Gentiles' gods do not exist but that their idolatrous sacrifices are actually sacrifices to demons.

2:13 The phrase νυνὶ δέ (*nuni de*, but now) provides the hinge on which the two parts of 2:11–13 swing. Within the NT, the phrase is distinctive of the Pauline Epistles[21] and is used to describe a shift in circumstances (Rom. 15:23, 25; 2 Cor. 8:10–11, 22) or in a line of thought (1 Cor. 12:17–18; 13:12–13; 15:19–20; Rom. 7:15–17). It is not surprising, therefore, that Paul often uses it to mark the dramatic change that accompanies the movement from the period prior to the gospel's coming to the period of the gospel's presence (Rom. 3:21), or of the change that comes to people when they move from unbelief to faith (Rom. 6:21–22; 7:5–6; 11:30; Col. 1:21–22; 3:5–8; Philem. 11; cf. Eph. 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:10). Paul used it here to signal that he would now describe the dramatic change that came to his readers thanks to "the surpassing greatness of [God's] power" (1:19) and despite their desperate plight as Gentiles. Their alienation "once" (v. 11) and "at that time" (v. 12) from the way of life and from the hope described in Israel's Scriptures had come to an end.

The language Paul uses to describe the Gentiles' plight and God's solution to it comes from Isa. 57:19: "Peace, peace, to the far and the near, says the Lord; and I will heal them" (NRSV).[22] He will allude more clearly to that text near the end of the next section (2:17), but his use of the adverbs μακράν (*makran*, far off) and ἐγγύς (*engys*, near) here is already indebted to it.[23] In its original context, the passage refers to God's future blessing on Jews wherever they might be, whether scattered abroad or in the land (cf. Acts 2:39), but the wider context from which it comes in Isaiah frequently emphasizes the unification of Israel with all peoples in the worship of God (Isa. 55:5; 56:6–8), and it is easy to see how Paul could have understood it as a prophecy of the inclusion of Gentiles within God's people through the gospel (Moritz 1996a: 32–34, 45–52).

This eschatological inclusion of Gentiles, as Gentiles, within the people of God has happened ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (*en Christō Iēsou*, in Christ Jesus) and ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ (*en tō haimati tou Christou*, by the blood of Christ). If the most fundamental problem facing Paul's Gentile readers prior to the gospel's arrival among them was their existence "outside Christ" (v. 12), then God has met this problem by placing them "in Christ Jesus."[24] This could happen, however, only "by his blood," a notion that Paul has already introduced in 1:7 and that he will explore more fully in the next section (2:14, 16).

21. It occurs sixteen times in the Pauline Letters, and apart from that, only twice in Hebrews.

22. Paul probably relies on the Hebrew rather than on the LXX. See on 2:17 below.

23. Other approaches include that of (1) Schlier (1957: 122) and Pokorný (1992: 118), who think that a piece of Christian tradition incorporated into the text (and not Isa. 57:19 itself) stands behind the language of "far" and "near"; (2) Lincoln (1982: 26–28, 30; 1987: 610–11; 1990: 138–39), who thinks that the author is using traditional Jewish terms for describing the conversion of proselytes (a change from his view in 1981: 137); and (3) Yee (2005: 113–19), who interprets the language in ethnic terms, assigning Jews a central position in society and Gentiles a position on the margins. For the perspective taken here, see Best 1998: 245.

24. God is the agent of the action described in the passive verb ἐγενήθητε.

Summary

In 2:11–13 Paul begins to describe specifically how God has made his great power available to the church at the corporate level. He does this both by reminding his believing Gentile readers of the plight in which they had existed as people who were separated from Israel and by reminding them of what God has done for them to remedy that plight. He begins by describing the tension-filled divide that existed between Gentiles and Jews prior to the coming of the gospel: both groups considered circumcision an insuperable barrier between them. This social barrier was matched by a theological barrier. As unbelieving Gentiles, Paul's readers were separated from the Messiah and so from all the blessings of being "in Christ." They were alienated from Israel's Scriptures, both from the way of life described there and from the promises the Scriptures contained of a coming Messiah and of the outpouring of God's Spirit. This meant that they were without hope and without God in a rebellious world headed for the experience of God's wrath. God responded to this desperate plight, however, by incorporating Paul's Gentile readers into his people: they are now "in Christ Jesus" and so, although once far from God, have been brought near to him.

Additional Notes

2:11. "Circumcision" (περιτομή) was symbolic to Jews of the social distinction between their people and other peoples, and sometimes in the LXX the designation "uncircumcised" (ἀπερίτμητος) for Gentiles had a pejorative edge.[25] By the first century, Gentiles could simply be called "the foreskin" (ἀκροβυστία; Gal. 2:7; Rom. 3:30; Col. 3:11), and here too the term could be pejorative, as, for example, when *m. Ned.* 3.11 applies it (in its Hebrew form) to Gentile idolaters.[26]

Gentiles, and especially Romans, however, also considered circumcision to be a distinctive, and negative, characteristic of Jews.[27] The first-century Latin poet Martial, for example, could repeatedly address a Jewish critic of his work as "circumcised poet" (*verpe poeta*; *Epig.* 11.94), and he did not intend the description politely (Cohen 1999: 41; cf. Martial, *Epig.* 7.82; Horace, *Sat.* 1.9.69–70; Petronius, *Satyr.* 102; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5; Juvenal, *Sat.* 14.99, 104).[28] According to Philo, circumcision was "an object of ridicule among many people" (*Spec. Laws* 1.1). It was so frequently derided in the wider society

25. Judg. 14:3; 15:18; 1 Sam. 14:6; 17:36; 31:4 [1 Chron. 10:4]; 2 Sam. 1:20; Isa. 52:1; Jer. 9:25–26. For the pejorative use, see, e.g., Judg. 14:3; 1 Sam. 17:36; Isa. 52:1.

26. "The term *foreskin* (הָעָרְלָה) is applied only to designate [idolaters], *For all the nations are uncircumcised, but all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart* [Jer. 9:24–25]" (Blackman 1963: 3.225). Cf. Acts 11:3.

27. Cohen (1999: 45–46) argues that since many other peoples in the Eastern Empire practiced circumcision, it is primarily in the literature of the Latin West that non-Jews regard circumcision as distinctive of Judaism. The concern of both Philo (*Spec. Laws* 1.1) and Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 2.137–44) to answer criticisms of the Jews with the news that many Eastern peoples practice circumcision shows, however, that even in the East people considered circumcision a distinctive marker of Judaism. It is perhaps also worth remembering that Paul wrote Ephesians from Rome, where, as Cohen says, circumcision was often seen as a Jewish distinctive.

28. Martial, *Epig.* 7.35 is sometimes thought to refer to a circumcised Jewish slave, but Cohen (1999: 351–57) has argued a persuasive case that this inference is mistaken.

that many Jews, especially in the first and second centuries AD, sought to have their circumcision disguised by cosmetic surgery (1 Cor. 7:18) or by special mechanisms (Martial, *Epig.* 7.82).[29]

Although Paul's primary focus in 2:11–13 is on the Gentiles' salvation-historical disadvantages when compared to Israel, the way he describes circumcision in 2:11 already hints at the hostility between the two groups, and this will become a dominant theme in 2:14–15 (cf. Col. 3:11; Barth 1974: 254; MacDonald 2000: 241).

2:11. In Greek literature the adjective χειροποίητος frequently means "made by humans" as opposed to "naturally occurring" (LSJ 1985).[30] In the LXX, however, it always appears with negative connotations either to describe "handmade" idols (e.g., Lev. 26:1, 30; Jdt. 8:18; Wis. 14:8; Dan. 5:4, 23; 6:28; Bel 1:5) or, as a substantive, to mean the "idols" themselves (Isa. 2:18; 10:11; 16:12; 19:1; 21:9; 31:7; 46:6). This negative use carries over into the NT where, apart from Eph. 2:11, it always refers to the temple and again has negative connotations: God does not live in a "handmade" temple (Mark 14:58; Acts 7:48), and Christ did not serve as priest in such a temple (Heb. 9:11, 24).[31] This evidence weighs heavily against Yee's argument (2005: 83–86) that the term is not used in a negative sense in 2:11.[32] Instead, the term probably refers to the merely human surgery by which Jews identifed themselves: physical circumcision is no longer the critical boundary marker for God's covenant people.

29. Cohen (1999: 358–59) argues that Martial, *Epig.* 7.82 may not refer to circumcision, but see Hall 1988: 73–74. On the surgical procedure called "epispasm" and on the possible use of a pin or ring to pull what remained of the foreskin forward and disguise circumcision, see Hall 1988. On the disgust with which both Greeks and Romans viewed circumcision, see Hall 1992: 1027–28 and Gruen 2002: 51.

30. See, e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 4.55; 15.324; *J.W.* 1.419, 420; 4.614; 7.176.

31. Cf. the use of ἀχειροποίητος of Christ's resurrected body as a new temple in Mark 14:58.

32. The negative connotations of the term, moreover, tend to undermine Yee's broader thesis that 2:11–12 is written from a Jewish rather than a Jewish-Christian perspective.

V. From Existence without God to Membership in the People of God (2:11–22)
A. The Special Plight of the Gentiles and God's Response (2:11–13)
➤ B. Christ Is the Believing Community's Peace (2:14–18)
C. Gentile Christians as an Integral Part of God's Household (2:19–22)

B. Christ Is the Believing Community's Peace (2:14–18)

The next paragraph uses the last phrase of 2:13 as a springboard into an explanation of how and in what senses God in Christ "brought near" those who were "far off." The section stands out clearly from its context as a discrete unit: it begins with the emphatic pronoun αὐτός (*autos*, himself) to focus attention on Christ; it shifts from second-person address, used consistently in the previous paragraph (2:11–13) and the following paragraph (2:19–22), to first-person-plural address (apart from 2:17); and in contrast to the surrounding prose, it uses a number of active-voice participles to describe Christ's action. Christ's own actions rather than God's action through Christ, accordingly, take the spotlight in the passage. In addition, the syntax of 2:14–16 is extraordinarily difficult; the passage uses several words that are unique not only to Ephesians but to the entire NT, and it seems to have mingled two independent concepts: the unification of Jews and Gentiles and the reconciliation of humanity with God.

Various explanations have emerged for these unusual aspects of the passage, and three approaches are particularly important. First, some see the paragraph as a Jewish-Christian exegesis of Isa. 9:6–7 (9:5–6 MT, LXX); 52:7; and 57:19. Following normal Jewish midrashic practice, the author has linked these passages together using the catchword "peace" (Stuhlmacher 1986: 187–91; Schnackenburg 1991: 107, 112).

Second, in recent years the idea has emerged that the passage is an encomium (eulogy) on Christ (Faust 1993: 315–24; Aletti 2001: 146; Yee 2005: 136–40). If this is the genre of the passage, Yee argues, then perhaps its parenthetical quality reflects the use of the ancient rhetorical technique of amplification (ἡ αὔξησις, *hē auxēsis*). This strategy was considered especially appropriate to a speech in praise or blame of someone (an epideictic speech) and that dwelled at length on some unusually noteworthy characteristic or deed of the speech's subject (Yee 2005: 136–39).[1]

Third, and most popular, is the idea that the letter's author used a preexisting tradition in this passage, usually thought to be a hymn,[2] and that he modified this tradition to conform to his theological convictions. According to some interpreters, the original hymn pictured Christ breaking through

1. See, e.g., Aristotle, *Rhet*. 1367b.33, where Aristotle defines the encomium as focusing on a person's achievements, and 1367b.38–40 and 1392a.18, where he describes the appropriateness of the strategy of "amplification" (τὸ αὔξειν) within an epideictic speech.

2. Lindemann (1975: 158) views the underlying text as exalted prose rather than a hymn.

the wall separating heaven from earth in a way reminiscent of Hellenistic Jewish and later gnostic cosmologies (e.g., Schlier 1957: 122–33; cf. Gnilka 1971: 149–50; Lincoln 1990: 128–29; Pokorný 1992: 117–20).[3] The author has modified the hymn to make it refer not merely to the destruction of the barrier between heaven and earth but also to the demolition of the wall of the Mosaic law that separated Jews from Gentiles (v. 15) by the death of Christ on the cross (v. 16; Gnilka 1971: 149, 151; Lincoln 1990: 128; Pokorný 1992: 118–19).

What are we to make of these explanations for the parenthetical nature and complicated syntax of 2:14–18? As for the first two ideas, there is perhaps no way to know the extent to which Jewish midrashic or Greco-Roman rhetorical practice influenced the author. It seems reasonable to think that one or the other or both at the same time had some impact on the way Paul expresses himself here. This is all the more plausible if we think of the author as a highly educated Hellenistic Jew (like Paul). Whether any such influence is present, and the extent to which it is present, however, is so uncertain that it seems unwise to allow it to control the exegesis of the passage.

Although the third explanation has enjoyed immense influence, it must receive the same verdict. The focus on Christ, the unusual vocabulary, the difficult syntax, and the shift of attention from peace between Jews and Gentiles to reconciliation with God might be explained by reliance on traditional material. But is the case certain enough to form a solid basis for exegesis? Ephesians, after all, is a syntactically difficult text (see, e.g., 1:13; 2:4–6; 3:1–2, 14; 4:20), and nearly 10 percent of its vocabulary is unique within the NT, about the same percentage as in 2:14–18 (Best 1997a: 61; 1998: 249). If we remember Jesus's own formulation of the two great commandments, moreover, the reconciliation of human beings to one another and of human beings generally to God seem to be natural thematic partners in a Christian text (Mark 12:28–31; Matt. 22:35–40; Luke 10:25–28; Did. 1.2; Justin, *Dial*. 93). More detailed interaction with those who advocate an underlying hymn must await the exegesis of the passage, but enough has been said to show that the theory is too uncertain to contribute to a reliable interpretive strategy.[4]

Rhetorically, Eph. 2:14–18 functions in a way not unlike other Pauline excurses. In 1 Cor. 12:1–13:13 a discussion of the need to value all spiritual gifts to avoid division in the church body (12:1–31) leads to an excursus on the importance of love (13:1–13). In 2 Cor. 2:14–7:1, a narrative of Paul's difficult relationship with the Corinthians leads to a lengthy reflection on the nature of his apostolic ministry.

3. Citing such texts as 1 En. 14.9; 3 Bar. 2.1; T. Levi 2.7; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.11.1; and Eusebius, *Hist. eccl*. 1.13.20, which speak of a wall, water, separation, or partition between earth and heaven.

4. For a similar verdict, see Stuhlmacher 1986: 185–87; Best 1997a: 60–63; 1998: 247–50; Schnackenburg 1991: 105–7; and Yee 2005: 127–40.

Although briefer, Eph. 2:14–18 is also an excursus. It is intended to show how Christ brought Gentiles, who were "far" from the salvation-historical privileges of Israel, "near" both to Jews, from whom they were alienated, and to God. By his death on the cross, Christ tore down and set aside the Mosaic law. It had formed a wall of hostility that divided Jews from Gentiles and, as Paul's use of the term "access" (προσαγωγή, *prosagōgē*) in 2:18 hints, blocked the way between humanity and God. Paul seems to assume that the Mosaic law's "decrees" (δόγματα, *dogmata*, v. 15) separating Israel and the nations led to enmity between the two groups. He also seems to assume that these "decrees" have codified the enmity between all humanity and God (cf. 2:1–3; cf. Col. 2:14–15). When Christ died on the cross, he tore down (λύσας, *lysas*; Eph. 2:14) the Mosaic law by setting it aside (καταργήσας, *katargēsas*; v. 15) along with its powerful effects on sinful humanity. Here Paul probably assumes the theology of the Mosaic law that he has developed in Romans. Through no fault of its own, the Mosaic law's introduction increased the trespass and only made rebellion against God worse (Rom. 5:20; 7:11–12). With its removal, the way was clear for the union of Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ (Eph. 2:15) and the Spirit (v. 16), and for the reconciliation between all humanity, across ethnic lines, to God (vv. 16–18). The first phrase of the passage aptly summarizes all this: "He himself is our peace."

Exegesis and Exposition

[14]For he himself is our peace, who made both things one and tore down in his flesh the middle wall, that is, the fence—the enmity—[15a]by setting aside the law of commandments [promulgated] in [the form of] decrees, [15b]in order that he might create the two into one new human being in him, so making peace, [16]and might reconcile both, in one body, to God through the cross by killing the enmity in it. [17]And he came and preached peace to you who were far and peace to those who were near, [18]for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

2:14–15a

The γάρ (*gar*, for) connects the new paragraph firmly with the immediately preceding statement that the Gentiles, who were "far," have now "been brought near" both "in Christ Jesus" and "by the blood of Christ." Although it is true, as advocates of an underlying hymn claim, that Christ now becomes the subject of the action whereas before in Ephesians God has been the subject and Christ the agent through whom God works, 2:13 has already prepared the ground for Christ to take center stage.[5] Paul intends to show precisely how Christ's death overcame the estrangement of Gentiles from the people of God that he has portrayed in 2:11–12. The αὐτός (*autos*, he himself) places the spotlight directly on Christ (cf. 4:10–11; 5:23; 5:27).

5. Christ rather than God is also the subject of the action in 4:7–13 and 5:23, 25–27 (cf. Best 1998: 249), and in each of these passages αὐτός is used of Christ. The style of the first part of the section, therefore, is consistent with the style of Ephesians generally.

Christ, Paul says, ἐστὶν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν (*estin hē eirēnē hēmōn*, is our peace). The identification of Christ with "our peace" is striking and is probably derived from the idea that those who are "in Christ" (v. 13) assume some of the qualities of Christ himself (cf. 5:2; 1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 3:3–4). Christ is not divided into competing groups, and so those who are identified with Christ are also at peace with one another (1 Cor. 1:13; 12:12–13, 27; Rom. 12:5).[6] As many commentators observe, the "peace" Paul thinks of here is the broad Hebraic concept of שָׁלוֹם (*šālôm*, peace), which does not mean simply the cessation of hostilities.[7] The word certainly can also mean the "opposite of war" (*HALOT* 2:1508), however, and in light of Paul's emphasis on the alienation of Gentiles from Israel (2:11–12), this nuance is probably uppermost in his thinking here.

With three participial clauses, Paul next explains how Christ has produced peace between the two formerly alienated social groups. First, Christ is ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφότερα ἕν (*ho poiēsas ta amphotera hen*, he who made both things one). It is odd that Paul uses the neuter form of the adjective ἀμφότεροι (*amphoteroi*, both) and the number ἕν (*hen*, one) here since he has used masculine terms to refer to Jews and Gentiles in 2:11–13,[8] and the two other occurrences of ἀμφότεροι in 2:16 and 18 are both masculine. This has led some interpreters to see the neuter terms here as undigested bits of traditional material that originally referred to a division between the heavenly and the earthly spheres rather than to two groups of people (e.g., Schlier 1957: 124; Gnilka 1971: 139; Lindemann 1975: 157n66, 160; Lincoln 1990: 140). If this is right, however, it is difficult to know why Paul did not change the neuter forms to masculines as he did in 2:16 and 18 (Best 1998: 252). Best's alternative suggestion is attractive: since the reference to a wall in what follows calls on spatial imagery, the author may have already been thinking in those terms and thus of a Jewish "region" and a Gentile "region," which the wall separates. In Greek, the noun "region" (χωρίον, *chōrion*) is neuter, and so it could serve as the unexpressed antecedent of the neuter ἀμφότερα and ἕν.[9]

Second, Paul describes Christ as ὁ . . . τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας (*ho . . . to mesotoichon tou phragmou lysas*, he who tore down the middle wall, that is the fence).[10] The term μεσότοιχον is rare in Greek literature, but where it does occur, it refers either to an outside wall or to a partition wall

6. Here Stuhlmacher (1986: 188) and Best (1998: 251) see a reference to Isa. 9:6, and this is certainly possible, but Paul's identification of the church with Christ provides a more immediate explanation for the language.

7. *HALOT* 2:1507–9 refers to "prosperity, success, . . . intactness, . . . welfare, state of health, . . . friendliness, . . . deliverance, salvation."

8. Λεγόμενοι (v. 11); ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι, ξένοι, ἔχοντες, ἄθεοι (v. 12); οἵ, ὄντες (v. 13).

9. It is sometimes said that neuter adjectives can be applied to groups of people, as in 1 Cor. 1:27–28 (BDF §138.1), and this is true, but it does not explain why Paul would use the neuter here and the masculine in the immediate context.

10. The καί therefore is not epexegetical ("namely," "inasmuch as"; Alford 1857: 94; Eadie 1883: 171; Abbott 1897: 61) but coordinate ("and"), and λύσας does not modify ποιήσας adverbially but stands parallel to it. So, correctly, Best 1998: 253 and Aletti 2001: 147–48. For

in a house or temple.[11] Josephus could use the closely related phrase τὸν μέσον τοῖχον (*ton meson toichon*, the middle wall) to refer to the wall that separated the holy of holies from the rest of Solomon's temple (*Ant*. 8.71; cf. 1 Kings 6:16–17; BDAG 635). Paul is using μεσότοιχον here metaphorically of something that keeps the two people groups, Jews and Gentiles, separate from each other. He further defines τὸ μεσότοιχον with the explanatory (or "epexegetical") genitive τοῦ φραγμοῦ (*tou phragmou*). This term means a "fence" or "hedge" that encloses something, shutting it off and protecting it (e.g., Isa. 5:2, 5; Sir. 36:25; Mark 12:1; Matt. 21:33), and appears only here in the Pauline corpus. Christ, then, tore down a partition that was also an enclosing fence (Eadie 1883: 172).

Why did Paul express himself in such an unusual way, using two rare terms in a redundant construction? According to Josephus, Herod's temple had a short stone wall or "balustrade" (δρύφακτος, *dryphaktos*) that separated the outer area, to which Gentiles were permitted, from the inner, more-holy sections permitted only to Jews (*Ant*. 15.417; *J.W.* 5.193–95).[12] The idea that Paul refers to this wall here as a metaphor for the separation of Jews and Gentiles is very old, going back at least to Anselm of Laon in the early twelfth century (Eadie 1883: 172), and has had a steady stream of supporters to the present (e.g., Abbott 1897: 61; Robinson 1904: 59–60; MacDonald 2000: 244; cf. MacDonald 2004: 434).[13] On this reading, Paul refers to this enclosure with the entire phrase τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ and uses it as a symbol of the hostility between Jews and Gentiles. It is unlikely, however, that Paul would have expected a wide audience of Gentiles in Asia Minor to understand an allusive reference to a specific feature of the Jerusalem temple's exterior architecture.[14]

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similar constructions, see Wallace 1996: 274–75. Note especially Matt. 27:40; John 6:33; and Acts 15:38.

11. The term never appears in the LXX, occurs rarely in classical literature and inscriptions, and appears only here in the NT. For its use in an extended metaphor that speaks of an outside wall separating the fields of two neighbors, see *Vita Aesopi* (W) 75.14–16 (translated into French in Aletti 2001: 149n120 and into English in Wills 1997: 202). For its use with reference to partitioning walls in houses, see MM 400 and the fifth-century AD lexicographer Hesychius, who defines the rare term κατῆλιψ as μεσοδομή, μεσότοιχον, δοκός, ὑπότονος βαστάζουσα τὸν ὄροφον ("something built between, a middle wall, a load-bearing beam, a support holding up roof thatch" [my trans.]). For the use of the term to describe an architectural feature of temples in Asia Minor, see Best 1998: 257n39. Clearly, the key elements of a μεσότοιχον are that it is an architectural term and that it separates.

12. Josephus says that the wall was punctuated at intervals with pillars inscribed in Greek and Latin threatening any Gentile who trespassed beyond it with death. A complete copy of this inscription was unearthed at the temple mount in 1871 and a fragmentary copy in 1934. On these inscriptions, see Bruce 1984: 297n115.

13. Bruce (1984: 297–98) is attracted to this interpretation but is also cautious about adopting it.

14. So a host of commentators, including Eadie 1883: 172; Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 69; Masson 1953: 165n1; Best 1998: 254; Aletti 2001: 149n120. Muddimann (2001: 128) argues against this objection, but, in my view, unsuccessfully.

Others have argued that the term μεσότοιχον, before the author glossed it with τοῦ φραγμοῦ, came from a piece of tradition, perhaps a hymn, in which it referred to the separation of earth from heaven according to a Hellenistic Jewish, and later gnostic, cosmology. The author added the reference to the enclosing "fence" because that term was particularly appropriate to the Mosaic law's function of protecting Israel from the impurities and idolatries of the Gentiles. The author, then, has transformed a hymn that originally spoke of Christ overcoming the separation between heaven and earth (cf. Col. 1:20) into a statement of Christ's destruction of the Mosaic law (e.g., Gnilka 1971: 151; Lincoln 1990: 129, 141; Pokorný 1992: 121).

This interpretation falls prey to the objections already voiced against the theory that 2:14–18, or some part of it, consists of a traditional hymn and Paul's (or the author's) editing of it. In this instance, it is difficult to see why, if the term μεσότοιχον seemed inadequate to Paul, he did not simply replace it with φραγμός rather than adding φραγμός to it.

Others believe that the wall simply symbolizes social separation and has no very specific reference. Jews were separated from Gentiles by a host of social boundaries, and so the metaphor of a wall, without particular reference to any specific institution, is used to describe the distance and sometimes hostility between Jews and Gentiles (Best 1998: 256–57; Yee 2005: 151).

We should not exaggerate the strangeness of Judaism, however, relative to the rest of Greco-Roman society in the first century. In a careful study of the issue, Cohen (1999: 28), concludes, "Not a single ancient author says that Jews are distinctive because of their looks, clothing, speech, names, or occupations." According to Cohen (1999: 67) "The diaspora Jews of antiquity were not easily recognizable—if, indeed, they were recognizable at all."

The most reliable social indicator that someone was a Jew, although itself far from infallible, was observance of the Jewish law (Cohen 1999: 53–62).[15] In 49–48 BC, about a century before Paul wrote Ephesians, the Roman proconsul of Asia, Lucius Lentulus Crus, exempted Jews in Ephesus who were also Roman citizens from military service. The Jews of Ephesus were distinguished from everybody else because they "observed" and "practiced" Jewish rites (ἱερὰ Ἰουδαϊκά, *hiera Ioudaika*); in other words, they kept the Jewish law (Cohen 1999: 58; Josephus, *Ant*. 14.228, 234, 237, 240). Since we know that in the Jewish Diaspora of the Second Temple period, the law was compared to "iron walls" (σιδηρᾶ τείχη, *sidēra teichē*) that God used to "enclose" Israel "with a fence" (περιφράσσω, *periphrassō*) and so to keep them from mixing with "other nations" (ἄλλα ἔθνη, *alla ethnē*; Let. Arist. 139),[16] and since we know that observing the law was the main distinguishing characteristic of Ephesian Jews during the same period, it seems most

15. Law observance was not an infallible guide to Jewishness, because, as Cohen (1999: 58–62) explains, some Gentiles occasionally kept the law, or parts of it, as matters of convenience or conviction.

16. Texts that speak of a fence around the law (e.g., *m.ʾAbot* 1.1; 3.14), sometimes cited in this connection (Pokorný 1992: 121), are not really relevant. As Best (1998: 255n37) and Mud-

likely that by the phrase τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ Paul meant the Jewish law. The Jewish law was both a "partition" that separated Jews from Gentiles and a "fence" that enclosed the Jewish people, keeping them safe from Gentile influences.

The next two phrases pose major syntactical problems. It is unclear whether τὴν ἔχθραν (*tēn echthran*, the enmity) is the direct object of the second participle, λύσας (*lysas*, who tore down), or of the third participle, καταργήσας (*katargēsas*, having set aside). If it goes with λύσας, then, somewhat oddly, the two objects of that participle, each standing in apposition to the other, appear on either side of their verb rather than one after the other (Lincoln 1990: 124). If τὴν ἔχθραν goes with καταργήσας and stands in apposition to τὸν νόμον (*ton nomon*, the law), however, then the phrase ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ (*en tē sarki autou*, in his flesh) intervenes between the two objects of the verb although it modifies neither of them (Abbott 1897: 62; Hoehner 2002: 373). It is difficult to decide between these alternatives, and precisely this kind of syntactical problem has led many students of the letter to conclude that Paul modified an underlying text of some kind (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 124).

Syntactical problems are not unusual in Ephesians, however, and may be the result of the letter's oral quality.[17] When Paul dictated the letter, he paused either after saying "λύσας" or after saying "τὴν ἔχθραν," making clear where τὴν ἔχθραν should go in the flow of thought. Since we do not know where that oral pause occurred, we are reduced to making an educated guess, and so it seems slightly more likely that τὴν ἔχθραν goes with λύσας. It is closer to it and could have come into the sentence as something of an afterthought (cf. χάριτί ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι in 2:5). Christ, then, is the one who has torn down "the middle wall, that is, the fence—the enmity."

The next phrase, ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ, also poses problems. It can fall, conceptually, in three different places. The following list illustrates this with three English translations that place the words "in his flesh" in italic type and the word(s) the phrase modifies in bold type:

It could modify ὁ . . . λύσας: "he who **tore down** *in his flesh* the middle wall, that is the fence—the enmity."[18]

It might modify καταργήσας: "he who tore down the middle wall, that is the fence—the enmity, by **setting aside** *in his flesh* the law of commandments in ordinances."[19]

diman (2001: 127–28) point out, these texts are concerned with the oral tradition that forms a fence around the law, not the function of the law in fencing off Israel from the Gentiles.

17. Cf., e.g., the placement of ἐν ἀγάπῃ in 1:5, the difficulty in understanding τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν in 1:23, and the broken syntax of 2:1, 5 and 3:1, 14.

18. E.g., Origen (Heine 2002: 135); Theodoret (R. Hill 2001: 2.40); Oecumenius (*PG* 118:1197); Theophylact (*PG* 124:1060); Alford 1857: 94; Ellicott 1859: 48; Abbott 1897: 62; Masson 1953: 165; Sellin 2008: 215.

19. E.g., Eadie 1883: 174; Robinson 1904: 63, 161; Gnilka 1971: 141; Lincoln 1990: 124; Schnackenburg 1991: 114; Hoehner 2002: 372.

> It might also be an afterthought intended to show that Christ was the central figure who accomplished the action of all three participles: "who **made** (ποιήσας) the two one, having **torn down** (λύσας) the middle wall, that is the fence—the enmity (*in his flesh*), by **setting aside** (καταργήσας) the law of commandments in ordinances" (Best 1998: 234, 258).

Probably the first of these options is correct (the middle wall was torn down in Christ's flesh). Many commentators whose native tongue was ancient Greek have favored it (e.g., Origen [Heine 2002: 135]; Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.40]; Oecumenius, *PG* 118:1197), and the appearance of the phrase τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ in 2:16 hints that the prepositional phrase "in his flesh" should stay with τὴν ἔχθραν.

What does the phrase mean? The similarity of the phrase to 2:13, 16 and Col. 1:22 (cf. Col. 2:14), where Christ's death is the means of reconciliation between God and human beings (v. 16; Col. 1:22; 2:14) and between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:13), means that it must refer to Jesus's death on the cross, not to his incarnation (*pace* Calvin 1965: 151). Paul probably did not intend to emphasize Christ's identity with "sinful flesh" (*pace* Muddiman 2001: 130, citing Rom. 8:3) but only that his death was a physical sacrifice, involving "blood" (Eph. 2:13; cf. 1:7) and "flesh."

The third participial phrase modifies the second participle λύσας, explaining the means by which Christ tore down the dividing wall that was also the enmity between Jews and Gentiles (Wallace 1996: 628–30). He did this "by setting aside" (καταργήσας, *katargēsas*) the law. Paul uses this same verb in the passive voice in 2 Cor. 3:7–14 to say that the Mosaic era, with its "ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets," has been "set aside" (2 Cor. 3:7 NRSV; cf. 3:11, 13–14). He also uses it in the passive voice in Rom. 7:2 and 6 to speak of believers being "released" from the law just as a wife is released, when her husband dies, from the law binding her to him. That is the sense Paul intends here, although by putting the verb in the active voice, and using it in concert with the terms "tore down" (v. 14) and "kill" (v. 16), he gives it a somewhat stronger connotation.[20]

If the passage says in strong terms that Christ set aside the law, however, does this not put it in tension with the Paul of the undisputed letters? In Rom. 3:31 Paul insists that his gospel does *not* set aside the law (using καταργέω in the active voice), and he continues to use the law for ethical instruction in such places as Gal. 5:14; 1 Cor. 5:13; 9:8–9; 10:1–22; 14:33b–34; and Rom. 13:8–10.

Some interpreters have thought that a contradiction does exist and is attributable to the context out of which the supposedly post-Pauline author of

20. The verb καταργέω is most often used in the NT in the negative senses of "invalidate, make powerless," or "abolish, wipe out, set aside" (BDAG 525–26). At least in the NT, the negative nuance of the term seems intensified when it is in the active voice and God or Christ is the subject, as it is here (2 Thess. 2:8; 1 Cor. 1:28; 2:6; 6:13; 15:24 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14).

Ephesians wrote. He lived at a time when the Jewish law was seen as equivalent to the Jewish way of life, which separated Jews from Gentiles and so, for Christians, could be safely relegated to the irrelevance of past salvation history. The intense discussions that once took place between Paul and Jewish Christianity were now a distant memory. There was no longer a need for Paul's more nuanced approach to the Mosaic law, in which it was in some senses abrogated and in other senses established. The redundant phrase used to describe the law in 2:15 (ὁ νόμος τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν, *ho nomos tōn entolōn en dogmasin*, the law of commandments in ordinances) only emphasizes the completeness of the law's abrogation—Christ did away with every facet of the Jewish way of life (Lincoln 1987: 612, 616; 1990: 143; Schnackenburg 1991: 115; MacDonald 2000: 245).

Other interpreters have moved in precisely the opposite direction, understanding 2:15 to set aside only certain elements of the Mosaic law. Calvin, followed by a number of others over the years, believed that the phrase τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν limited the part of the law under discussion to its "ceremonies"—those particularly Jewish parts of the law that formed the "wall" of the previous verse and separated Jews from Gentiles. The moral law, common to both Jews and Gentiles, then remained unaffected by Christ's work (Calvin: 1965: 151; 1973: 196).[21] Others have thought that the phrase sets aside only the commanding character of the law, with its emphasis on externals and obedience (Robinson 1904: 64, 161; Muddiman 2001: 133).

None of these interpretations of the expression ὁ νόμος τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας, however, is satisfactory. The words τῶν ἐντολῶν express the content of the law, and the phrase ἐν δόγμασιν describes the method of the commandments' promulgation.[22] The law that Christ set aside consisted of specific commandments promulgated in the form of decrees.[23] The redundancy of the expression is characteristic of Ephesians, and so we should probably not read too much significance into each word. Paul clearly intends the phrase to refer to the entire Mosaic law.[24]

The Paul of Ephesians did not think that Christ had set aside the need for "commandments" within Christianity, nor did he think the Mosaic law had been "nullified," if that word is taken to mean that the Mosaic law is no longer useful for believers. His use of a "command" (ἐντολή, *entolē*) from the Decalogue in his ethical instruction in Ephesians (6:2–3; cf. Exod. 20:12;

21. See also Eadie 1883: 177–78; cf. Yee 2005: 154–61. Despite Barth's attempt (1974: 287–91) to distinguish his view from Calvin's, it is difficult to see how the two views differ in substance.

22. Cf. the use of the term δόγμα to refer to the decrees of a king in, e.g., 4 Macc. 4:23–26; Dan. 6:13 LXX (6:12 Eng.); Luke 2:1; Acts 17:7; and to its probable use for the Mosaic law in 3 Macc. 1:3 ("ancestral traditions," NRSV) and Col. 2:14.

23. Cf. Paul's use of the terms γράμμα and γράμματα of the Moasic law in Rom. 2:27; 7:6; 2 Cor. 3:6–7.

24. So most interpreters, including Alford 1857: 94; Ellicott 1859: 48; Abbott 1897: 64–65; Westcott 1906: 37–38; Stuhlmacher 1986: 189–90; O'Brien 1999: 196–201; Best 1998: 260–61; and Hoehner 2002: 374–77.

Deut. 5:16) is enough to demonstrate this. Paul apparently thought, however, that when believers obeyed the parts of the Mosaic law that he incorporated into his ethical teaching, they were not obeying these commands as the Mosaic law. In Paul's thinking, the Mosaic law governed Israel for a specific period of time (Gal. 3:19). Although it was glorious in its day (2 Cor. 3:7–10), it had now served its purpose and come to its divinely appointed end (2 Cor. 3:13; Rom. 10:4). God had established a new people, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles, and the law governing their conduct Paul called "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2; cf.1 Cor. 9:21). The Mosaic law was still authoritative Scripture within the new people of God, but in a different way than it had been for Israel.[25] It revealed the character of God, the nature of humanity, and the centrality of faith to a right relationship with God, but its commandments no longer governed the behavior of God's people without first passing through the filter of the gospel.

Here, then, Paul says that when Christ set aside the Mosaic law by his death, he removed the hostile purposes to which human sinfulness had often put the Mosaic law's good, but temporary, commands about separating from the Gentiles. This toxic mixture of the law and human sinfulness (cf. Rom. 5:20; 7:5, 7–25; 1 Cor. 15:56) probably led Paul to speak of the law here in 2:15 in negative terms. The sinful use of the law produced a hostility that deprived Gentiles of access to God through the Scriptures (2:12). There is certainly more to be said about the Mosaic law than this, but a fuller explanation of its role did not fit Paul's purposes here. Instead, he speaks concisely, aligning the Mosaic law closely with "enmity" and saying in straightforward terms that Christ has set it aside (Aletti 2001: 151).

2:15b–16 Christ set aside the Mosaic law for two purposes. Paul now describes these purposes in a lengthy subordinate clause with two main verbs, κτίσῃ (*ktisē*, he might create) and ἀποκαταλλάξῃ (*apokatallaxē*, he might reconcile).

First, when Christ set aside the Mosaic law, he created a new, unified human being in himself and so made peace between believers from among Jews and Gentiles. Paul has already used the verb κτίζω (*ktizō*, create) to refer to the individual believer as God's new creation no longer living under the sway of the world, the devil, and the flesh but in the way God originally created human beings to live (2:10; cf. vv. 2–3).[26] Here too Paul has the new creation in mind, but now conceived as a corporate event, making peace between the two estranged groups, Jews and Gentiles.[27] In bringing these groups together,

25. A more detailed argument for this approach to Paul's understanding of the Mosaic law appears in Thielman 1992; 1994; 1999: 7–46. Cf. O'Brien 1999: 196–201.

26. The eleven NT uses of κτίζω outside Ephesians all refer to God's creative activity in Gen. 1–2 (Matt. 19:4; Mark 13:19; 1 Cor. 11:9; Rom. 1:25; Col. 1:16 [2x]; 3:10; 1 Tim. 4:3; Rev. 4:11 [2x]; 10:6), and Eph. 3:9 also uses the term this way. It is probable, therefore, that Eph. 2:10, 15 and 4:24 are all intended to recall God's original creation of human beings.

27. Paul has shifted from the neuter phrase τὰ ἀμφότερα in 2:14 to the masculine expression οἱ δύο here, and this has led to discussion about whether he has also moved his focus from people groups in 2:14 (represented by the neuter) to individuals here (represented by the masculine).

Christ has created εἷς καινὸς ἄνθρωπος (*heis kainos anthrōpos*, one new human being), and he has done this ἐν αὐτῷ (*en autō*, in him[self]). By their union with Christ, believers become united with one another across the social barriers that formerly divided them, and so, like Christ himself, become a new Adam (cf. 1 Cor. 15:22, 45–49; Col. 3:10–11; Lincoln 1990: 143). Ποιῶν (*poiōn*; v. 15) is a textbook example of an adverbial participle of result: it is in the present tense and follows the verb (Wallace 1996: 637–39). So the result of this newly created man, Paul says, is peace between formerly hostile Jews and Gentiles.

Second, when Christ set aside the Mosaic law, he reconciled all humanity, of whatever ethnic origin, to God. "Reconciliation" between God and human beings is a distinctively Pauline concept within the NT and appears in two theologically weighty passages in the undisputed letters: 2 Cor. 5:18–20 and Rom. 5:10–11 (cf. Rom. 11:15). In these passages, God always takes the initiative in reconciliation, although he does so through Christ, and specifically through his death. This does not mean that people have no responsibility in reconciliation, however, for God gives to Paul a ministry of reconciliation, and that ministry involves calling people to "be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20 NRSV; on this point, see Büchsel, *TDNT* 1:256–57). Just as with the everyday use of "reconciliation" (1 Cor. 7:11), the theological use of the term assumes a breech in relationship, an enmity (Rom. 5:1, 8, 10), which needs to be healed. In the undisputed letters, this enmity originates in human rebellion against God, and this rebellion has called forth God's wrath (Rom. 1:18–3:19; 5:9; see Büchsel, *TDNT* 1:257).

The concept in Colossians (1:20, 22) and Ephesians (only here in 2:16) is basically the same but with three distinctions. First, both letters use the unique compounded verb ἀποκαταλλάσσω (*apokatallassō*) rather than the usual terms καταλλάσσω (*katallassō*, reconcile) and καταλλαγή (*katallagē*, reconciliation). This variation probably only intensifies the word rather than changing its meaning.[28] Second, in both letters reconciliation comes through Christ's death, but Christ, rather than God himself, is the reconciler. Third, whereas in the undisputed letters and Ephesians, God reconciles people to himself, in Colossians he reconciles the entire cosmos (τὰ πάντα, *ta panta*, all things) to himself (1:20).

Here in 2:16, Paul says that Christ has reconciled τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους (*tous amphoterous*, both) to God, using the masculine adjective, whereas in 2:14 he had used the neuter τά ἀμφότερα. The change is slightly unusual, and some

The shift in gender was probably dictated by the masculine ἄνθρωπος imagery, however, and so Paul's focus remains on the two people groups. See Hoehner's persuasive evaluation (2002: 378–79) of Best's lengthy argument (1998: 261–63).

28. Some interpreters have taken the prefixed ἀπό to mean that Christ has restored an original peace between God and humanity that was disrupted (e.g., Calvin 1965: 152; Alford 1857: 95; Ellicott 1859: 49; Lightfoot 1879: 159–60; LSJ 201). As true as this is theologically, and as pertinent as it is to a context that emphasizes the new creation, the prepositional prefix ἀπό most often simply intensifies the words to which it is attached, and in such a rare word as this, it is safest to assume that this is all it is doing here (Abbott 1897: 66).

interpreters believe that it signals Paul's (or the author's) editorial work on an original hymn that once referred not to two groups of people but to two cosmic spheres, heaven and earth (see above on v. 14). A simpler explanation, however, is ready to hand. Since the appearance of τά ἀμφότερα in 2:14, Paul has introduced the grammatically masculine expression καινὸς ἄνθρωπος (*kainos anthrōpos*, new human being) in 2:15b, and since this new human being is made of "both" Jews and Gentiles, Paul has shifted the adjective "both" into the masculine gender to fit the personal and grammatically masculine nature of the metaphor (so also Mayer 2002: 131). As 2:1–3 has clarified, all people are "sons of disobedience" and "children of wrath." Thus, although the Jewish advantages Paul has described in 2:12 mean that Jews were in some sense "nearer" to God than Gentiles were (cf. v. 17), they were still in need of reconciliation to him through the death of Christ.

They are reconciled to him ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι (*en heni sōmati*, in one body). As the use of εἷς (*heis*, one) shows, Paul refers here not to the crucified body of Christ[29] but to the "one entity [ἕν, *hen*]" (v. 14) and the "one [εἷς] new human being" (v. 15) formed of Jews and Gentiles who are "in Christ." The body to which Paul refers therefore is the church, a body of people unified with each other across ethnic lines and at peace with God (cf. Col. 3:15).

Paul next describes the specific means through which this reconciliation with God was able to take place. It happened διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ (*dia tou staurou*, through the cross), that is, by means of Christ's death on the cross. Even more specifically, it happened ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν (*apokteinas tēn echthran*, by killing the enmity).[30] Paul last used the term ἔχθρα (*echthra*, enmity) of the social tension between Jews and Gentiles that Christ "tore down in his flesh" (v. 14), and some commentators continue to read ἔχθρα here in those terms: Christ's death on the cross killed the enmity between Jews and Gentiles (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 146; Best 1998: 266). But between his use of ἔχθρα in 2:14 and his use of it here, Paul has introduced the theme of the reconciliation of all humanity to God, and this theme will dominate the rest of the paragraph (cf. vv. 17–18). The term here, then, refers to the enmity between God and his rebellious creatures, and the whole thought is reminiscent of Rom. 5:10: "For if, while we were enemies [ἐχθροί, *echthroi*] we were reconciled [κατηλλάγημεν, *katēllagēmen*] to God through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled [καταλλαγέντες, *katallagentes*], shall we be saved by his life" (cf., e.g., O'Brien 1999: 204–5; Hoehner 2002: 283–84).

Since ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν serves to further specify precisely how Christ used the cross to reconcile both Jews and Gentiles to God, the prepositional phrase ἐν αὐτῷ (*en autō*, in it) probably also refers to the cross (e.g., Gnilka

29. See the earlier commentators, such as Theodoret (R. Hill 2001: 2.41). Muddiman (2001: 135) sees a reference to the body of Christ in the hymn on which the editor relied and a double reference to both Christ and the church in the thinking of the editor himself.

30. Ἀποκτείνας is an adverbial participle of means. Its aorist tense does not indicate antecedent but contemporaneous action. On this, see Wallace 1996: 628–30 and the debate between Picirilli 2007 and Porter 2007.

1973: 144–45; Best 1998: 266; Hoehner 2002: 384) rather than to Christ himself (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 146; Schnackenburg 1991: 117). The killing of the enmity happened when Christ was killed on the cross. This thought not only recalls the reference to the death of God's Son in Rom. 5:10 but, since it is part of a statement about Christ's purpose in setting aside the Mosaic law, the expression is also reminiscent of Col. 2:14–15: "[Christ] erased the record of debts, with its decrees [δόγμασιν, *dogmasin*], which was against us, and removed it from the midst, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by it [ἐν αὐτῷ, *en autō*]."

The Mosaic law was as tightly bound to the enmity between God and all humanity as it was to the enmity between Jews and Gentiles. When its holy, righteous, and good "decrees" encountered a humanity under the power of the world, the devil, and the flesh, they served only to reveal the depth of humanity's rebellion against God and the gravity of the penalty for that rebellion. When Christ died on the cross, he set the law aside, and in so doing, he not only created a new people unified across ethnic barriers but also removed the case against all humanity codified in the Mosaic law. When Christ set aside the law through his death on the cross, therefore, he reconciled to God all who believed the gospel, whether Jew or Gentile.

2:17 Paul now summarizes the dual theme of peace between Jews and Gentiles and peace between humanity and God with a skillfully crafted allusion to Isa. 52:7a and 57:19. Isaiah 52:7a refers to the beauty of "the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news" (NRSV).[31] In Isaiah, this good news is God's restoration of Israel's fortunes after the exile and, with it, the eschatological reign of God. Paul was apparently not the first early Christian to connect this text with the realization that in Christ, God was restoring peace between himself and not only Israel but also all humanity. For Peter too, in Acts 10:36 (cf. Luke 2:14), Christ is the messenger of Isa. 52:7, who proclaims to Israel the glad tidings (εὐαγγελίζω, *euangelizō*) of peace and who is also, as Peter puts it, "Lord of all" (cf. Faust 1993: 159).

As he has already hinted in 2:13, however, Paul's primary concern is not with Isa. 52:7 but with Isa. 57:19. Paul now weaves an allusion to this text into his argument by repeating the term "peace" and so recalling the statement "peace, peace, to the far and the near" (NRSV).[32] He cleverly restructures the statement in Isaiah so that one occurrence of the word "peace" goes with "far" and another with "near" (Lincoln 1982: 28; 1990: 149). This restructuring

31. Paul's allusion is closer to the Hebrew than to the LXX, which has the herald announcing "a report of peace" (εὐαγγελιζομένου ἀκοὴν εἰρήνης) rather than "peace" itself. Paul's use of Isa. 52:7 in Rom. 10:15, although it is concerned with a different part of the text, is also closer to the Hebrew than to the LXX.

32. Here too Paul seems to be dependent on the Hebrew rather than on the LXX, which disturbs the poetry of the Hebrew text's שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם (peace, peace) in 57:19 by inserting a preposition between the two words: εἰρήνην ἐπ᾽ εἰρήνην ("peace upon peace"). See also Lincoln 1990: 147.

emphasizes the evenhandedness of the proclamation of the glad tidings: the Gentiles have received the message of peace just as decisively as God's own people. Their greater distance from God has made no difference. The "peace," then, is not a peace between Jews and Gentiles (as it was in vv. 14 and 15) but a peace between both groups and God.[33]

2:18 Paul now provides further evidence of the peace that both Jews and Gentiles who are in Christ have with God. Both have been reconciled to God, "for" (ὅτι, *hoti*) both groups are united in the Spirit and have access to the Father through Christ.

The ὅτι introduces neither the result of Christ's proclamation of peace (Hoehner 2002: 218) nor the content of the proclamation (Haupt 1902a: 88), but loosely indicates the basis for, or proof of, the peace that Christ has proclaimed (LSJ 1265; BDAG 732.4b).[34] This proof comes in the form of ἡ προσαγωγή (*he prosagōgē*, the access) that Christ has provided to God for both Jews and Gentiles. Προσαγωγή could refer to access to a king, and some distinguished interpreters have taken it that way here (LSJ 1500; Fee 1994: 685): just as the friends of Cyrus could introduce members of the common people to Cyrus and gain them an audience with the great king (Xenophon, *Cyr.* 7.5.45), so Christ leads us into the presence of God.

In this passage, however, God is depicted not as a king but as a Father. It seems more likely, then, that when Paul uses προσαγωγή here, he has in mind the common meaning of its cognate verb προσάγω, which often refers to bringing offerings, prayers, or people before God (Gärtner 1965: 60–62; Lincoln 1990: 149).[35] As we have just seen in the comments on 2:15–16, Paul has implied that the Mosaic law was a barrier not only between Jews and Gentiles (v. 14) but also between God and humanity (v. 16). Through his death on the cross (διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ, *dia tou staurou*, through the cross), Christ removed this barrier (v. 16) and so provided access to God (cf. Rom. 4:15; 5:1–2, 9–10). Paul's phrase δι' αὐτοῦ (*di' autou*, through him; v. 18) probably refers precisely to Christ's death as the means through which he has obtained access to God for all who believe the gospel proclamation of peace.[36] Through his own death,

33. *Pace* Moritz (1996a: 32–34), the "far" and "near" of Isa. 57:19 in their original context probably refer to Israelites in the dispersion and Israelites in the land (e.g., Westermann 1969: 300; Lincoln 1982: 27; Hübner 1997: 165; Hoehner 2002: 365). Moritz (1996a: 32–34, 45–52) is quite correct, however, that Paul's theology of the eschatological inclusion of the Gentiles in the saving purposes of God is consistent with the earth-encompassing vision of Isa. 55–60. See especially Isa. 55:5; 56:6–7.

34. The causal use of ὅτι is common in Ephesians (4:25; 5:16, 23, 30; 6:12), whereas ὅτι only rarely indicates result in any literature. LSJ 1265 do not list result as a meaning, and BDAG 732 place it last. Since Paul has already given the content of Christ's proclamation as "peace," moreover, it is unlikely that ὅτι introduces another description of that content (so, correctly, Hoehner 2002: 388).

35. See, e.g., Lev. 7:8; 14:12; Tob. 12:12; 1 Macc. 5:54; 2 Macc. 3:32; 1 Pet. 3:18; and cf. Herodotus, *Hist*. 2.58.

36. Cf. Col. 1:20 in $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, ℵ, A, C, D^1, and Ψ, where the phrase διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ is followed immediately by δι' αὐτοῦ, a redundancy that makes it the more difficult reading

Christ has brought people into God's presence just as a priest might bring an offering to a deity.

Paul identifies the group who is now at peace with God as οἱ ἀμφότεροι (*hoi amphoteroi*), "both" Jews and Gentiles.[37] They come to God ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι (*en heni pneumati*), meaning not "by means of one Spirit" but "united together in one Spirit." Two considerations make this second understanding of the phrase clear. First, Paul has already mentioned the means of access to God: it is provided by Christ's death. Second, thus far he has used the number "one" twice within this paragraph to speak of the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ, in the phrase "one new human being" in 2:15 and in the phrase "in one body" in 2:16. Here too, then, his focus is on the unity of Jews and Gentiles. They are one just as the Spirit is one, and in this Spirit-effected unity they come to God, an approach made possible by the death of Christ (cf. 4:3–4 and the comments of Fee 1994: 583–84).

Summary

In 2:14–18 Paul places the spotlight directly on Christ, who, he says, is the "peace" of the believing community. He is their peace in the sense that he has united Jews and Gentiles to each other in himself and therefore overcome the hostility vividly portrayed in 2:11–12. Paul's description of how Christ did this moves forward in three steps. These steps are not related to one another sequentially but examine the same action in increasing detail, like a microscope clicking through three levels of magnification to examine the same organism:

> Christ made the two groups one.
> Christ tore down the Mosaic law as both a "partition" separating Jews from Gentiles and as a "fence" enclosing the Jewish people and keeping them safe from Gentile influences.
> Christ tore down this "partition" between Jews and Gentiles by setting aside the Mosaic law's commandments, issued in the form of decrees. When the Mosaic law passed away, its use as an instrument of hostility between Jews and Gentiles also passed away.

Christ set aside the Mosaic law for two reasons. First, he did this to create in himself one new human being out of two formerly hostile factions. Paul's description of this purpose summarizes all that he has just said. The second

and probably correct (R. Wilson 2005: 154–55). If retained, δι' αὐτοῦ refers either to the cross itself or to Jesus in his role as the crucified one. In either case, the phrase refers to Jesus's death as the means by which peace was made.

37. As with τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους in 2:16, the gender has shifted from neuter (v. 14) to masculine because of the intervening imagery of the "one new human being" in 2:15.

purpose, in contrast, introduces a new thought: when Christ set aside the law, he reconciled this unified group of Jewish and Gentile believers to God.

Christ did all this, Paul says, through his death on the cross. His death made it possible for him to present to God both Jewish and Gentile believers, now united peacefully with each other as a newly created human being.

C. Gentile Christians as an Integral Part of God's Household (2:19–22)

After making the case that, in Christ Jesus, Gentile Christians have drawn near both to Jewish Christians and to God (2:13, 17–18), Paul next shows exactly how near all Christians are to one another and to God. Using as a starting point his concluding statement that both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians now have access "to the Father," he explains that Gentile Christians are full members of God's household (v. 19). This in turn leads him to employ the architectural metaphor of a building under construction to describe the close relationship his Gentile Christian readers have to their Jewish fellow Christians and to God himself (v. 20).

They became members of God's household when God constructed them on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, a foundation whose most important stone—the stone that gives guidance to the building process and stability to the finished structure—is Christ Jesus himself. In the sphere marked out by a relationship with him, Paul continues, this whole building is presently growing into a temple whose individual building blocks are tightly fitted together (v. 21). Paul is probably thinking especially of the close connection that now exists between his Gentile Christian readers (v. 22) and Jewish Christians since Christ has set aside the Mosaic law. He then turns directly to his Gentile Christian readers and tells them that they too are being built into this structure together with others, presumably the Jewish Christians to whom peace was preached, according to 2:17. The entire building, he concludes, is the place where God dwells by his Spirit.

This paragraph reexpresses the main themes of 2:11–18 in vivid metaphorical language and brings all of 2:1–22 to a fitting and emphatic end. Paul has demonstrated to his Gentile Christian readers the depth of their plight prior to their trust in the gospel at both the individual and corporate levels. Individually, God has rescued them from being led toward his eschatological wrath by the world, its evil prince, and their own sinful tendencies (2:1–3). Corporately, God rescued them from an ethnic hostility that kept them alienated from both the promises of God in the Scriptures and from God himself. In 2:19–22, with the metaphor of the construction of God's dwelling place, Paul summarizes for his readers precisely what God's powerful action on their behalf (1:19) has done for them.

Through the apostolic and prophetic preaching of the gospel, God has placed them in his household. He has fitted them into his house alongside Jewish believers, overcoming the alienation that previously existed between

Jews and Gentiles. He has also placed them in the very house where he dwells by his Spirit, overcoming their estrangement from him.

God has accomplished all this "in" Christ Jesus. As the building's most important stone, Christ Jesus guides the building process, stabilizes the building itself, and presides over it from his position of authority in the heavenly places, where he reigns. Through him the alienation of Gentiles from Jews and of both groups from God has been so fully overcome that both groups fit tightly together to form the place where God's Spirit dwells.

Paul's statement in 2:18, which seems to form a launching pad for the present paragraph, provides a neat summary of these points: "Through him [Christ] we both [Gentiles and Jews] have access in one Spirit to the Father."

Exegesis and Exposition

[19]So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens together with the saints and members of God's household [20]because you were built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the most important stone, [21]in whom the whole ⌜ ⌝ building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, [22]in whom also you are being built together into the dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

2:19 Ἄρα οὖν (*ara oun*, so then) is characteristic of Paul's argumentative style, and here it signals a tight logical connection between 2:18 and the statement that Paul is about to make.[1] Since access to the Father has been achieved through the death of Christ for a group united in the Spirit across ethnic lines, and since Paul's Gentile readers belong to this group (v. 18), they are neither "strangers" (ξένοι, *xenoi*) nor "aliens" (πάροικοι, *paroikoi*) but "citizens together" (συμπολῖται, *sympolitai*) and "members of the household" (οἰκεῖοι) of God.

These four terms were commonly used in social and political contexts to refer to a particular group's status, and ξένοι and πάροικοι were frequently contrasted with πολῖται or οἰκεῖοι. Ancient lists of city residents, for example, ranked the privileges of full citizens (πολῖται) first, resident aliens (πάροικοι or κάτοικοι, *katoikoi*) next, and transient foreigners (ξένοι) last.[2] Philo (*Posterity* 109), similarly, describes how people adopt a different form of speech depending on the social status of the person to whom they are speaking: one speaks in a different way to parents than to children, to near relatives than to

1. The phrase never appears in the LXX, and elsewhere in the NT only in 1 Thess. 5:6; 2 Thess. 2:15; Gal. 6:10; Rom. 5:18; 7:3, 25; 8:12; 9:16, 18; 14:12, 19, although it does occur in 2 Clem. 8.6; 14.3; Barn. 9.6; 10.2; and Ign. *Trall*. 10 (BDAG 127). *Pace* K. Clark (1972: 78–79), the context of Paul's argument seems to dictate that the often-tentative nuance of ἄρα is missing here.

2. See Stählin, *TDNT* 5:30n203 and J. H. Elliott 1981: 25, 50n16. On the social and political connotations of these terms in the Greco-Roman world generally, see Zahn 1909: 2.139–40 and Cartledge, *BNP* 8:810–14.

distant ones, to members of one's own household (οἰκείοις, *oikeiois*) than to foreigners (ἀλλοτρίοις, *allotriois*), and to citizens (πολίταις, *politais*) than to strangers (ξένοις, *xenois*).[3]

"Strangers" and "aliens," therefore, were outsiders without the full legal rights of citizens and often, at a more informal level, without social acceptance from the communities in which they lived. Paul uses the terms metaphorically and loosely. He neither intends to make technical distinctions between ξένοι and πάροικοι (*pace* Eadie 1883: 189) nor is interested in the legal nicety that these groups were not entirely without rights, especially in Jewish society (J. H. Elliott 1981: 25, 27–28). Instead, he paints in broad brush strokes, intending to contrast the former status of his Gentile readers as outside the people of God, with their present status as full members of God's household.

The term ἅγιοι (*hagioi*, saints), then, refers, as it does elsewhere in the letter, to believers without ethnic distinction (1:1, 15, 18; 3:8; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18). Paul is not saying that Gentile believers are now citizens together with Israel (Barth 1974: 66, 269n71) or with Jewish Christians (e.g., E. Scott 1930: 176; Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 71; Faust 1993: 187; Sellin 2008: 233), nor is he imagining that his readers, seated with the enthroned Christ in heaven (2:6), are citizens together with the angels (cf., e.g., Gal. 4:26; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 12:18–24; 1QS 11.7–8; 1QM 12.1–2; 1QH[a] 11.21–22; Schlier 1957: 140–41; Gnilka 1971: 154). Rather, they form one citizenry with all other believers (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 151; Aletti 2001: 159–60; Hoehner 2002: 392–96). Like them, they are set apart from the rest of the world (1:4; 5:3, 27) as appropriate inhabitants of God's "holy temple" or "dwelling place" (cf. vv. 21–22). Like them, too, they are "members of [the] household" (οἰκεῖοι, *oikeioi*) over which God presides as Father (cf. v. 18; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 3:2–6), a thought that forms a skillful contrast with the former plight of Paul's readers as "resident aliens" (πάροικοι), people who stood outside the "household" that forms God's society.

2:20 The idea that his Gentile Christian readers now belong to God's household leads Paul to shift his metaphor from the social and political realm to the world of architecture. They are part of God's family, Paul says, because God has incorporated them into a building he has begun to construct on a solid foundation of two elements: apostles and prophets, on one hand, and Christ Jesus himself, on the other. The aorist participle ἐποικοδομηθέντες (*epoikodomēthentes*) points back in time to the readers' response to the gospel (1:13) and indicates the cause of what Paul has said in 2:19: his Gentile readers are citizens together with the saints and members of God's household *because* they were built on the foundation of the apostles, prophets, and Christ Jesus (Best 1998: 279; Hoehner 2002: 397).[4]

3. Cf. the set of contrasts in Diogn. 5.5: "[Christians] live in their respective countries, but only as resident aliens [πάροικοι]; they participate in all things as citizens [πολῖται], and they endure all things as foreigners [ξένοι]" (trans. Ehrman 2003).

4. Although causal participles normally precede the verbs that they modify, they do occasionally come after them (e.g., Acts 16:34; Wallace 1996: 632).

The metaphor of building on a sure foundation was common in classical antiquity and was often used in admonitions or warnings (Plato, *Leg.* 793b–c; Epictetus [Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 2.15.8–9]; cf. Soranus, *Gynaeciorum* 1.47). Here, however, Paul uses the metaphor positively to encourage his Gentile readers that the foundation on which their inclusion in God's people was built stands firm. This foundation consists of two basic elements, the first with two components.

The first element is οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ προφῆται (*hoi apostoloi kai prophētai*, the apostles and prophets), bound together by a single article (cf. 3:5; Wallace 1996: 270). They form a single foundation because they first proclaimed the gospel to the Gentiles.[5] Does the single article also hint that they are the same people?[6] This seems unlikely since Paul makes a distinction between apostles and prophets in his list of gifts in 4:11 (cf. 2 Cor. 12:28).

They are instead two groups engaged in a common task. The ἀπόστολοι are probably those who first took the gospel to the Gentiles—people such as Barnabas, Timothy, Silvanus, Apollos, and, preeminently, Paul himself (Acts 14:1, 4; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:7; 1 Cor. 4:6–9; 9:5–6; Rom. 11:13; 15:18–21; Eph. 3:4–9; 1 Tim. 2:7). The προφῆται are not OT prophets,[7] but the same kinds of people Paul refers to in 3:5; 4:11; and 1 Cor. 12:28 (cf. 12:10; 13:2, 8, 9; 14:1–6, 22–40; Rom. 12:6) and who, in those passages, exercise their gifts in the period after Christ's coming. Such prophets are apparently people whom the Spirit inspires to speak incisively to particular individuals (1 Cor. 14:24–25) or to the church (Acts 11:27–30; 15:32; 21:10–11), especially at critical moments in their lives or in history. Paul may have been thinking here of the role that prophets played in directing the movement of the church outward to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1–3; 15:22, 32; cf. 19:6; Masson 1953: 169–70; Best 1998: 283), a notion that becomes more explicit in 3:5–6, where Paul links the inclusion of the Gentiles with a previously unknown mystery now revealed "by the Spirit to the holy apostles, and prophets."[8]

The apostles and prophets comprise a foundation whose "most important stone" ἀκρογωνιαίου (*akrogōniaiou*) is αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (*autou*

5. This does not mean that τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν is a subjective genitive ("the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets"), a position to which 1 Cor. 3:11 drove some earlier commentators (e.g., Ellicott 1859: 52–53; Eadie 1883: 196–98) and for which Sandnes (1991: 227–29) has more recently argued on other grounds. The phrase, as most interpreters now recognize, is a genitive of apposition ("the foundation, that is, the apostles and prophets"). This reading keeps the people in the passage (the Gentile Christian audience, the apostles, and Christ) together as part of the building and so provides a more consistent use of the architectural figure. Cf. Grudem 1982: 85, 88.

6. In recent times, the most convincing case for this position comes from Grudem (1982: 93–105), who recognizes that the case cannot be made on the basis of the single article.

7. *Pace* many earlier commentators, e.g., Chrysostom (*PG* 62:43–44); Theodoret (R. Hill 2001: 2.41); Jerome (Heine 2002: 139); and Calvin 1965: 155. The desire to refute Marcionism and other similar movements seems to have fueled this reading in antiquity. In more recent times, McKelvey (1969: 113) has suggested that this is the right interpretation.

8. See the link between knowledge of mysteries and prophecy in 1 Cor. 13:2; and cf. the comments of Percy 1946: 347–49.

Christou Iēsou, Jesus Christ himself). The intensification of the name Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς with αὐτός (*autos*, himself) sets Christ apart from the apostles and prophets as the most important element in the building.[9] This is also the point of ἀκρογωνιαῖος, a rare term that surfaces only in Isa. 28:16 LXX and then, until the second half of the second century, only in a stream of Christian tradition dependent on that text (1 Pet. 2:6; Barn. 6.2–3; Justin, *Dial*. 114.4; 126.1).

Because the term is so rare, its meaning is not entirely clear. Divided into its two elements, the adjective ἄκρον (*akron*, "topmost, outermost, inmost"; LSJ 57) and the adjective γωνιαῖος (*gōniaios*, "on [at] the angle"; LSJ 364), it describes something on or at an extreme corner of a building, either (thinking vertically) at its highest point or (thinking horizontally) at the point most distant from its center. In Isa. 28:16 the adjective is explicitly used to describe a "stone" (λίθος, *lithos*), a word that in Ephesians we are left to supply from the architectural figure Paul is using. Thus, Christ Jesus could be either a stone that crowns the building at its top when the structure is finished or a stone that is at the foundation's most distant corner and put in place during the initial phase of construction.

A number of interpreters have taken ἀκρογωνιαῖος in the first sense, as a stone set high in the building and added last. Among their arguments, two considerations weigh heavily. First, the term appears in Symmachus's Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (2 Kings 25:17; Ps. 118:22 [117:22 LXX]) and in T. Sol. 22.6–23.4 to refer to an elevated stone.[10] In the Testament of Solomon the stone is placed last in the temple, an image that also makes reasonably good sense in Paul's own figure, since 2:21–22 reveals that his controlling metaphor is a temple (e.g., Jeremias, *TDNT* 1:792; 4:275; Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 72; Gnilka 1971: 158; cf. *PGL* 66).

Second, 4:13–16 recalls the language of harmonious growth present in 2:19–22, but with the human body rather than the construction of a building as the controlling image. In 4:13–16 the church clearly grows up to Christ, who is then immediately identified with the head of the body. The growing building image from 2:19–22 and the growing body image from 4:13–16 would match each other better, it is said, if the stone in one and the head in the other both showed the superiority of the ascended Christ over the whole. This would demand a stone high in the building's architecture (Lincoln 1990: 155–56; Aletti 2001: 162–63).

9. Since the phrase αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ is part of a longer genitive absolute construction (ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ), it seems unlikely that the αὐτοῦ is a genitive of possession referring back to θεμελίῳ in the previous clause ("Christ Jesus being its [the foundation's] cornerstone"), a translation that Schnackenburg (1991: 123) thinks entirely possible (a change from his rejection of it in 1982: 259–60). Like every other word in the phrase, αὐτοῦ is genitive only because it is part of the genitive absolute construction.

10. Symmachus's work comes, at the earliest, from the second half of the second century after Christ (Greenspoon 1992: 251). The date of the Testament of Solomon is very uncertain but probably falls in the first three centuries after Christ (Duling, *OTP* 1:940–43).

Other interpreters have argued compellingly that ἀκρογωνιαῖος must refer to a stone low in the building's structure, set on top of the foundation and carefully placed to provide guidance and stability for the building's continuing construction (e.g., McKelvey 1962: 352–59; 1969: 195–204; Schnackenburg 1982: 262–64). This meaning has in its favor consistency with the present tenses that Paul uses in the rest of the figure. As these tenses show, Paul views the building as currently under construction. In this context it makes better sense to think of Christ as providing guidance and stability for this present work than as the "keystone," placed last and eventually tying everything together (McKelvey 1962: 358–59; Sellin 2008: 239).[11]

In addition, the foundational use of ἀκρογωνιαῖος is more consistent with the use of similar imagery in other relevant literary contexts. In Isa. 28:16, ἀκρογωνιαῖος appears in close proximity to the term θεμέλιος (*themelios*, foundation) just as it does here, and it refers clearly—even emphatically—to a stone in a building's foundation.[12] In 1 Cor. 3:11, moreover, Christ is the θεμέλιος of the Corinthian church. He therefore is the critical part of the initial stage of construction just as he is in Eph. 2:20 if ἀκρογωνιαῖος sits low in the building's structure and provides strength and guidance to all that is built upon it (Schnackenburg 1982: 263–64).

What, then, are we to conclude? The seemingly equal weight of the arguments on either side led one of the greatest modern interpreters of Ephesians, E. Best (1998: 286), to suggest that "in the present state of our knowledge the problem is insoluble" (cf. Lincoln 1990: 155).

It is worth asking, however, whether the interpretive problem arises from too wooden an understanding of the metaphor. Perhaps Paul did not intend ἀκρογωνιαῖος to be understood strictly as either a stone low in the building or as the finishing touch to the building but as both. Mayer (2002: 166) suggests attractively that the author of Ephesians appreciated the ambiguity of the prefixed element ἀκρο-: "Christ as cornerstone is then metaphorically at the same time *fundamentum fundamentorum* and *finis finium*."[13] Paul may have

11. Aletti (2001: 163n165) has answered this objection by claiming that there is no need to think of Christ as being absent from the church as it grows. As the ἐν ᾧ of 2:21 and the use of the verb αὐξάνω in 4:15 indicate, the growth of the building follows the model of the growth of a body: the entire body is present as the body matures. McKelvey (1969: 118–19) acknowledges this connection but suggests that the image of a building under construction provided the conceptual link between a finished temple in which God dwells and a growing body: like a body and a building in process, the church is growing, but like a finished temple building, God already dwells in it.

12. Isaiah 28:16 LXX says twice that the stone is placed εἰς τὰ θεμέλια. At first, the significance of this would seem to be diminished if Lincoln (1990: 155) is correct that the author is alluding not to Isa. 28:16 but only to the Christian tradition that uses Isa. 28:16 as one of several stone texts. In 1 Pet. 2:4–8 and Barn. 6.2–3, however, the references to Isa. 28:16 are full enough that even someone relying only on them would know that they refer to a stone placed εἰς τὰ θεμέλια of the building.

13. Christus als Eckstein ist dann metaphorisch zugleich das fundamentum fundamentorum und der finis finium.

intended the metaphor to show Christ's importance as anchoring and guiding the growth of the church, which shortly turns out to be the temple and thus to have its foundations, figuratively speaking, in Zion like the ἀκρογωνιαῖος of Isa. 28:16.[14] Paul may have also recognized that this term's prefixed ἀκρο- allows it to encompass Christ's role as "head over all things" (1:22–23; cf. 2:6), and his role as the head toward which the body grows (4:13, 15–16). He is, paradoxically, the "topmost foundation stone."

2:21 We now learn for the first time that the building Paul has been describing and of which his readers are a part is both a temple and, as the present tense verbs show, presently under construction. Paul develops these thoughts in two subordinate clauses, which are constructed along parallel lines.[15]

Paul first says that Christ Jesus is the person in whom the whole building grows, in a unified way, into a holy temple. The phrase πᾶσα οἰκοδομή would normally be translated "every building," and some interpreters over the years have rendered it this way (e.g., Lightfoot 1890: 65). This presents a problem, however, since the figure Paul is developing in 2:19–22 seems to assume a single building, not multiple buildings making up a temple complex. As the additional note explains, some early scribes tried to solve the problem by adding the article ἡ in front of οἰκοδομή, thus making Paul refer unambiguously to "the whole building." Even without the article, however, the phrase can mean this, and the sense demands it.[16] The whole building, then, grows in the sphere encompassed by Christ Jesus.

It also grows συναρμολογουμένη (*synarmologoumenē*, being joined together). This term appears only here and in 4:16 in all known ancient Greek literature prior to the second century AD.[17] Clearly Paul coined it to match his other συν- (*syn-*, with) words in chapter 2.[18] Its basic element, ἁρμολογέω (*harmologeō*) is also rare, but its meaning is not in doubt: it is an architectural word meaning "fit together" or "join" (Maurer, *TDNT* 7:855), as in the phrase "the beams of the windows are fitted together [ἡρμολόγηται, *hērmologētai*]"

14. McKelvey (1969: 188–92, 203) points out that the foundation stone of Isa. 28:16 has a long and rich interpretive history in Jewish tradition as the first part of the earth's creation and the portal of access to both the underworld and heaven. It is useful to know that Isa. 28:16 was not an obscure text in Jewish antiquity, but the literature in which these traditions are found cannot be dated with certainty, and there is no way to know whether they influenced Paul.

15. ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη εἰς ναόν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ,
ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι

16. See the discussion of Moule 1959: 94–95 and the use of the same construction in, e.g., Thucydides, *Pel. War* 2.43.3 (ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ τάφος, the whole earth is the tomb of famous men [my trans.]); Matt. 3:15 (πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην, to fulfill all righteousness); and 28:18 (πᾶσα ἐξουσία, all authority). J. Johnston (2004: 173) argues persuasively that the closest analogy to the idiom is the use of πᾶσα συναγωγή in the LXX without a genitive qualifier (Lev. 9:5; 16:33; Num. 27:2, 19, 22; 31:27).

17. The term seems to have entered the Greek language through its appearance in these two places in Ephesians. See Maurer, *TDNT* 7:855.

18. Συνεζωοποίησεν (v. 5); συνήγειρεν, συνεκάθισεν (v. 6); συμπολῖται (v. 19); συνοικοδομεῖσθε (v. 22).

(P.Ryl. 233.6, my trans.; LSJ 244). Paul wants his readers to imagine themselves as part of a building in the process of growing by being tightly fitted together "with" (συν-) other believers across ethnic boundary lines, such as the ones the Mosaic law once imposed (2:14–15).

Paul next reveals that the building he has been talking about all along is ναὸς ἅγιος ἐν κυρίῳ (*naos hagios en kyriō*, a holy temple in the Lord). Although the imagery would be intelligible in terms of any temple, and Paul's readers in Roman Asia were surrounded by temples, he was probably thinking specifically of the Jewish temple and, even more specifically, of the role that the temple would play in the days of Israel's restoration according to Scripture. The way for this has been prepared through his allusion in 2:20 to Isa. 28:16, whose "cornerstone" is laid in Zion, the location of the temple.

That the temple is Israel's temple is also suggested by Paul's main theme in 2:11–22 of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God. Isaiah 56:3–8 specifically refers to the inclusion of the nations in temple worship during the period of Israel's restoration, and as Paul's allusion to Isa. 57:19 in 2:13 and 17 reveals, he was thinking of this part of Isaiah as he dictated Eph. 2:11–22 (McKelvey 1969: 113; Beale 2004: 259–63; cf. Mayer 2002: 169–72).[19]

The phrase ἐν κυρίῳ refers not to God the Father but to "the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:2–3; Eadie 1883: 203) and means that the location of the temple itself is in the sphere defined by Jesus Christ. Just as the growth takes place "in" him, according to the beginning of 2:21, so the temple exists "in" him. This is a multiethnic temple, the fulfillment of Jewish eschatological expectations, and it is not a physical building: it exists "in the Lord."

2:22 Just as in 1:13 (see the comments on that verse), so here, Paul turns directly to his readers with the phrase ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς (*en hō kai hymeis*, in whom also you). Here too he uses the phrase to apply what he has been saying directly to them. Inasmuch as they are "no longer strangers and aliens" to God's household but are full members of it, Paul's Gentile readers are also "being built together" (συνοικοδομεῖσθε, *synoikodomeisthe*) with other believers into the temple Paul has just described. Like the participle συναρμολογουμένη in 2:21, the verb συνοικοδομεῖσθε is present tense to emphasize that the building is presently under way. It also includes the prefix συν- to communicate that Paul's readers are being joined "together with" other believers, specifically other Jewish believers since the destruction of the dividing wall of hostility (2:14).[20]

The result of this tightly joined construction, as in 2:21, will be the temple, which Paul now calls κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι (*katoikētērion tou theou en pneumati*, the dwelling place of God in the Spirit). Although κατοικητήριον appears often in the LXX for the dwelling place of people

19. For the eschatological inclusion of the Gentiles in temple worship, see also Isa. 2:1–2; 66:19–23; Tob. 14:5–7; 1 En. 90.29–34; and cf. McKelvey 1969: 118.

20. So, e.g., Hoehner 2002: 412–13; but *pace*, e.g., Tachau 1972: 137–38, 140–41, who believes that the relationship between Jewish and Gentile Christians is no longer in view in 2:19–22 but only the present existence of Gentile Christians in one, all-encompassing church.

(Exod. 12:20; Pss. 32:14 [33:14 MT, Eng.]; 106:4 [107:4]; Jer. 21:13) or animals (Nah. 2:12 [2:11]; Jer. 9:10 [9:11]; cf. Josephus, *Ant*. 9.241), it is sometimes used of God's dwelling place, whether in heaven (1 Kings 8:39, 43, 49; 2 Chron. 6:30, 33, 39; 30:27; 3 Macc. 2:15; cf. Dan. 2:11) or in Zion's sanctuary (Exod. 15:17 [cf. Philo, *Planting* 47]; Ps. 75:3 [76:3 MT; 76:2 Eng.]). Paul probably chose this word because of its biblical associations with God's temple.[21] Just as ναός in 2:21 referred to the temple of the eschatologically restored Israel, so κατοικητήριον also refers to that temple here. Similarly, just as the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ (*en kyriō*, in the Lord) qualified the noun ναός in 2:21, so here the phrase ἐν πνεύματι qualifies the noun κατοικητήριον to tell us how God dwells within this building: he does so "in" or "by" the Spirit.

This brings Paul's imagery in 2:19–22 full circle. The household of God (cf. οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ, v. 19), into which Paul's Gentile readers have now been fully integrated, is also the house of God (κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ, v. 22)—the place where God lives, by his Spirit, with his people.

Summary

In 2:19–22 Paul explores the idea with which he concluded the previous section (v. 18), that Christ had created access for both Jews and Gentiles, as one people, to God the Father. Paul tells his readers that although they are Gentiles, they are fellow citizens with all God's people. They are members of God's household and part of the temple in which God's Spirit dwells. This temple's foundation is the witness of the apostles and prophets who first went to the Gentiles with the gospel of human reconciliation to God through the death of Christ. The temple's most important stone—the stone that guides the building's construction and tops it off when it is finished—is Christ Jesus. Paul's readers are the carefully shaped and fitted building blocks presently being added to the building. The way in which Paul describes this temple recalls the OT expectation of a rebuilt temple in which Israel and the nations would join together in the worship of God.

This paragraph brings to a close Paul's effort to explain in greater detail what he meant in 1:19–23 when he said he prayed for God to illuminate the eyes of his readers' hearts so that they might understand the magnitude of the power he has placed at their disposal in Christ. They had been mired in rebellion against God and alienated from God's revelation of himself through his people Israel. They were utterly without hope of escape from God's wrath. Then God, because he is overwhelmingly merciful, saved them and brought them into fellowship with his people, giving them a home in

21. A search of the *TLG* shows that prior to its use here in Ephesians, the term is used only of the dwelling place of a deity in the LXX, ten times of God and once of the gods (Dan. 2:11; cf. Rev. 18:2). It was not, in other words, a term used outside Judaism for the temple of a deity. This bolsters the case for seeing both κατοικητήριον here and its counterpart ναός in 2:21 as references not to just any temple but to the biblical temple.

which he is Father, a home that turns out to be the temple where God's spiritual presence dwells.

Additional Note

2:21. Some ancient witnesses to the text of Ephesians (e.g., ℵ[1], A, C, P, 075, 6, 81, 326, 1739[c], 1881, 1912, Chrysostom[lem]) place ἡ between πᾶσα and οἰκοδομή, dispelling any doubt that Paul is referring to "the whole building" rather than to "every building." Since the diphthong οἰ and the article ἡ were pronounced in virtually identical ways (Metzger 1968: 191), it is possible that a scribe misheard πᾶσα οἰκοδομή for πᾶσα ἡ οἰκοδομή (Metzger 1994: 534) and so omitted an original ἡ. It is much more likely, however, that a scribe, knowing the expression πᾶσα οἰκοδομή would normally mean "every building," inserted ἡ to make the meaning "the whole building" explicit and thus preserve the architectural metaphor of a single building. In any case, the correct reading is not in doubt, as the early and geographically widespread attestation of πᾶσα οἰκοδομή without the article reveals (e.g., ℵ*, B, D, F, G, Ψ, 0150, 33, 1739*, 1852, 1962, 2127, 2200, 2464; Hoehner 2002: 407n3; and Metzger 1994: 534).

V. From Existence without God to Membership in the People of God (2:11–22)
➤ VI. Paul's Divinely Given Task and His Suffering for the Gentiles (3:1–13)
VII. Paul Prays for His Readers' Inner Strength and Praises the God Who Can Give It (3:14–21)
VIII. The Growth of the Church toward Unity and Maturity (4:1–16)

VI. Paul's Divinely Given Task and His Suffering for the Gentiles (3:1–13)

In light of his discussion of the inclusion of Gentiles within the household of God in 2:19–22, Paul now begins an intercessory prayer specifically for his readers as Gentiles (3:1). The thought of interceding for Gentiles, however, immediately touches off a digression on his own responsibility to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles. This digression consumes two paragraphs (3:2–7, 8–13) before Paul returns to his prayer in 3:14, a return he signals by repeating the first two words of 3:1 (τούτου χάριν, *toutou charin*, on account of this).

The section begins and ends with a reference to Paul's suffering "for" (ὑπέρ, *hyper*) his Gentile readers. In 3:1 he is "the prisoner of Christ" for them, and in 3:13 he asks them not to be discouraged about his sufferings for them since these sufferings are their "glory." In the digression that appears between these two statements, Paul reflects on his "responsibility of administering" (οἰκονομία, *oikonomia*) the "grace" (χάρις, *charis*) God has given to him. "Grace" here means the calling he received at the time of his conversion to preach the untraceable riches of Christ to the Gentiles.

The section can be divided into three parts: two brief sentences, one at the beginning and one at the end, and the digression sandwiched between them. The first sentence, never completed, sparks the digression by referring to Paul's imprisonment in the service of the Gentiles (3:1).

The digression itself consists of two lengthy sentences. The first of these sentences describes the close relationship between the task God has given Paul on behalf of the Gentiles and the mystery God has revealed both to Paul and to "the holy apostles, and prophets" (3:2–7). The second sentence of the digression describes how Paul accomplishes his God-given task (3:8–12).

The section's final sentence, like its opening sentence, is much shorter than the two sentences that make up the digression. It looks back over the digression and returns to the theme of suffering that initiated it, supplementing it now with a word of encouragement to the letter's readers (3:13).

This section of the letter bears a number of close verbal, syntactical, and thematic similarities to Col. 1:23–28. Both passages

use the phrase εἴ γε (*ei ge*, if, as I assume; Col. 1:23; Eph. 3:2)
speak of Paul as ἐγὼ Παῦλος (*egō Paulos*, I Paul; Col. 1:23; Eph. 3:1)
use the phrase οὗ ἐγενόμην . . . διάκονος (*hou egenomēn . . . diakonos*, of which I became a servant) to describe the gospel (Col. 1:23; Eph. 3:7)
speak of Paul's sufferings for his readers (Col. 1:24; Eph. 3:13)

describe Paul's vocation as an οἰκονομία (*oikonomia*, administrative responsibility; Col. 1:25; Eph. 3:2)
identify the μυστήριον (*mystērion*; mystery)
with Christ (Col. 1:27; Eph. 3:4)
as something ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων (*apokekrymmenon apo tōn aiōnōn*, hidden from eternity; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9)
as something now revealed τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ (*tois hagiois autou*, to his holy people; Col. 1:27) or τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ προφήταις (*tois hagiois apostolois autou kai prophētais*, to his holy apostles, and prophets; Eph. 3:5)

To many interpreters the reason for these similarities is clear: the writer of Ephesians was dependent on Colossians, and such dependence is likely only if someone other than Paul wrote Ephesians (e.g., Mitton 1951: 55–97; Lincoln 1990: lv, lxvi–lxviii, 168–70; Sterling 2008: 80–89).

Whoever produced Eph. 3:1–13, however, does not seem to have been paying careful attention to Col. 1:23–28 (*pace*, e.g., Sterling 2008: 80–89) and appears to have been recalling the language of that letter from memory (cf. Mitton 1951: 55–67, 75). He speaks of Paul's "sufferings," for example, as θλίψεσιν (*thlipsesin*; Eph. 1:13) rather than παθήμασιν (*pathēmasin*; Col. 1:24), and varies the line τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς (*tēn oikonomian tou theou tēn dotheisan moi eis hymas*, the administrative task of God given to me for you; Col. 1:25) so that it becomes the not-quite-identical τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς (*tēn oikonomian tēs charitos tou theou tēs dotheisēs moi eis hymas*, the responsibility of administering the grace of God given to me for you; Eph. 3:2).

If we are unwilling to concede that the theological differences between Colossians and Ephesians present an "almost insurmountable difficulty" (Lincoln 1990: lxvii) to the case for the Pauline authorship of Ephesians (see the introduction), then there is no compelling reason to deny that Paul is the author of both Col. 1:23–28 and Eph. 3:1–13. Paul probably dictated this section of Ephesians shortly after composing Colossians, and perhaps because he did so with some emotion, he paid little attention to the niceties of lucid syntax. The author of Ephesians, says Best (1998: 294), "had not cleverly planned what he was going to write." He began to pray with reference to his imprisonment, digressed to say why he was in prison, and then, reminded by his own digression that he had been on the verge of prayer, decided to go back to the prayer, but not before turning his original reference to his suffering into a word of encouragement for his readers.

A. Paul's Role in the Administration of the Mystery (3:1–7)

Paul begins 3:1–13 with an emphatic self-reference to his imprisonment (ἐγὼ Παῦλος ὁ δέσμιος, *egō Paulos ho desmios*, I, Paul, the prisoner). The pathos of this reference seems to be an appropriate introduction to a prayer whose subject is his readers' understanding of the limitless love of Christ (vv. 14–19). Mention of his imprisonment on behalf of his Gentile readers then leads Paul into a sustained reflection on the responsibility he bears as a recipient of divine revelation about God's purposes for the Gentiles (vv. 2–13). Perhaps at some level Paul is answering in 3:2–7 the question implied in 3:1 of why he is in prison for the Gentiles.

The first part of the digression (vv. 2–7) describes the close link between Paul's "responsibility of administering" (οἰκονομία, *oikonomia*) the task God has given him and "the mystery" God has revealed to him. Paul describes this link in three successive phases. First, he tells his readers how he knows and understands the mystery: it came to him by means of a divine revelation (vv. 3–4). Second, he asserts that the mystery was utterly unknown until the Spirit revealed it to Christ's holy apostles and to prophets (v. 5).

Third, he gives the content of the mystery as the union in one body, on fully equal terms, of Jewish and Gentile believers through the gospel (v. 6). This description of the mystery differs from the description of it in 1:9–10, where the term last occurred. There the mystery was more broadly conceived as the summation of all things, whether in heaven or on earth, in Christ. Here the mystery is one part of that grand scheme—the unification of two formerly separated ethnic groups in one body through the gospel. The reason for this narrowed focus probably lies in the purpose of the digression. Paul is describing his own administrative responsibility (οἰκονομία; 3:3) in God's administration (οἰκονομία; 1:10) of this all-encompassing plan, and Paul's role is focused on bringing Gentile believers into the newly constituted people of God.

Throughout the passage an important subtheme is the grace of God. Paul was not given the important responsibility he describes here, with its special insight and understanding into the previously unknown mystery, because of any qualifications of his own. His explanation of the link between his responsibility and the mystery is sandwiched between descriptions of his task as "the grace of God given to me" (v. 2) and "the gift of God's grace given to me" (v. 7a), and the passage ends with the statement that Paul became a "servant" of the gospel only by means of the effective working of God's power (v. 7b). This theme provides a link to the next section, which opens

with an emphatic reference to Paul as "the least of all the saints" and again describes his task as the "grace . . . given" to him (v. 8).

The passage is thoughtfully articulated. Not only does its end correspond to its beginning and provide a smooth transition to the next long sentence, but it also skillfully picks up the language of the previous section. The three συν- words in 3:6 echo the three συν- words of 2:19–22,[1] and the critical term οἰκονομία in 3:2 picks up the six -οἰκ- words of 2:19–22.[2]

Still, the passage bears signs of extemporaneity. The false start in 3:1, the pathos of Paul's first-person reference to his imprisonment in that same verse ("I Paul, the prisoner"), the lack of an object for the three prefixed prepositions in 3:6 ("heirs together and one body together and sharers in the promise together with" . . . whom?), and the sheer length of the sentence itself (105 words)—these all look like a communication that was actually dictated with some emotion. On a smaller scale it is reminiscent of 2 Cor. 2:14–7:4, where Paul's narrative of the geographical and temporal details of his turbulent relationship with the Corinthians (1:12–2:13) prompted him to digress in 2:14–7:4 on the nature of his often-difficult ministry of the Spirit and righteousness. He then returned in 7:5, with a repetition of the language of 2:13, to the details he had left behind.[3] Similarly, here in Ephesians a reference to his suffering in the cause of the gospel in 3:1 prompts a reflection on his apostolic responsibility. When he finally returns to his original train of thought in 3:14, he signals this return with a repetition of the language he was using when he began to digress (τούτου χάριν, *toutou charin*).

As the exegesis brings out, 3:1–7 presents some significant challenges to those who think Ephesians is a genuine Pauline letter. These signs of extemporaneity, pathos, and Paul's normal mode of discourse, however, look genuine. It would have been possible to fake such elements, but it seems more likely that Paul himself was moved to speak this way as his secretary furiously took down his words.

Exegesis and Exposition

[1]For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ ⌜ ⌝ for you Gentiles—[2]if, as I assume, you have heard about the responsibility of administering the grace of God given to me for you, [3]⌜that⌝ the mystery was made known to me by revelation, just as I wrote briefly above, [4]according to which, when you read, you are able to perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, [5]which was not made known to the sons of human beings in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles, and prophets, [6]that the Gentiles are heirs together and one body together and sharers in

1. Cf. the terms συγκληρονόμα, σύσσωμα, and συμμέτοχα in 3:6 with the terms συμπολῖται, συναρμολογουμένη, and συνοικοδομεῖσθε in 2:19–22.

2. Πάροικοι and οἰκεῖοι (2:19), ἐποικοδομηθέντες (2:20), οἰκοδομή (2:21), and συνοικοδομεῖσθε and κατοικητήριον (2:22).

3. Cf. ἐξῆλθον εἰς Μακεδονίαν (2 Cor. 2:13) with ἐλθόντων ἡμῶν εἰς Μακεδονίαν (2 Cor. 7:5); on this, see M. Harris 2005: 240.

the promise together with [Jewish believers] in Christ Jesus, through the gospel, [7]of which I became a servant according to the gift of God's grace given to me according to the effect of his power.

3:1 Paul begins his prayer with τούτου χάριν (*toutou charin*, for this reason), a phrase that can point either backward to what has been said (e.g., 1 Macc. 12:45; 13:4) or forward to something that will be said (e.g., Titus 1:5; Philo, *Joseph* 45; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 35.2). Here it probably does not refer forward to the substance of Paul's prayer report (3:16–19) but backward to what Paul has just said about the incorporation of Gentile believers, alongside Jewish believers, into the metaphorical dwelling place of God (2:19–22; cf. Ellicott 1859: 56; Haupt 1902a: 95; Lincoln 1990: 172). "For this reason," Paul the prisoner prays that his Gentile readers will grasp the vastness of Christ's love (3:16–19). Paul's knowledge of what God has done for his Gentile readers in Christ (2:19–22) prompts him to pray that they too will understand the vastness of the love that God has shown for them in Christ (3:14–19).

This prayerful concern for his readers arose from Paul's special role as an apostle to the Gentiles. As their apostle, he felt a strong responsibility not only to proclaim the gospel to them but also to nurture them in the faith so that they might persevere to the end. His reference to himself as ἐγὼ Παῦλος (*egō Paulos*, I, Paul) probably reflects these convictions. Paul uses this expression elsewhere when he wants to defend or emphasize his apostleship to the Gentiles (Gal. 5:2; 2 Cor. 10:1; Col. 1:23) or when he wants to express his deep concern for those who have believed the gospel through his preaching (1 Thess. 2:18).[4] Here these concerns coalesce: Paul wanted to help his discouraged readers with his prayer (3:13), and he wanted to do this precisely because he was an apostle to the Gentiles.

Paul describes himself not as an apostle, however, but as ὁ δέσμιος (*ho desmios*, the prisoner). The article places special emphasis on his imprisonment, and the mention of his imprisonment was probably intended to add pathos and conviction to his prayer: those who go to prison for what they believe are worth hearing (cf. 6:20; Philem. 1, 9; 2 Tim. 1:8; Rev. 1:9).[5] Paul is not a prisoner of Rome but τοῦ Χριστου (*tou Christou*, of Christ) and ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν τῶν ἐθνῶν (*hyper hymōn tōn ethnōn*, for you Gentiles). He may have been thinking here of how Christ chose him to bear the burden (βαστάζω, *bastazō*) of his name before the Gentiles and to suffer much in the process (Acts 9:15–16; cf. Luke 14:27). An analogy between his own suffering in this way "for" the salvation of the Gentiles and the suffering of Christ "for" others is explicitly expressed in

4. Cf. Malherbe 2000: 184. The expression in Philem. 19 is part of a legal commitment (R. Wilson 2005: 358–59) and thus stands apart from these other uses.

5. Cf. Calvin 1965: 157, "And it must have been very moving for them to hear that it was for their sake that he was in trouble and peril." Cassidy (2001: 96) says that the article may emphasize the way that Paul's imprisonment now defines his day-to-day existence because he has been in prison for so long.

Col. 1:24 and may also lie behind his use of ὑπέρ (*hyper*) both here and later in 3:13 (BDAG 1030; cf., e.g., 5:25; 2 Cor. 12:15; Mark 14:24).[6]

3:2 Mention of his imprisonment in order to bring the gospel to the Gentiles has prompted Paul to digress on the origin and nature of his special role in this task. He begins with a combination of particles (εἴ γε, *ei ge*) that appears only five times in the NT: once here, once in 4:21, and three other times, all in the Pauline corpus (Gal. 3:4; 2 Cor. 5:3; Col. 1:23). According to Denniston (1954: 114–15), "the essential force" of the particle γε (*ge*) "appears to be concentration," but it expresses this emphasis so delicately that it should be "rendered in English by an inflexion of the voice, or by italics" rather than by words (cf. Smyth §§2821, 2823).

Such a fine nuance inevitably makes the phrase εἴ γε ambiguous: it can imply either doubt or certainty (Moule 1959: 164), and sometimes the decision about which of these is in view is difficult (2 Cor. 5:3; Col. 1:23). Here, oddly, there is an element of both meanings: Paul has no real doubt that his readers have heard of him, any more than he doubts that they have heard about Jesus when he uses the expression again in 4:20–21 (Thrall 1962: 88). At the same time, the γε reveals some personal distance between Paul and his readers: "If, as I assume, you have heard" (cf., e.g., Abbott 1897: 78; MacDonald 2000: 261). This distance is sometimes attributed to a pseudonymous author writing in a general way to a wide audience who, he is "sure," has heard of the famous apostle's vocation (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 173). If so, the emotion expressed by both the broken syntax and the phrase ἐγὼ Παῦλος ὁ δέσμιος in 3:1–2 seems extremely artificial. This is certainly possible—ancient forgers sometimes worked with surprising subtlety (cf. "Plato," *Ep.* 12; Donelson 1986: 25–26)—but it is at least equally likely that these elements are evidence that the real Paul dictated this letter (perhaps quickly and with some emotion) and that the εἴ γε reveals his intention that a wide audience of believers in Ephesus should read it or hear it read. After Paul's absence from the city for over seven years, nearly five of them in various forms of imprisonment, many of these intended readers would have had only a loose connection to him.[7]

Paul assumes that his audience has heard about τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς (*tēn oikonomian tēs charitos tou theou tēs dotheisēs moi eis hymas*, the responsibility of administering the grace of God given to me for you). The term οἰκονομία can refer to a "plan" that is administered, to the task of "administration," or to the responsibility of an administrator, and interpreters differ about which of these meanings is most suitable here. In 3:9 the word refers to the "administrative plan" God has now revealed (cf. Ign. *Eph.* 18.2), and if we import that meaning here, then Paul might be speaking of God's plan to use him to preach the gospel to the

6. That the comparison is only an analogy and that Christ's death has a unique, atoning significance for Paul also becomes clear in 1 Cor. 1:13, where Paul views as absurd any notion that he could take the place of the crucified Christ.

7. For the chronology, see 1 Cor. 16:8; Acts 20:3, 6, 16; 24:27; 27:9; 28:11, 30.

Gentiles, a plan that either originated with God's grace or had grace "as its characteristic element" (Eadie 1883: 213; cf., e.g., Robinson 1904: 167; Gnilka 1971: 163; Schnackenburg 1991: 131; Best 1998: 298–99).[8]

Elsewhere in Paul's Letters, however, the term refers to either the responsibility or the task of administering something, and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between these two nuances.[9] In Eph. 1:10 it refers to God's task of administering the fullness of the times (see the comments on that verse). In 1 Cor. 9:16–17 and Col. 1:25, it could be understood either as Paul's task of preaching the gospel or as the responsibility given to him to be such a preacher. Here in Eph. 3:2, however, the distinction between the two nuances is clearer. The "grace" that Paul administers is his God-given task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles (cf. v. 7, and see below), and that leaves οἰκονομία to refer to the responsibility that God has given to him to accomplish this task.[10] Paul assumes that his special responsibility of administering the grace of God to Gentiles is well known to his believing Gentile readers.

The translation "responsibility of administering," however, fails to show the connection between οἰκονομία and the many -οἰκ- (*-oik-*) terms in 2:19–22.[11] Indeed, the primary meaning of οἰκονομία in Paul's time was "management of a household" (LSJ 1204; L. Johnson 2001: 148–49), and the connection was probably lost on neither Paul nor his readers (cf. Eadie 1883: 213). God has given him the responsibility of administering the part of his plan for the universe that involves the inclusion of the Gentiles within his household.[12]

Paul refers to the task for which he is responsible in an unusual way. It is, he says, "the grace [χάρις, *charis*] of God given to me for you [Gentiles]." Up to this point Paul has used the term χάρις as the central characteristic of salvation: God gives salvation freely, generously, and at great cost to the most undeserving of people (1:6–7; 2:5, 7–8). Here in 3:2, however, Paul uses the term in the way he will use it in 3:7–8, as the hallmark of his own vocation of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. God did not simply give him the gospel message of grace to take to the Gentiles, but the assignment to do this is itself, in a special sense, God's grace given to Paul (τῆς δοθείσης μοι, *tēs dotheisēs moi*;

8. According to some interpreters, including BDAG 698, this is also the best meaning for οἰκονομία in 1:10.

9. Luke 16:2–4 illustrates how the meaning of the term can move easily between these two ideas (BDAG 697).

10. Cf. Lincoln 1990: 173–74; Hoehner 2002: 422; and especially Aletti 2001: 175–76.

11. Πάροικοι, οἰκεῖοι, ἐποικοδομηθέντες, οἰκοδομή, συνοικοδομεῖσθε, κατοικητήριον.

12. Cf. Epictetus (Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 3.22.1–5), where the philosopher says that acting out of accord with God's design is foolish:

> For in a well-ordered [καλῶς οἰκουμένῃ] house [οἰκίᾳ] no one comes along and says to himself, "I ought to be manager [οἰκονόμον] of this house"; or if he does, the lord of the mansion, when he turns around and sees the fellow giving orders in a high and mighty fashion, drags him out and gives him a dressing down. So it goes also in this great city, the world; for here also there is a Lord of the Mansion [οἰκοδεσπότης] who assigns each and everything its place. (trans. W. Oldfather 1925–28)

See Spicq, *TLNT* 2:574.

cf. vv. 7 and 8). The idea that the task God has given Paul is a demonstration of God's grace appears often in Paul's Letters (Gal. 2:7–9; 1 Cor. 3:10; 15:10; Phil. 1:7; Rom. 1:5; 12:3; 15:15), and in 4:7 he will use χάρις this way of all believers when he says that "to each one of us grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ."[13]

Paul's reference to himself as "the least of all the saints" in 3:8 probably shows us the link between these two uses of the term "grace." God's willingness to use Paul to preach the gospel among the Gentiles was a signal demonstration of his grace (3:7; cf. Gal. 1:13–16; 1 Cor. 15:9–10; 1 Tim. 1:12–16). Just as in salvation generally, God's grace is evident in his desire to save those who are dead in trespasses and sins, so with Paul specifically, God's grace is evident in his use of a former persecutor of the church, and zealot for an exclusivist form of Jewish tradition, to preach the good news that the Gentiles are now included among God's people.

3:3 Paul next defines the administrative responsibility God has given to him more specifically.[14] As the parallel between "to me" (μοι, *moi*) in 3:2 and "to me" (μοι, *moi*) here demonstrates, the critical role God has graciously given to Paul (v. 2) is intimately tied to the revelation to Paul of the "mystery" (μυστήριον, *mystērion*). It is only because God has revealed the mystery to him that he has a responsibility and a divinely given task to fulfill.

Paul has received this part of the mystery, he says, κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν (*kata apocalypsin*). This phrase does not refer to the "norm" or "ground" according to which the mystery was made known, as if the revelation of the mystery to Paul followed a certain previously conceived pattern (*pace* Lincoln 1990: 175; BDAG 512). It instead refers to the means by which the mystery was made known to Paul: it came to him "by revelation" from God.[15] In Dan. 2:17–19 Daniel received information about both the content and the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream apart from any cleverness of his own, and strictly because God in his mercy revealed it to him (thus saving his life). Similarly, Paul received his insight into the part of the mystery that was of particular relevance to the Gentiles only "by revelation" from God (cf. δι' ἀποκαλύψεως, *di' apokalypseōs*, in Gal. 1:12) and as an act of God's mercy (1 Tim. 1:13). No amount of exegetical study of the Scriptures would have yielded this

13. Cf. 1 Pet. 4:10, where all Christians are administrators (οἰκονόμοι) of the various gifts that God, in the diverse expressions of his grace (χάρις), gives to them.

14. Grammatically, the clause beginning with ὅτι forms a second object of the verb ἠκούσατε in 3:2, and this second object further explains the first object (τὴν οἰκονομίαν). Paul assumes that his audience has heard of the administration of the grace God gave to him, namely, that they have heard of the mystery made known to him by revelation. On this, see, e.g., Alford 1857: 100; Ellicott 1859: 57; Abbott 1897: 79; and especially Haupt 1902a: 97, who correctly observes that ὅτι introduces an explanation of οἰκονομία that stretches all the way to the infinitive clause in 3:6.

15. This use of the phrase differs, therefore, from its use in Rom. 16:25 or Gal. 2:2, where Paul speaks of the norm "according to" which God will strengthen his readers or "according to" which he and Barnabas traveled to Jerusalem. For the use here, see Justin, *Dial.* 78.2; and Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.11.1.

insight; God had to make it known to Paul personally (vv. 5, 9; Best 1997a: 121; 1998: 300).

The content of this divine revelation, Paul says next, is not something new to the readers. He has written about it briefly before (καθὼς προέγραψα ἐν ὀλίγῳ, *kathōs proegrapsa en oligō*, just as I wrote briefly above). The phrase ἐν ὀλίγῳ (*en oligō*) is a common expression for "in brief" (BDAG 703) or "within a small compass" (LSJ 1215), but the term προγράφω (*prographō*) is more ambiguous. It can refer to something written a long time "beforehand," such as the Scriptures (Rom. 15:4; Jude 4), or to something that was written "above" in the same document (LSJ 1473; BDAG 867). Down through the years some interpreters have thought that the reference was to some other communication of Paul (Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.*, hom. 6; *NPNF* 13:76; Calvin 1965: 158), perhaps a ten-letter collection of his letters to which our Ephesians formed a pseudepigraphic introduction (Goodspeed 1951: 287–88), perhaps to Colossians (Muddiman 2001: 151–52), or perhaps to a specific passage in a Pauline letter, such as Gal. 1:15–16 (Sellin 2008: 251). Others believe it refers to the mention of the mystery in 1:9 (Alford 1857: 100). However, Paul is probably describing what he has just written about the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ in 2:11–22 (Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.42]; Haupt 1902a: 98n1; Masson 1953: 173; Schnackenburg 1991: 132). He may be thinking even more specifically of the language of inclusion in 2:19–22 with its συν- compounds (cf. 3:6).

3:4 Πρός (*pros*) can occasionally be used with the accusative case to mean "according to" (BDAG 875; 2 Esd. 6:13 LXX [Ezra 6:13 MT, Eng.]; Wis. 16:21; Gal. 2:14; 2 Cor. 5:10; Herm. *Sim.* 9.5.2), and that is apparently how Paul uses it here in the phrase πρὸς ὅ (*pros ho*).[16] What he has written beforehand (perhaps specifically in 2:19–22) provides evidence "according to which" his readers are able to perceive that he has insight into the mystery of Christ.

This perception will come ἀναγινώσκοντες (*anaginōskontes*), "when [they] read." It was normal in antiquity to read aloud, even when reading privately, but here Paul has in mind the public reading of the letter.[17] Thus, he is not imagining that they will now back up and study what he has written before this point,[18] but he is simply thinking from his own perspective as the letter's author that when they hear read aloud what he has just written, they will appreciate the insight God has given him.[19]

16. So, e.g., Abbott 1897: 80; Lincoln 1990: 175–76; and BDAG 875.3.e.δ; but not Eadie 1883: 215, who prefers the simpler meaning "in reference to."

17. Cf. 1 Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16; and the comments of Thomas (1992: 13), both on reading aloud in private and on the common practice in antiquity of reading texts aloud to audiences.

18. Cf. John of Damascus (*PG* 95:833): "The explanation is short, he says, and the teaching is concise, and the many things I have taught in seed form are brief, although I have revealed so great a thing, just as you are able to perceive; but [you are able] to perceive [it] by much reading, not by a cursory treatment or a hasty scan" (my trans.).

19. *Pace* Sellin (2008: 251–52), it is the author's perspective that prevents ἀναγινώσκοντες from being superfluous even though it refers to material the readers have obviously read (or heard read).

The term σύνεσις (*synesis*, insight) refers to understanding not that Paul himself has ingeniously developed, but that has been given to him by God (cf. Exod. 31:3 LXX; 35:1 LXX; Sir. 1:19 LXX; Col. 1:9; 2:2). This is clear from 3:2, where Paul's critical role is attributed to the grace given to him, and from his statement in 3:3 that his knowledge of the mystery has been made known to him by revelation. Both δοθείσης (*dotheisēs*, given, v. 2) and ἐγνωρίσθη (*egnōristhē*, made known, v. 3) are divine passives. The source of his insight, then, is God, and this rescues the reference to "my insight" here in 3:4 from any element of boasting or egotism (cf. Best 1998: 304).

Some scholars have taken the reference to Paul's own insight to be a clear sign that the letter comes from a post-Pauline author who wanted to boost the apostle's authority after his death (e.g., Gnilka 1971: 165; Lincoln 1990: 176; cf. Baur 2003: 2.33; Sterling 2008: 87–88). Lincoln, for example, argues that although Paul commends himself in the undisputed letters, he does this only in polemical settings (Gal. 1–2; 1 Cor. 14:37–38; 2 Cor. 10–13). The "unprovoked and unqualified" character of the reference to Paul's insight here in Ephesians sets it apart from those other instances (Lincoln 1990: 176; cf. Gnilka 1971: 165).

First-person claims of special insight frequently appear in Jewish apocalyptic literature, however, and since the language of revelation is so prominent in Eph. 3:2–3, this seems to be the most likely cultural context in which to understand the first-person references here (Aletti 2001: 177).[20] If so, then the claims are probably not an attempt to boost Paul's waning authority since this is not the function of such claims in the apocalyptic literature from the Second Temple period and shortly thereafter. First-person claims of special insight appear both in pseudepigraphic documents (2 Esd. [4 Ezra] 5:22; 14:40; T. Levi 2.3; 2 Bar. 81.4) and in the Qumran Hymns (1QH^a 10.13; 20.13), which are anonymous but not pseudepigraphic. In both contexts their purpose seems to be to assure the reader that the insight of the seer is from God, not that the seer himself has any special authority (Aletti 2001: 177). The claim of special insight here in 3:4, therefore, probably should not be read as weighty evidence either for or against authenticity, and in any case, the argument should not hinge on how likely Paul would be to commend himself as a possessor of special insight.

The content of Paul's insight—what he has insight "into" (cf. 2 Tim. 2:7; BDAG 970)—is τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (*to mystērion tou Christou*, the mystery of Christ). This could mean "the mystery that is Christ," an idea that some interpreters believe lies behind Col. 1:27 (τὸ μυστήριον . . . , ὅ ἐστιν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, *to mystērion . . . , ho estin Christos en hymin*, the mystery . . . , which is Christ in you).[21] It is more likely, however, that Paul refers to "the

20. See the texts that Aletti lists: Dan. 10:1; 2 Esd. (4 Ezra) 5:22; 14:40, 47; T. Levi 2.3; 18.7; 1QH^a 10.13; 20.13; 2 Bar. 81.4.

21. E.g., Alford 1857: 100; Ellicott 1859: 59. Since the mystery in Col. 1:27 is not simply Christ, but Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν (Abbott 1897: 80; Hoehner 2002: 436), a better analogy would be Col. 2:2: τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ (cf. Col. 4:3).

mystery about Christ."[22] In light of Paul's coming definition of the mystery as the close bond across ethnic lines between all Christians (v. 6), he is probably thinking here of the leading role that Christ plays in bringing unity to believers, according to 2:14–22.

3:5 This mystery, Paul says next, "was not made known . . . in other generations," a comment that has raised more than a few eyebrows over the years.[23] As Paul will clarify shortly, the mystery is the full inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God by means of their faith in the gospel and their incorporation into Christ, which results from this (v. 6). Yet it is difficult to see this inclusion as something completely unanticipated "in other generations." Both the OT and noncanonical Jewish literature from the Second Temple period (and shortly thereafter) attest a lively expectation of the Gentiles' inclusion in the worship of God at the time of Israel's eschatological restoration.[24]

One very early approach to the problem claims that Paul speaks in relative terms: the inclusion of the Gentiles was known theoretically (Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.42]; cf. Origen [Heine 2002: 145–46]; Barth 1974: 334n45), or vaguely (Theophylact, *PG* 124:1069; Calvin 1965: 160; Robinson 1928: 73), or to comparatively few (Eadie 1883: 217; Muddiman 2001: 154) in ancient times but now has become a reality, or become clear, or become known to many. Exegetical backing for this interpretation is sometimes sought in the phrase τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων (*tois huiois tōn anthrōpōn*, to the sons of human beings) which, it is said, may refer to common people generally as opposed to the special class of patriarchs and prophets who knew about the mystery (Eadie 1883: 217).[25] More often, commentators interpret the ὡς (*ōs*, as) that follows this phrase as comparative and as therefore indicating that the mystery was not made known to people in previous generations to the same degree that it has now been made known (Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.42]; Alford 1857: 101; Ellicott 1859: 59; Eadie

22. Interpreters often call this an "objective genitive" (Eadie 1883: 215; Abbott 1897: 80; Haput 1902: 99; Masson 1953: 173n2; Hoehner 2002: 436). An objective genitive, however, must be related to a noun that has a verbal counterpart (Winer 1874: 185; MHT 3:210; Wallace 1996: 116–17). In this case the verbal counterpart would be μυέω, "initiate into the mysteries" (LSJ 1150; BDAG 660), and if τοῦ Χριστοῦ were objective, then Christ would be the initiate (cf. Phil. 4:12). It may be best to leave this genitive unclassified or simply to call it a "general genitive." See Schnackenburg 1991: 133; the discussion in Zerwick 1963: 12–14; and Aletti's acknowledgment (2001: 178) that the genitive here defies exact classification.

23. In the earliest extant commentary on Ephesians, Origen already expends much energy on the problem (Heine 2002: 144–46).

24. See, e.g., Pss. 22:27; 86:9; 96:3, 7–10; Isa. 2:2–4 (cf. Mic. 4:1–4); 11:10; 19:24–25; 45:14, 22; 51:4–5; 52:10; 55:5; 56:6–7; 60:11; 66:18–23; 54:15 LXX; Jer. 3:17; Amos 9:12 LXX; Zech. 8:20–23; 9:10; Tob. 13:11; 14:6–7; 1 En. 10.21; 90.33; 2 Bar. 72–73; T. Naph. 8.3–4; Sib. Or. 3.716–23; Philo, *Moses* 2.43–44. See Jeremias 1982: 56–62 and Donaldson 1997: 69–74.

25. It is sometimes said that Jerome adopted this interpretation (Barth 1974: 334; Best 1998: 306); however, not only are the relevant comments probably Origen's rather than Jerome's (Heine 2002: 144n6), but the author of the comments, whoever he may be, also appears to doubt that this interpretation is correct (Heine 2002: 145). Cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.*, hom. 6; *NPNF* 13:76; Oecumenius, *PG* 118:1204.

1883: 217; Abbott 1897: 82; Westcott 1906: 45; cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.*, hom. 6; *NPNF* 13:76–77).

More recent interpreters, however, are almost united in rejecting this approach, and they are probably correct to do so.[26] In the next paragraph, Paul will go over much the same ground again and will express himself unambiguously: the mystery now revealed to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places was hidden for ages past in the God who created the world (3:9–10; cf. Col. 1:26; Aletti 2001: 178; Grindheim 2003: 534). The mystery, therefore, was wholly unknown in the past and has now been revealed. Before deciding that the author has expressed himself in a way that is inconsistent with his affirmation of the OT elsewhere in the letter (Barth 1974: 334; cf. Best 1998: 306) or that is inconsistent with the perspective on the OT in the undisputed Paulines (Lincoln 1982: 47; 1990: 178), however, it is necessary to decide precisely what Paul considers the mystery to be in this context.

In 3:6 Paul will identify the mystery as the full inclusion of Gentile believers within the people of God. They are, he says, συγκληρονόμα καὶ σύσσωμα καὶ συμμέτοχα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (*synklēronoma kai syssōma kai symmetocha tēs epangelias*, heirs together and one body together and sharers in the promise together) with Jewish Christians. The words compounded with the preposition συν- (*syn-*, together) recall the terms συμπολῖται (*sympolitai*, citizens together), συναρμολογουμένη (*synarmologoumenē*, being joined together), and συνοικοδομεῖσθε (*synoikodomeisthe*, you are being built together) in the preceding paragraph (2:19, 21, 22), with its focus on the complete unity of Jewish and Gentile believers and on their common function as building blocks in the metaphorical building that is becoming the dwelling place of God. The mystery, then, is not merely the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the worship of the one God but their equality with each other (2:11–12).

The equality of Jews with Gentiles in the eschatological period of Israel's restoration is not easy to infer from either the OT or the Jewish literature of the period. Without the clarifying lens of the gospel, some OT passages could be misunderstood to mean that the Gentiles would serve Israel during the time of its restoration (e.g., Isa. 45:14; 60:1–16; Hag. 2:7; Ps. 68:29, 31; cf. 1QM 12.13–15; Tob. 13:11; Pss. Sol. 17.30; Jeremias 1982: 58–61). The mystery long unknown to people in other generations and now revealed, therefore, is that in Christ Jesus and through the gospel, Gentile Christians are fully equal members of the people of God with Jewish Christians. Paul may also have in mind, as Grindheim (2003: 531–53) has convincingly argued, the achievement of this unity by means of setting aside the Mosaic law (2:14–15), a development that was certainly unanticipated in any known form of pre-Christian Jewish expectation.

This mystery, Paul says, νῦν ἀπεκαλύφθη τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ προφήταις ἐν πνεύματι (*nyn apekalyphthē tois hagiois apostolois autou kai prophētais en pneumati*, has now been revealed by the Spirit to his holy

26. Exceptions include Caragounis 1977: 102–3 and Bruce 1984: 314.

apostles and prophets). This statement has received close scrutiny both because its syntax is unclear and because its character is unusual.

At the level of syntax, there are three principal questions: First, does Paul intend the terms ἁγίοις (*hagiois*, holy) and αὐτοῦ (*autou*, his) to describe only ἀποστόλοις (*apostolois*, apostles), or does he mean for them to apply also to προφήταις (*prophētais*, prophets)? Second, does αὐτοῦ in this phrase refer to Christ or to God? Third, does ἐν πνεύματι (*en pneumati*, in the Spirit) modify προφήταις or the verb ἀπεκαλύφθη (*apekalyphthē*, was revealed)?

In answer to the first question, interpreters often observe that the concept of "holy prophets" is not uncommon in Christian literature from the period (Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21; 2 Pet. 3:2) and that the single article binds apostles and prophets together so that any modifiers are likely to apply to both. Thus, we should translate "his holy apostles and prophets" and see both "his" and "holy" as qualifying both "prophets" and "apostles" (Schlier 1957: 150; Best 1998: 307; Hoehner 2002: 442–43).

It is true that the single article binds "apostles" closely with "prophets," something we would expect from their common, foundational function in 2:20. Nevertheless, the way Paul has sandwiched ἀποστόλοις between ἁγίοις and αὐτοῦ and placed the whole three-word unit before the καί (*kai*, and) probably means that he wants to draw a distinction between apostles and prophets (Schnackenburg 1991: 133–34; O'Brien 1999: 233; cf. Lincoln 1990: 179). Paul intends, therefore, to refer to "his holy apostles, and prophets." If this reading is correct, then it would be consistent with the distinction that Paul seems to make between apostles and prophets in 4:11, where he sees them as two separate groups and probably lists apostles first because of their primary importance (ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, *edōken tous men apostolous, tous de prophētas*, and he gave some to be apostles, others to be prophets).

Why do they have this place of primacy? Although a connection with the historical Jesus was not, in Paul's thinking, an absolutely necessary qualification for an apostle,[27] it seems to have been a characteristic of most apostles, including the last and least of these—Paul himself (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:7–9). This link with the historical Jesus and therefore with the events that precipitated the dramatic change that Paul describes in 3:5 probably sets the apostles apart in Paul's mind from all other Christians as critically important to the church's identity. This is why he calls them "holy."

The correlation between 3:5 and 4:11 also helps us to answer the second question: To whom does αὐτοῦ refer? Despite the claim of some commentators that the αὐτοῦ refers to God (cf. Col. 1:26), its antecedent is more likely to be Christ. He gives the gift of apostleship in 4:11, and his explicit appearance at the end of 3:4 means that a reference to him is most natural.[28]

27. In 1 Thess. 2:6–7 and 1 Cor. 4:6–9 Paul uses the first-person plural and seems to include Silvanus, Timothy, and Apollos among the apostles, but there is no evidence that any of them had contact with Jesus during his earthly ministry.

28. Masson 1953: 173; Muddiman 2001: 155; *pace*, e.g., Lincoln 1990: 179 (tentatively); Hoehner 2002: 442–43.

Some commentators have also decided that distinguishing between "apostles" and "prophets" helps to answer the third question: What does ἐν πνεύματι modify? If we take "holy" with "apostles," they argue, perhaps we should take ἐν πνεύματι with "prophets." Each term would then have its own modifier (Schnackenburg 1991: 133–34; Pokorný 1992: 143; cf. Eadie 1883: 218–19; Schlier 1957: 150). It is more likely, however, that ἐν πνεύματι goes with the verb ἀπεκαλύφθη to describe how the revelation took place. In 1 Cor. 2:6–10, a passage with close verbal and conceptual links to Eph. 3:2–13, Paul explicitly says that God "revealed" (ἀπεκάλυψεν, *apekalypsen*) his "wisdom in a mystery" (σοφία ἐν μυστηρίῳ, *sophia en mysteriō*) "through the Spirit" (διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, *dia tou pneumatos*) to those who proclaim the gospel.[29] This makes it likely that here too Paul intends to speak of the Spirit as the one through whom the revelation was given (Fee 1994: 692; *pace* Heil 2007b: 512–13).[30]

If these syntactical decisions are correct, then the text describes the mystery about Christ, which, it says, was unknown in former times but was revealed by the Spirit to two distinct groups: the holy apostles of Christ and the prophets. This way of putting things, however, raises two critical questions.

The first question is whether it is likely that the same Paul, who in the undisputed letters applies the term "holy" to all Christians, would now use this term to separate the apostles from other Christians and then speak of them as a special group within the people of God. Scholars who believe that Ephesians is pseudonymous tend to give a negative answer to this question.[31] Not only is this the only appearance in the NT of the phrase "holy apostles," but where the adjective ἅγιος (*hagios*, holy) is used substantively in the Pauline corpus, it most often, and perhaps always, refers to Christians generally.[32] In addition, if the author of Ephesians has relied on Colossians, then he seems to have transformed a reference in Col. 1:26 to "his saints," meaning all God's people, into a reference to "his holy apostles and prophets," meaning those foundational witnesses of the past to whom God originally communicated the mystery.[33] Such a move would be consistent with a tendency that many scholars identify in the development of early Christianity toward emphasizing

29. For the translation "wisdom in a mystery," see Bockmuehl 1990: 160–61.

30. A few commentators claim that the use of the phrase ἐν πνεύματι elsewhere in Ephesians and Colossians supports the attachment of the phrase here to the noun that precedes it (Schlier 1957: 150; Schnackenburg 1991: 133). This is certainly true of Eph. 2:22 and Col. 1:8, but as Best (1998: 308) points out, the phrase modifies verbal forms in 5:18 and 6:18. In 6:18, moreover, the verbal form is separated from ἐν πνεύματι by another phrase, just as it is in 3:5.

31. E.g., De Wette 1843: 119; Baur 2003: 2.32; Gnilka 1973: 167; Lincoln 1990: 179; Schnackenburg 1991: 28, 133; MacDonald 2000: 263.

32. See, e.g., 1 Cor. 1:2; 14:33; 16:15; Phil. 1:1; 4:22; 2 Cor. 1:1; 13:12; Rom. 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 16:15; Philem. 5, 7.

33. A synoptic comparison of the two relevant phrases shows the plausibility of this reconstruction:

Col. 1:26b νῦν δὲ ἐφανερώθη τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ
Eph. 3:5b ὡς νῦν ἀπεκαλύφθη τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ προφήταις

the role of the earliest Christian "apostles and prophets" as the foundation of the church (cf. 2:20).[34]

Several commentators mention that the phrase "holy apostles" is similar to the use of "holy elders" for church leaders in Ignatius (*Magn*. 3.1).[35] Ephesians, then, seems to participate in the subapostolic tendency to dignify special titles (such as "elder" or "apostle") with this adjective ("holy"). We could perhaps add to this the tendency in the late first and early second centuries to use commendatory adjectives of important Christians of the past (e.g., Ign. *Eph*. 12.2; 1 Clem. 5.2; 47.1; Pol. *Phil*. 3.2; 11.3).

This is a strong argument, but for two reasons it is not decisive. First, it is not entirely clear that when the Paul of the undisputed letters uses the term ἅγιοι as a substantive, as he does in Col. 1:26, he is always referring to God's people as a whole rather than to a special group within it. Scholars have long recognized this possibility with respect to the Jerusalem "saints" for whom Paul intended the collection he took up among his predominantly Gentile churches (1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:12), and Bockmuehl (1990: 184–85) has argued persuasively that ἅγιοι in Col. 1:26 may also refer to a particular group of Christians. Although Bockmuehl (1990: 201) acknowledges some "ambivalence" in the expression, he points out that taking ἅγιοι here as a special group fits the evidence in several ways. It is consistent, he argues, with Paul's contention that he, Apollos, and Cephas, among others, have a special role as the recipients and administrators of God's mysteries (1 Cor. 2:1, 10; 4:1–2). It also preserves the distinction, implicit in Col. 1:27–28, between those such as Paul, who communicate the mystery, and those such as the Gentiles and the Colossians in particular, to whom they communicate it.

If the "saints" of Col. 1:26 are a special group who proclaim the mystery, however, then Eph. 3:5 merely names this group more specifically as "his holy apostles, and prophets." It does not betray a conceptual development that goes beyond the understanding articulated either in the undisputed letters or in Colossians (cf. Percy 1946: 346–47).

Second, it is important to nuance the argument that the designation "his holy apostles" breathes the air of a later time. This argument has changed little since the mid-nineteenth century when Baur (2003: 2.32) claimed that Eph. 3:5 was an example of how reverence toward figures in the apostolic age increased with the passing of time. Yet this claim needs to be balanced with evidence from the earliest extant Christian literature that leaders of the first generation were already highly esteemed and given titles of dignity. In 1 Thess.

34. See, e.g., Merklein 1973: 164–67, 188–92; Pokorný 1992: 142; MacDonald 2000: 263; Strecker 2000: 569–70; and cf. Hahn 2002: 346–47. Dahl (2000: 54) comments: "One gains the impression [from 2:11–22; 3:5–7] . . . that our author sees the apostles and prophets more as ideal forms than as people of flesh and blood." (Man gewinnt . . . den Eindruck, dass unser Verfasser die Apostel und Propheten eher als ideale Gestalten denn als Menschen von Fleisch und Blut ansieht.)

35. Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 74; Gnilka 1973: 179n6; Lincoln 1990: 179; Best 1998: 307–8; MacDonald 2000: 263.

5:12–13, Paul urges his readers to "esteem [their leaders] very highly" (ἡγεῖσθαι αὐτοὺς ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ, *hēgeisthai autous hyperekperissou*). In Gal. 2:9 we learn that the Jerusalem church referred to James, Peter, and John as "the pillars," perhaps borrowing a traditional Jewish title of honor (cf. 1 Clem. 5.2; Betz 1979: 99n404; Martyn 1997: 205). Speaking of the apostles as "holy" would not move us into a completely different conceptual world, although the precise language is, without question, unusual for Paul (Dahl 2000: 54).

Who are these "holy apostles and prophets"? They must be identical to the "apostles and prophets" who form the foundation of God's variegated dwelling place—a temple whose building blocks are believers from among both Jews and Gentiles (2:20–22). They are, then, people such as Peter, Barnabas, Apollos, and certainly Paul himself, who presided over the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles (Percy 1946: 346–49; cf. Gal. 2:7, 9; 1 Cor. 3:5–6, 22; 4:6, 9; 9:5–6; Acts 13:1–3; 14:4, 14; 15:22, 32).

This leads to the second major critical question raised by this passage: Why does Paul emphasize the centrality of his own role in receiving and communicating the mystery in 3:2–4 and 8–10 but here in 3:5 claim that the apostles and prophets generally have that role?

According to some who think Ephesians is pseudonymous, the passage represents the confluence of two contradictory streams of early Christian tradition about how the gospel first advanced to the Gentiles (Best 1997a: 103–38; Sterling 2008: 88; cf. Lincoln 1990: 179–80). One stream is present in the four canonical Gospels and Acts and depicts the twelve apostles as recipients of a commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.[36] Perhaps its chronologically earliest appearance in the extant literature, however, is here in Eph. 3:5. The other stream is present in both the disputed and undisputed Pauline correspondence, and it is detectable in one brief sentence in Acts.[37] This stream identifies Paul as the last of the apostles and uniquely commissioned among this group to take the gospel to the Gentiles. This tradition appears in Eph. 3:3 and 3:8 and stands in conflict with the tradition in 3:5. "Probably," says Best (1997a: 132), "the author of Ephesians had not thought this problem through."

It seems more likely, however, that Eph. 3:1–13 reflects the complexity of the actual situation in the early days of the church's mission. This complexity appears with the same contours in Paul's undisputed correspondence and in Acts, and it is precisely these contours that we see again in Eph. 3:1–13. If we turn first to Paul's undisputed correspondence, we discover, as Best (1997a: 124–26) correctly argues, that Paul considered himself to be the apostle to the Gentiles par excellence (Rom. 1:5, 13; 11:13; 15:15–18; cf. 1 Cor. 15:8). In addition, he speaks of an agreement between himself and the "pillars" in

36. Mark 7:24–30; 13:10; 14:9; 15:39; Matt. 28:16–20; Luke 24:47–49; Acts 1:8; 13:47 (cf. Isa. 49:6).

37. Gal. 1:12, 15, 16; 2:1–10; Rom. 1:5, 13; 11:13; 15:15–18; Col. 1:24–29; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 4:17; Acts 22:21.

Jerusalem that he was the apostle to the Gentiles and they, particularly Peter, were apostles to the Jews (Gal. 2:7–9).

We also find, however, that Paul had no quarrel with other Jewish Christians who preached the gospel among the Gentiles and who worked relatively independently of him. Cephas, for example, was certainly known to the predominantly Gentile Corinthian church, and he probably had traveled to Corinth to work among them. When Paul mentions Cephas in 1 Corinthians, however, he says nothing about Cephas's violation of the Jerusalem agreement (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5). Similarly, although Apollos arrived in Corinth independently of Paul and felt free to disagree with him on strategic details of the work there (1 Cor. 3:6–8; 16:12), Paul nevertheless viewed himself as united with Apollos in the common work of building up the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 3:8). Paul, then, certainly saw himself as the primary apostle to the Gentiles, but it also seems reasonable to think that he knew that others, independently of his own special role, understood and acted on the need to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

This pattern emerges again in Acts. There, Peter takes the gospel to the Gentile Cornelius and his family in response to what could be called a revelation (Acts 10:1–11:18; cf. 15:7). After some initial hesitation, "the apostles and brothers who were in Judea" acknowledged the validity of the vision and accepted its implication that God had "also given to the Gentiles repentance for the purpose of life" (Acts 11:1–18; cf. 15:14). Despite this, and despite also having a role in proclaiming the gospel to Israel (Acts 9:15), Paul remains the primary means by which the gospel goes "far away to the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21; 26:17–18).

If we now turn back to Eph. 3:1–13, we discover the same pattern. Paul plays the chief strategic role in proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles, a role that "was made known" to him "by revelation" (3:2–4, 6–13). This description nicely summarizes the picture in Acts and Galatians of how the insight concerning the Gentiles' inclusion came to Paul (Acts 9:3–6, 15–16; 22:6–21; 26:12–18; Gal. 1:11–12). But the whole group of apostles and prophets also understood this insight (3:5). This too is an apt summary of the picture that emerges from Acts of a vision to Peter whose validity was subsequently recognized by others.

If we now put all this together, we can say that in 3:5 Paul contrasts the period prior to the revelation of the Gentiles' full inclusion in God's people, on equal terms with the Jews, with the period "now" (νῦν, *nyn*) in effect after that revelation. This revelation came not only to Paul at the time of his conversion but also to the other apostles and prophets in this new era, and it was revealed to them by the Spirit of God. Within this group, the apostles (including Paul) hold a special place, which Paul signals by calling them "holy." He uses this unusual term for them because the link that most of them have with the historical Jesus gives them an especially critical role in the founding and guidance of the church.

3:6 Paul next explains the content of the mystery that has "now been revealed." It concerns the status of the Gentiles, and Paul describes this new status with

three adjectives, each of which begins with a form of the preposition σύν (*syn*, together with).[38] A chart is perhaps the easiest way to convey the rhetorical effect of these compounded terms:

συγκληρονόμα (*synklēronoma*, heirs together with)
σύσσωμα (*syssōma*, one body together with)
συμμέτοχα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (*symmetocha tēs epangelias*, sharers together with . . . in the promise)

It is clear, then, that the Gentiles are inheritors, one body, and sharers "together with" (σύν), but "together with" whom? The previous paragraph (2:19–22), with its own set of three σύν compounds, makes the answer clear. Gentile believers are now full participants in each of these three qualities with Jewish believers.[39]

The term συγκληρονόμος (*synklēronomos*) recalls the theme of inheritance that appears in several places in the letter's opening prayer sections (1:11, 14, 18). It is an eschatological theme, looking forward to the time when God's people will receive their inheritance (1:11, 14; 5:5; cf. 1:18; Col. 3:24). This, in turn, recalls the biblical theme that God had promised Abraham the inheritance of the land.[40] In Galatians and Romans Paul has described Jews and Gentiles who are united in their common faith in Christ as the people who will see the ultimate fulfillment of this biblical promise (Gal. 3:6–4:7; Rom. 4:1–25). Their inheritance would not be a geographical region at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, but, as Paul makes especially clear in Romans, a glorious existence within a renewed creation as God's adopted and beloved children (Rom. 4:13–14; 8:14–30; cf. Gal. 3:29; 4:4–6; 6:15).[41] Those ideas are also present, although in a more subtle form, in Ephesians (1:5, 13–14; 2:10, 15; 3:9; 4:13, 23–24).

If the concept of inheritance has such rich roots in the OT, how could Paul consider the coinheritance of Gentile and Jewish Christians to be a previously unknown mystery (3:5, 9)? The previously unknown element lies in the σύν. As we saw above (on 3:5), the OT and Jewish literature of the Second Temple period is replete with references to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the worship

38. Εἶναι could be an infinitive in indirect discourse ("as it is now revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets: In the Messiah Jesus and through the gospel, the Gentiles are joint heirs"; Barth 1974: 326, 336). Most commentators, however, take the infinitive in apposition to the relative pronoun ὅ in 3:5 and its antecedent μυστήριον in 3:4, and this probably is correct. Cf. the similar constructions in Acts 24:15 and Rev. 2:14.

39. Συμπολῖται (*sympolitai*, citizens together, 2:19); συναρμολογουμένη (*synarmologoumenē*, being joined together, 2:22); συνοικοδομεῖσθε (*synoikodomeisthe*, you are being built together, 2:23).

40. See, e.g., Gen. 15:7–8; 22:17; 24:60; 28:4; 47:27; Exod. 23:30; Lev. 20:24; Num. 13:30; 33:54; 34:2, 13, 17–18; Deut. 1:39; 2:12; 3:20, 28; 4:1, 5, 14, 22, 26, 38; 1 Chron. 16:14–18; 2 Chron. 6:27.

41. This new creation is perhaps identical in Paul's thinking with "the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9–10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5).

of God to come in the eschatological period of Israel's restoration. The full equality of Gentiles with Jews in a newly constituted humanity, however, was not revealed previously.[42]

The second term, σύσσωμα, appears here for the first time in all known literature, and it is possible that Paul invented it.[43] Its two components are very common, however, and so the meaning of the term is not in doubt. It recalls Paul's claim in 2:16 that Christ has reconciled both Jews and Gentiles to God "in one body" (ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι, *en heni sōmati*) through his death on the cross (cf. 4:4). It also recalls his description in 1:23 of the church as Christ's "body" (σῶμα, *sōma*; cf. 4:12, 16; 5:23, 29–30). Gentile believers are, then, "one body together with" Jewish believers, and this new, composite group is the church.

The final term, συμμέτοχα, is also an unusual word, although not as rare as σύσσωμα (*pace* Ellicott 1859: 60). Origen was apparently unfamiliar with it and seems to have thought, based on its use in 5:7, that it had a negative connotation (Heine 2002: 217; cf. Josephus, *J.W.* 1.486). There is no sign of that here, however, where it seems simply to be a more intense form of the adjective μέτοχος (*metochos*, "sharing in, partner," BDAG 643), chosen perhaps for rhetorical reasons, since it begins with a form of σύν, like the other two terms.

The Gentiles are sharers together with the Jews τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (*tēs epangelias*, in the promise).[44] What is this promise? Paul is probably thinking especially of the promise to Abraham that through him all the Gentiles would be blessed (Gal. 3:8; Rom. 4:13), a promise that in Gal. 3:14 seems to merge with the biblical promise of the eschatological outpouring of God's Spirit (cf. Eph. 1:13; Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26–27; 37:14; Joel 3:1–2; cf. Acts 1:4; 2:33).[45]

Paul next supplies two phrases that indicate how these three characteristics have come to his Gentile readers. They are full and equal participants with others in the newly constituted people of God because they too are ἐν

42. Indeed, during the Second Temple period some interpreters of the Scriptures found in their inheritance language a justification for the violent overthrow and subjugation of the Gentiles. See, e.g., the echoes of Ps. 2:8–9 LXX in Pss. Sol. 17.22–25.

43. We should not claim this too quickly. Σύσσωμος appears naturally in various contexts in Christian writers of later years (*PGL* 1348) and may not have been as unusual in Paul's time as its absence in the extant literature could at first lead us to believe. The similar term συσσωματοποιέω ("incorporate, amalgamate," LSJ 1734) appears prior to Paul in the second-century BC Stoic philosopher Posidonius (*Fragmenta* 341a 17) and then again in *De mundo* (396a.14), a passage that relies on Posidonius and is sometimes wrongly attributed to Aristotle (Abbott 1897: 83; Robinson 1928: 169). *De mundo* is dated variously from the mid-first century BC to the early second century AD (Ross 1923: 11; Forster 1931: preface). A term not unlike σύσσωμος was therefore in circulation around the time of Paul.

44. On the use of the genitive case with adjectives beginning with σύν, see BDF §182.1 and BDAG 958. *Pace* Abbott (1897: 83), the phrase must go with this last term rather than with all three terms because attaching it to σύσσωμα would involve "gross artificiality" (Haupt 1902a: 102).

45. See the comments on 1:13 and 2:12; and cf. Aletti 2001: 180.

Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (*en Christō Iēsou*, in Christ Jesus). In 1:10, Paul has identified the mystery as God's intention to sum up all things in heaven and on earth "in Christ" (cf. 3:10–11), and in 2:11–22 Paul has described how Christ has started to accomplish the earthly part of this plan by making Jewish and Gentile believers into one new human being "in" himself "through" his death on the cross (2:13, 15; cf. Gnilka 1971: 168–69). Not all Jews and Gentiles, therefore, are now one people, but only those who are "in Christ." One becomes "in Christ," and therefore part of the one, new multiethnic people of God διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (*dia tou euangeliou*, through the gospel; cf. 1 Cor. 4:15), that is, by hearing the gospel preached and believing it (1:13).

3:7 Using language that is reminiscent of 3:2 (and of Col. 1:23, 25), Paul now returns to his own role in bringing the mystery he has just described out of hiding (3:2–4). He has become, he says, a διάκονος (*diakonos*, servant) of the gospel. Διάκονος means, in a general sense, one who assists another (e.g., Matt. 22:13; John 2:5, 9; BDAG 230), but Paul frequently uses this and the closely related words διακονέω (*diakoneō*, serve) and διακονία (*diakonia*, service) to refer to his special work of urging people to be reconciled to God through faith in Christ (1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6; 4:1; 5:18; 6:3–4; 11:23; 1 Tim. 1:12). In Romans he could speak of his "service" (διακονία) as synonymous with his role as "apostle of the Gentiles" (11:13), and that concept is close to the thought he develops here. Paul serves the gospel in the sense that he preaches it to the Gentiles, enabling them to hear and believe it (cf. 1:13) and in this way become incorporated into the new, multiethnic people of God (cf. 2:11–22; 3:6).[46]

Paul's strategic role in the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles came to him "according to" (κατά, *kata*) a graciously given gift from God.[47] In 4:7 Paul will say similarly that each believer has been "given grace according to [κατά] the measure of the gift of Christ," and then in 4:12 that these gifts are intended "for the building up of the body of Christ" (cf. 1 Pet. 4:10). Christ equips every believer with a gift for edifying the body, and Paul's own gift was the foundational proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles as one of the apostles and prophets (2:20; 3:2, 5; 4:11).

Paul was given this gift "according to [κατά] the effect [ἐνέργειαν, *energeian*] of his [God's] power [δυνάμεως, *dynameōs*]."[48] Just as in 1:19 and 3:20, so here Paul

46. It is true that we find a specific link between "servant" and "gospel" only here and in Col. 1:23, but it is difficult to see any substantial difference between this language and the concept of Paul's apostolic "service" in the letters whose Pauline authorship is undisputed. *Pace* Merklein 1973: 223 and A. Weiser, *EDNT* 1:304, who find in both Col. 1:23 and Eph. 3:7 evidence of a post-Pauline development of the office of "minister of the gospel."

47. Here the meaning of κατά slides slightly from its usual indication of the norm by which something is measured into an expression of the reason for something. Paul became a servant of the gospel because of the divine grace given to him. On this meaning for κατά, see BDAG 513.5.a.δ.

48. Most commentators agree (*pace* Westcott 1906: 47) that this second κατά clause does not stand parallel to the first κατά clause but instead modifies the participle δοθείσης. As Hoehner (2002: 451) observes, if the two clauses were parallel, they would probably be linked with καί.

seems to distinguish between the "effective power" (ἐνέργεια) and the "potential power" (δύναμις) of God.[49] God put his potential power into effect when he made Paul a servant of the gospel. Paul is thinking principally of his conversion from persecutor of the church to proclaimer of the gospel to the Gentiles, something that only God's power could effect and that, whenever Paul mentions it, he couples with God's grace, as he does here (Gal. 1:13–16; 2:8; cf. 1 Cor. 15:8–10; 1 Tim. 1:12–14). He may also be thinking, however, of the continuing effectiveness of God's power in his ministry, despite his imprisonment (3:1; 4:1) and suffering (3:13; cf. Col. 1:29; see Bruce 1984: 317; O'Brien 1999: 239).

In 1:19 Paul has prayed that his readers might understand the vastness of the power that God has put into effect for them. Here in 3:7, he may be subtly presenting himself to them as a practical example of how this works. God's great power was behind Paul's own conversion from persecutor to herald of the good news and remains effective in his ministry despite his imprisonment (v. 1) and suffering (v. 13).

The repetition from 3:2 of the concepts of Paul's particular role in proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles (v. 2: οἰκονομία, *oikonomia*, task of administration; v. 7: διάκονος, *diakonos*, servant) and of God's gracious gift to him of that role (v. 2: χάρις, *charis*, grace; δίδωμι, *didōmi*, give; v. 7: δωρεά, *dōrea*, gift; χάρις, *charis*, grace; δίδωμι, *didōmi*, give) form a rhetorically effective close to the long sentence that constitutes this section (vv. 1–7). As happens elsewhere in Paul's Letters, however, the close of one section already announces the major concern of the section that follows it (on this feature of Romans, see Dahl 1977: 82–83). Here, Paul's concern with his service to the gospel anticipates the next paragraph (3:8–13), where he describes the way he has carried out this service (Best 1998: 313).

Summary

After dwelling on the way God has used his great power to include Paul's formerly hopeless Gentile readers into his people, Paul begins in 3:1–7 to pray that God might empower his readers to understand the vastness of Christ's love (3:14, 18–19). Before he can complete this thought, however, Paul breaks off in midsentence to describe to his readers his own role in God's plan to place Gentile believers on the same footing with Jewish believers in a newly constituted people. God has graciously given to Paul, along with other apostles and prophets, the insight that through Christ's death God was making Gentile believers one body together with, heirs together with, and sharers together with Jewish believers. This complete equality between Gentiles and Jews in one new people of God is something that neither Paul nor the other apostles and prophets could have known apart from God's revelation of it to them. It is in this sense a "mystery."

God has given Paul the responsibility of administering this mystery to the Gentiles, of making known to them that they can have a place in God's

49. See the discussion of these terms in the comments on 1:19.

people if they believe the gospel. When God gave this responsibility to Paul, he was the least likely person God could have chosen for the task, but this is how God works: he uses his great power in gracious ways to transform his enemies into his servants.

Additional Notes

3:1. The way in which Paul refers to the relationship between his imprisonment and Christ varies widely among ancient witnesses to the letter's text. In one strongly attested tradition, Paul says that he is the prisoner τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. This reading appears in some of the most ancient witnesses (e.g., 𝔓46, B, A, Origen, Coptic) and is geographically diverse, showing up in Alexandrian (e.g., 𝔓46, B, A) as well as most Byzantine, and some Western (e.g., two manuscripts of the Old Latin, Pelagius) witnesses. It may well be the correct reading (Metzger 1994: 534, with some hesitation; Hoehner 2002: 420n1; Sellin 2008: 248).

Another set of witnesses, however, omits the name Ἰησοῦ. These include the early Alexandrian א; the Western trio D, F, and G; and such Byzantine witnesses as 256 and 2127. In addition to this strong external attestation is the possibility that an original τοῦ Χριστοῦ was expanded to τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ under the influence of Philem. 1 and 9 (Best 1998: 294). All five references to Paul as a prisoner in the Pauline corpus also refer in some way to Jesus. If we set aside Eph. 3:1, only the two references in Philem. 1 and 9 are identical, and this makes it all the more likely that the particular expression found in those two references would have influenced the text of Eph. 3:1. The other "prisoner" references seem to have had a smaller impact on the text, but they illustrate what probably happened with Philem. 1, 9 and Eph. 3:1. Τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ (C Ψ) may have been influenced by 2 Tim. 1:8, and the expressions ἐν Χριστῷ (365), and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (lectionaries 156, 170, and 617) may have been influenced by Eph. 4:1.

It seems best, therefore, to assume that at an early date the name Ἰησοῦ was added to the text under the influence of the two references in Philemon.

3:3. An impressive list of both Alexandrian (𝔓46, B) and Western (F, G, two Old Latin manuscripts, "Ambrosiaster") witnesses omits the ὅτι at the beginning of the verse. If this tradition is followed, then 3:3 begins a new sentence. The omission looks suspiciously like an attempt to simplify the enormous sentence that stretches from 3:1 through 3:7, however, and this suspicion grows with the realization that these long sentences, although difficult, are part of the distinctive style of this letter (Best 1998: 299). In addition, the inclusion of ὅτι has strong external support (Hoehner 2002: 425n2). It is found in early (א, A, C) and geographically diverse witnesses (א, D, most Byzantine manuscripts, and the Armenian, Vulgate, Syriac, Bohairic Coptic, and Syriac versions). Both internal and external evidence point toward its inclusion.

B. How Paul Fulfills His Task (3:8–13)

If the previous section (3:1–7) was primarily about the link between Paul's administrative responsibility and the mystery of the Gentiles' inclusion in the church, then this section is chiefly devoted to the ways in which he has carried out that role (Schnackenburg 1991: 129; Best 1998: 292; Hoehner 2002: 453) and why the role was necessary. He has fulfilled the role that God gave him in two ways. First, he has proclaimed the good news of the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles (v. 8b), and second, he has illumined everyone, whether Jew or Gentile, about the mystery that the Creator of the universe has now revealed (v. 9).

Why is it necessary for Paul to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles and the mystery to everyone? He does this in order to assemble a unified church of Jews and Gentiles who will bear witness to the inimical powers of the universe that the Creator's purposes are being fulfilled (v. 10). This fulfillment, planned before time began, is taking place in the Messiah (v. 11) because those who believe in him, whether Jews or Gentiles, have the kind of relationship with God that friends have with each other, a relationship characterized by candid speech and confident access (v. 12). Paul probably thinks of this speech and access as primarily evident in prayer.

At this point the thought of prayer may have prompted Paul to remember that he had been digressing from a prayer. That prayer started with a reference to his imprisonment for the Gentiles, and he will get back to it shortly (in v. 14), but before doing so, he concludes his digression with an exhortation to his readers. Because of all that he has said about his strategic role in God's "plan" for the universe, he asks his readers not to be discouraged that he is suffering for them. That suffering, he tells them, means their glory: it has brought them the gospel and made them part of God's glorious inheritance in the saints (v. 13).

Like 3:1–7, this section has the marks of spontaneity. It is composed of two sentences, one of them very long (eighty-two words), and the other, by the standards of Eph. 1–3, short (fourteen words). The second, short sentence is designed to get the discourse back on track by returning to the theme of Paul's suffering for the Gentiles, which in 3:1 started the digression that now comes to an end.

Exegesis and Exposition

[8a]To me, the least of all the saints, [8b]this grace was given: to proclaim to the Gentiles the good news about the untraceable wealth of Christ [9]and to illumine ⌜everyone⌝

about the administrative plan of the mystery hidden from eternity in the God who created all things, [10]in order that the beautifully complex wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places [11]according to his purpose from before the ages, which he carried out in the Messiah, Jesus our Lord, [12]in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in him. [13]Therefore I ask you not to be discouraged in my sufferings for you, inasmuch as they are ⌜your⌝ glory.

3:8a Paul begins a new sentence, signaling the beginning of a new section. Just as he did at the beginning (v. 2) and end (v. 7) of the last sentence, he emphasizes his special responsibility (οἰκονομία, *oikonomia*, v. 2) in God's purposes and describes that responsibility as the "grace" God has "given" him. As with 3:7, Paul's conversion lies in the background. His reference to himself (ἐμοί, *emoi*, to me; cf. μοι, *moi*, vv. 2, 7) as ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ πάντων ἁγίων (*elachistoterō pantōn hagiōn*, least of all the saints) recalls the language of 1 Cor. 15:8–10. There Paul follows a description of the appearance of the resurrected Christ to him "last of all" with the comment that he is "the least [ἐλάχιστος, *elachistos*] of the apostles" because he "persecuted the church of God" (15:9). The dramatic change this appearance of Christ brought to him, he continues, was a result of God's grace, a grace powerful enough to fuel his intense labor in the service of the gospel to the present day (15:10). In Ephesians, Paul speaks similarly of how his position as "the least of all the saints" contrasts sharply with the critical importance of his God-given role as proclaimer of the gospel and with the effective power that God has given to him to carry out this role (v. 7).

How can Paul expect readers, many of whom he does not personally know (3:2; 4:21), to appreciate this subtle reference to his conversion? The story of Paul's conversion from persecutor of the church to preacher of the gospel was widely known during his lifetime, even among Christians he had never seen (Gal. 1:23), and it was the subject of praise to God (Gal. 1:24). It is not surprising, then, that he can assume his readers have heard this story.

The brief reference here to Paul as "the least of all the saints" has often played a role in discussion of the letter's authorship. Defenders of Pauline authorship occasionally comment that a pseudonymous admirer of Paul would not have spoken in such an unflattering way of the apostle. To them, the statement is a sign of the letter's authenticity.[1] It is not clear, however, that calling the pre-conversion Paul "the least of all the saints" would have been considered unflattering among ancient admirers. Luke was such an admirer but still gives a vivid impression of Paul's murderous preconversion past in the buildup to his conversion (cf. Barn. 5.9).

Those who read the letter as a pseudonymous document often point out that the description of Paul's conversion in Eph. 3:8 has been intensified in

1. Hoehner 2002: 452; cf. Muddiman 2001: 157; Hoehner and Muddiman cite Bruce in support of their position (cf. Lincoln 1990: 182), but Bruce (1984: 318–19) is much less definitive on this point in his later commentary than he was in his earlier one (cf. Bruce 1961: 63).

a way that is characteristic of the subapostolic age (Baur 2003: 2.33; Gnilka 1971: 170; Lincoln 1990: 183; cf. MacDonald 2000: 271). Two intensifications are thought to be especially revealing. First, the author of Ephesians seems to have transformed the simple ἐλάχιστος (*elachistos*, least) into the elaborate, and rather odd, ἐλαχιστότερος (*elachistoteros*), which is technically a comparative form of a superlative adjective and may mean "very least" (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 183; Schnackenburg 1991: 136; cf. MacDonald 2000: 264). Second, they point to an increasingly exaggerated portrait of Paul as a sinner. He begins in 1 Cor. 15:9 as merely the least of the apostles, but then becomes in Eph. 3:8 the least of all the saints, and in 1 Tim. 1:15 the first of sinners (e.g., Gnilka 1971: 170; Lincoln 1990: 183; Schnackenburg 1991: 136). This, they believe, falls in step with a tendency after Paul's death to intensify the wickedness of the apostles in order to create a more impressive foil for the greatness of God's grace.[2] Barnabas 5.9 seems to support the point: "And when he selected his own apostles who were about to preach his gospel, they were altogether lawless beyond all sin [ὄντας ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἁμαρτίαν ἀνομωτέρους, *ontas hyper pasan hamartian anomōterous*]. This was to show that he did not come to call the upright but sinners" (trans. Ehrman 2003).

Both "intensifications," however, are far less than certain. The term ἐλαχιστότερος is extremely rare, but it is not "a kind of *tour de force*" (MHT 2:166), nor is it "a unique formation" (Abbott 1987: 85). Its first two occurrences in extant Greek literature are apparently here and in the mechanical writer Heron, who flourished in Alexandria during the mid 60s AD.[3] This is precisely the time that Ephesians was written, if Paul was the author.[4] Heron uses the word in quite pedestrian prose, as if it is nothing unusual, and it is not clear that it means anything other than "least." It appears in a description of the different technical terms for the measurement of length: "Now least of all (πάντων δὲ ἐλαχιστότερον, *pantōn de elachistoteron*)," he says, "is the 'finger'" (Heron, *Def.* 130.1.5). "Least of all" rather than "very least of all" seems to be a good translation here because Heron promptly divides the "finger" into the still-smaller components of one-half, one-third, and so on.

The idea that Paul's wickedness became increasingly exaggerated with the march of time is even shakier. Although Barn. 5.9 may show a general tendency in this direction, it does not mention Paul and, as Wallace (1996: 302n26) points out, "is not autobiographical." It is more likely that hyperbole about one's position relative to other Christians or about past sins arose on occasion among those who believed God had been especially gracious to them. It is not

2. MacDonald (2000: 271–72) sees the increased emphasis on Paul's preconversion sinfulness as part of a larger strategy to strengthen Paul's authority as an apostle and thus strengthen the authority of contemporary church leaders by tracing their authority back to him.

3. Heron's date can be firmly fixed by a reference in one of his works to a recently observed lunar eclipse that could have occurred only on March 13, AD 62, at 11:51 p.m. local time in Alexandria (*Dioptra* 35). On this, see the clever deductions of Neugebauer 1975: 846.

4. The term also appears in L.A.E. [Apocalypse] 16.2, but this document is difficult to date, and its text at this point is uncertain. See the note in *OTP* 2:277.

only the genuine Paul of 1 Cor. 15:9 who uses this kind of language but also the genuine Ignatius: "Remember in your prayers the church in Syria," he says to the Trallians, "of which I am not worthy to be considered a member, being as I am the very least [ἔσχατος, *eschatos*, literally, 'last'] of them" (*Trall.* 13.1, trans. Holmes 2007; cf. Ign. *Eph.* 21.1). This could be another emergence of the tradition that started with 1 Cor. 15:9 and continued in Eph. 3:8 and 1 Tim. 1:15, but that seems unlikely since there is so little verbal agreement between Ignatius's statement and the supposed tradition.[5] The lack of verbal agreement must count as evidence that there is no connection at all and that Christians, independently of one another, sometimes simply spoke this way.[6]

In light of the ambiguity of the evidence, then, it seems best to excuse Eph. 3:8a from the debate over the epistle's authorship (cf. Aletti 2001: 185). A pseudonymous author could have written it, but nothing about the substance of the description is either uncharacteristic of Paul or especially characteristic of a later era.

Assuming on other grounds, then, that Paul is the letter's author, it is probable that his experience of God's grace in moving him from persecutor of the church to servant of the gospel, has led him to speak of himself in this way. His strategic role in God's purposes (3:2), his insight into the union of Jewish and Gentile believers in one body (3:3–6), his proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles (3:7–8), and his illumination of everyone about God's plan (3:9)—these were due not to his own ability but to the graciousness of God and "the effect of his power" (3:7). Paul can therefore call the role that God has given him to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles ἡ χάρις αὕτη (*hē charis hautē*, this grace; cf. 3:2; Gal. 2:7–9; 1 Cor. 3:10; Phil. 1:7; Rom. 1:5; 12:3; 15:15–16).

3:8b–9 Αὕτη (*hautē*, this) points forward to two infinitives that describe the "grace" God has given to Paul in further detail. First, God has commissioned Paul τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εὐαγγελίσασθαι (*tois ethnesin euangelisasthai*, to proclaim to the Gentiles the good news [about . . .]). Paul last used the verb εὐαγγελίζω (*euangelizō*, proclaim the good news) in 2:17 to refer to Christ's proclamation of peace with God to both "the far" (the Gentiles) and "the near" (the Jews). He has also just used the noun form of this verb, εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion*, good news), in 3:6–7 to describe the gospel as the instrument through which Gentile

5. Ignatius is closest to 1 Cor. 15:9, whose sentiment is similar. The only significant overlap in the precise wording of the two passages, however, is the use in both of the adjective ἔσχατος:

1 Corinthians 15:8–9	**Ignatius, *Trallians* 13.1**
Ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερεὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὤφθη κἀμοί. Ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων ὃς οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς καλεῖσθαι ἀπόστολος, διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ.	Μνημονεύετε ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς ὑμῶν τῆς ἐν Συρίᾳ ἐκκλησίας, ὅθεν καὶ οὐκ ἄξιός εἰμι λέγεσθαι, ὢν ἔσχατος ἐκείνων.

6. MacDonald (2000: 270–71) suggests that a rhetorical convention described in Plutarch, *Mor.* 7, is operative in both Ignatius and Ephesians at this point. If so, then the convention may still have been the vehicle for genuine expressions of humility.

and Jewish believers are united in one people. His role, then, is to be the means through which Christ proclaims to the Gentiles the good news of reconciliation with God (cf. Gal. 1:16; 2:7; Rom. 1:5; 15:15–16; 1 Tim. 2:7; Acts 9:15).

Rather than using the language of reconciliation to describe the content of the gospel, however, here Paul describes it as τὸ ἀνεξιχνίαστον πλοῦτος τοῦ Χριστοῦ (*to anexichniaston ploutos tou Christou*, the untraceable wealth of Christ). Paul has already used the term πλοῦτος (*ploutos*, wealth) three times in the letter to speak of the lavish nature of God's relationship to his people:

- In 1:7 God's people receive "the wealth [τὸ πλοῦτος, *to ploutos*] of his grace" when he redeems them through Christ's blood.
- In 1:18 God's people are to him an inheritance of great "wealth [ὁ πλοῦτος, *ho ploutos*]" (1:18; cf. 3:16).
- In 2:7 God has given life to, raised, and seated his people together with Christ so that he might show to them "the surpassing wealth [τὸ . . . πλοῦτος] of his grace" for all time (2:7).

In 1:7 and 2:7, the wealth is the richness of God's grace as it is visible in the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ. Here in 3:8b, then, the genitive expression τοῦ Χριστοῦ means not that the untraceable wealth is Christ himself (Lincoln 1990: 183–84; MacDonald 2000: 265), but that it is the grace of God shown in Christ (Pokorný 1992: 144–45; Hübner 1997: 188). The term ἀνεξιχνίαστος (*anexichniastos*, untraceable) is particularly appropriate for describing God's grace in Christ here since Paul has just explained that God's plan to include Gentiles and Jews on equal terms among his people "in Christ Jesus" would be utterly unknown apart from the special revelation of it to Paul, the apostles, and the prophets (3:3, 5–6).[7] No one would have been able to "trace out" the logic of the Scriptures to this conclusion; God had to reveal it.

The thought in 3:8b is similar to that of Rom. 9–11, where God surprisingly shows the "wealth" (ὁ πλοῦτος) of his glory to the Gentiles (9:23) so that they experience the "wealth" (πλοῦτος) of his mercy (11:12), but does this in a way that, also surprisingly, will include formerly unbelieving Jews (11:25–32). Paul calls the unexpected inclusion of "all Israel" within God's people in the future a "mystery" (μυστήριον, *mystērion*; 11:25), and he praises the whole unpredictable and merciful arrangement as "the depth of the wealth [πλούτου] of the wisdom and knowledge of God," whose ways are "untraceable" (ἀνεξιχνίαστοι; 11:33).

Second, God has commissioned Paul φωτίσαι πάντας (*phōtisai pantas*, to illumine everyone). The term πάντας (*pantas*, everyone) is masculine,

7. The few occurrences of this word in the extant literature cluster around texts concerned with the incomprehensible nature of God's wisdom, especially as it is revealed in creation (Job 5:9; 9:10 LXX; 1 Clem. 20.5; cf. Job 34:24 LXX) and in his mercy to sinners (Pr. Man. 6 [Odes 12:6 LXX]; Diogn. 9.5).

and so it does not refer back to the neuter term ἔθνεσιν (*ethnesin*, Gentiles) in 3:8.[8] Here, then, Paul is called to explain not only to Gentiles but also to everyone, whether Jew or Gentile, "the plan of the mystery" revealed to him about the full partnership of Gentile believers with Jewish believers (3:6). As Paul says in his Letter to the Romans, he is obligated to proclaim the gospel to Greek, barbarian, wise, foolish, Jew, or Gentile (Rom. 1:14, 16; Hoehner 2002: 455). As Romans demonstrates, this was not always an evangelistic task in the sense of calling unbelievers to faith. Paul sometimes felt that it was his apostolic responsibility to preach the gospel to believers in such a way that he clearly showed its implications for ethnic unity (Rom. 11:13; 12:3; 14:1–15:13).

Once again (cf. v. 5), Paul emphasizes that the mystery of the unity of Gentile with Jewish believers was unknown until God revealed it in the gospel. He describes the mystery in three ways.

First, he says, it was ἀποκεκρυμμένος (*apokekrymmenos*, hidden). The perfect tense of this adjectival participle emphasizes the mystery's hiddenness: God's plan to place Jews and Gentiles on an equal footing within his newly constituted people was known only to God prior to his revelation of it to Paul and other apostles and prophets (vv. 2–5, 7–8).[9] It was, as Paul has just said, "untraceable."

Second, the mystery was hidden ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων (*apo tōn aiōnōn*). This means either that it was hidden "from the Aeons"—the evil spiritual forces that Paul refers to elsewhere in the letter (1:21; 2:2–3; 6:12), including the next clause (v. 10)—or that it was hidden "from ages past."[10] The term αἰών (*aiōn*, age) was beginning to take on connotations of a personal cosmic power in the first century (see the additional note on 2:2), but when Paul uses this term elsewhere to speak of the hiddenness of God's "wisdom" or of "the mystery," it clearly describes the massive length of time that these remained hidden (1 Cor. 2:7; Col. 1:26; cf. Rom. 16:25). Any other connotation here is unlikely.

Third, the mystery was hidden "in the God who created [κτίσαντι, *ktisanti*] all things." This phrase continues two important themes of the letter so far: God chose a people for himself prior to the world's creation (1:9–10; cf. 1:4–5, 11; 2:10), and this people is itself a new humanity or a new creation (2:10, 15; 4:13; 5:31–32). Prior to the time that his Spirit revealed it to Paul (and other apostles and prophets), only God knew that in Christ he would fully overcome the division between Jews and Gentiles.[11] God has graciously given Paul a strategic administrative role (οἰκονομία, *oikonomia*, v. 2) in the plan (οἰκονομία; v. 9) according to which this mystery is being worked out: he is to preach the

8. Confusion on this point probably accounts for the absence of the term in some early witnesses to the text. See Metzger 1994: 534 and the additional note below.

9. For the use of the perfect tense to "intensify" the verb, see Campbell 2008a: 110.

10. For "aeons," see, e.g., Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 75; Schlier 1957: 153–56; BDAG 33. Barth (1974: 344) and Best (1998: 320) think the term may have elements of both meanings.

11. Paul is still using the definition of "the mystery" that he developed in 3:6.

gospel to the Gentiles (v. 8) and to enlighten everyone—whether Gentile or Jew—about the ethnically inclusive nature of this new creation.

3:10 Paul next introduces a purpose clause (ἵνα, *hina*, in order that) that grammatically could give either the reason why the mystery was hidden (Abbott 1897: 88; Haupt 1902a: 105–6; Muddiman 2001: 160) or the reason why Paul preached the gospel to the Gentiles and enlightened everyone (Alford 1857: 103).[12] This second option is far more likely to be correct. The purpose is that something "might be made known" (γνωρισθῇ, *gnōristhē*), and since this thought is consistent with Paul's preaching (εὐαγγελίσασθαι, *euangelisasthai*; v. 8) and enlightening (φωτίσαι, *phōtisai*; v. 9), Paul is now explaining why he preaches the untraceable riches of Christ to the Gentiles and enlightens everyone about God's previously hidden plan to unite Jews and Gentiles in one body (Eadie 1883: 230). He does this to make something known.

This something is "the πολυποίκιλος [*polypoikilos*, beautifully complex] wisdom of God." This rare term combines the more common adjective ποικίλος (*poikilos*), meaning "many-coloured, spotted, pied, dappled, wrought in various colours, changeful, diversified, manifold" (LSJ 1430), with the common adverb πολύς (*polys*), meaning "many." Πολυποίκιλος connoted complex variety (Sib. Or. 1.89; 12.149), sometimes in crafted items such as a multicolored veil (Euripides, *Iph. taur.* 1150) or a floral wreath of many different flowers (Eubulus [Comic], *Fragmenta* 3.1–4.2; Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 15.24.32; cf. Sib. Or. 1.291). It could also be used of complex emotions (Sib. Or. 8.120) and reasoning processes (Herodorus, *Fragmenta* 24b.7–8). Here in Eph. 3:10 it seems to refer to the many complex facets of God's wisdom. Just as the wealth of Christ is "untraceable" (ἀνεξιχνίαστον, *anexichniaston*), according to 3:8, so now Paul describes the wisdom of God as "very many-sided" (BDAG 847).[13]

Perhaps there is also a hint of the unfathomable wisdom of God in the creation of the world. This theme was common in antiquity, appearing in Greek philosophy (Critias, DK 88B25.12),[14] the Jewish and Christian Scriptures (Prov. 8:22–31; Job 28:20–27), and in other Jewish literature from the Second Temple period (Sir. 42:15–25; 43:1–33; Bar. 3:29–37; Wis. 8:1; 1QH^a 9.7–8, 13–14, 19–20).[15] A reference to God's wisdom in creation would not be out of

12. Lincoln (1990: 185) and Hoehner (2002: 459) basically adopt this second view but think that the purpose clause is ultimately related, beyond the infinitives, to ἐδόθη in 3:8 (so Lincoln; cf. Best 1998: 322) or to ἐγενήθην διάκονος in 3:7 (so Hoehner).

13. The thought, then, is similar to Rom. 11:33, where God's "paths" of reasoning are "untraceable" (ἀνεξιχνίαστος). Cf. Col. 2:3; Sir. 1:6, 25; Bar. 3:15; Wis. 8:5; and 2 Bar. 54.13. In Wis. 7:22–23, the "spirit" of wisdom is described with a lengthy string of adjectives, including πολυμερές (manifold). On the relevance of this material to Eph. 3:10, see especially Schnackenburg 1991: 139–40; Dahl 2000: 355.

14. Critias was a fifth-century BC philosopher and playwright. This reference appears in a fragment on the invention of the gods and describes how someone came up with the idea that the array of stars in the heavens were "the beautiful embroidery [ποίκιλμα] of Time the skilled [σοφοῦ] craftsman" (trans. Freeman 1948: 158; cf. Schwindt 2002: 368).

15. See especially Dahl 2000: 355–56. Lincoln (1990: 186) believes that Dahl has read too much into the evidence, citing especially Dahl's use of the second-century Christian apologist

place here, on the heels of Paul's description of God as the one who "created all things" (v. 9). The translation "beautifully complex," then, might be even more appropriate than "very many-sided."

Paul probably thinks of "the beautifully complex wisdom of God" as especially evident in the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers in the church (v. 6). This is the mystery that was utterly inaccessible to human understanding until God, in whom it was hidden, revealed it to the apostles and prophets, and especially to Paul (vv. 2, 5, 7–9). The full unity of Jewish with Gentile believers in the one body of Christ, moreover, is the "creation" of a "new human being" (2:15–16).[16] All this is evidence of the vast complexity of God's wisdom, a wisdom now evident not merely in the beautiful diversity of his creation but also in the surprising way he is restoring this creation after the ravages of sin.

Αἱ ἀρχαὶ καὶ αἱ ἐξουσίαι (*hai archai kai hai exousiai*, the rulers and authorities) have played a role in leading all humanity into transgression, sin, and death. According to a Jewish tradition that was influential during Paul's era, Gen. 6:1–6 describes how such beings had strayed from the place in heaven that God had assigned to them at creation and had introduced humanity to various forms of wickedness, including the magical arts (e.g., CD-A 2.17–21; 4QEnoch^{a} 3–4QEnoch^{c} 6; 1 En. 6–16; T. Naph. 3.4–5). Some form of that tradition lies behind 1 Pet. 3:19–20; Jude 6; and 2 Pet. 2:4–5 and may also lie in the background here (cf. Schwindt 2002: 367–69). In light of the way Paul speaks of "the rulers and authorities" elsewhere in the letter, there can, in any case, be little doubt that Paul considered these figures to be thoroughly evil spiritual beings who exercised power over the unbelieving world (2:1–2; 6:12).[17] The church is unified across ethnic lines and is a newly created human being. By its very existence as a unified body, then, the church makes known to the evil spiritual rulers and authorities the vastness of God's creative wisdom: he not only created the universe with its endless variety, but in a wholly surprising way he has also begun to restore the crowning achievement of his creation—humanity—to its original unity.

The rulers and authorities to whom the ethnically unified church makes all this known occupy the same "heavenly" (ἐπουράνιος, *epouranios*) world

Theophilus of Antioch. Although Dahl (2000: 356) probably goes too far in suggesting that Theophilus's use of πολυποίκιλος (*Autol*. 1.6.5, 16; 2.16.2; cf. παμποίκιλος in 1.6.12) was "dependent upon a Hellenistic Jewish interpretation of Genesis," he has convincingly shown that Eph. 3:10 participates in a tendency in Hellenistic Judaism to speak of God's creation of the universe as evidence for the vastness of God's wisdom.

16. Ἵνα . . . κτίσῃ . . . ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον (2:15). Cf. Westcott 1906: 48–49.

17. The "rulers and authorities," therefore, are not "saints and ministers of God" (Origen [Heine 2002: 149]), "the heavenly angels" (Calvin 1965: 163; De Wette 1843: 121; Alford 1857: 103; Ellicott 1859: 64; Eadie 1883: 234; Abbott 1897: 88), the angels who oversee the affairs of various nations (Masson 1953: 176), or a mixture of good and evil powers (Bruce 1984: 321; O'Brien 1999: 246–47; Hoehner 2002: 459–60). For the approach adopted here, see, e.g., Schlier 1957: 155; Gnilka 1971: 175; Arnold 1989: 62–64; Schnackenburg 1991: 140–41; MacDonald 2000: 266; Best 1998: 322.

that God (1:3, 20), Christ Jesus (1:20; 2:6), and even believers (2:6; cf. 1:20–23) and their blessings (1:3) occupy (cf. 2:2; 6:12; and the comments on 2:2). The powers, however, are conquered and beneath the Messiah's feet (1:20–22). Since the church is one with the risen and enthroned Christ (2:6), the powers are also conquered and beneath the church's feet (cf. 1:20–23). From this position with Christ, the church can "now" (νῦν, *nyn*) testify to the powers that, despite their ability even in the present to work in "the sons of disobedience" (2:2), to make strategic plans to trouble God's people (6:11), and to shoot their "ignited missiles" at them (6:16), their designs will ultimately fail.

It is likely that for Christians in Roman Asia in the first century, the earthly rulers and authorities—the deified and reigning emperors who were worshiped in the imperial cult and who, through governors and magistrates and loyal citizens, often made life difficult for believers—would have provided evidence of the continuing potency of the evil heavenly powers.[18] If so, then Paul's claim that the church provides counterevidence of God's superior power would come as a welcome encouragement to his readers.

3:11 The vast and complex wisdom of God was made known to the evil spiritual rulers and authorities κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων (*kata prothesin tōn aiōnōn*, according to his purpose from before the ages). Paul now reaches back to a prominent theme in the letter's opening benedictory prayer—that everything involved in the redemption of his people and the reuniting of creation in Christ, including the revelation of the mystery, happened according to a conscious decision of God prior to the beginning of time (1:5, 9, 11). Here in 3:11 he adds that the revelation of God's beautifully complex wisdom to the evil powers through the church was also in God's plan from the beginning.

The Greek is a little unusual: the expression τῶν αἰώνων has the article and is plural, and so a natural translation would be "according to the predetermination of the Aeons." A few interpreters (most notably Schlier 1957: 157) have opted for this reading, taking τῶν αἰώνων as an objective genitive and trying to explain the text as a reference to God's predetermination of personal, cosmic powers. Not only does the use of τῶν αἰώνων in 3:21 in a strictly chronological sense make this reading unlikely, however, but τῶν αἰώνων makes much better contextual sense if it is a "genitive of quality" or an "attributive genitive" (BDF §165; Wallace 1996: 86–88). A reference to God's "purpose from before the ages" fits neatly with the predestinarian echoes of the benedictory prayer that are already reverberating in Paul's use of the phrase κατὰ πρόθεσιν (*kata prothesin*, according to the purpose; cf. 1:9, 11). The prefix προ- (*pro-*, before) attached to πρόθεσιν, moreover, probably has a chronological element that governs the genitive phrase τῶν αἰώνων and gives the whole phrase a strong resemblance to 1 Cor. 2:7 (ἣν [σοφίαν] προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων, *hēn [sophian] proōrisen ho theos pro tōn aiōnōn*, which [wisdom] God predestined before the ages; Sellin 1992: 98–99).

18. See the section titled "The Circumstances That Prompted Ephesians" in the commentary introduction.

This eternal purpose God ἐποίησεν (*epoiēsen*) in Christ. Does this mean that God "made" the plan in Christ before time began (e.g., Calvin 1965: 164; Robinson 1904: 171–72; Best 1998: 328), or does it mean that when the right time came, God "carried out" his age-old plan in Christ (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 189; Pokorný 1992: 147; O'Brien 1999: 248–49; Hoehner 2002: 463–64)? The verb ποιέω (*poieō*, make, do) can mean either "make" or "carry out," but here Paul probably speaks of God carrying out his purpose in Christ. Although this is the less-usual meaning of the term, Paul can use it this way elsewhere in Ephesians (2:3), and his only other use of πρόθεσις in the letter links it to God working (ἐνεργέω, *energeō*) all things (1:11; Lincoln 1990: 189).

This understanding makes good sense of the unusually elaborate reference to Christ that follows ἐποίησεν: ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν (*en tō Christō Iēsou tō kyriō hēmōn*, in the Messiah, Jesus our Lord). Elsewhere in Ephesians when Paul uses the names Christ, Jesus, and Lord in combination with each other and the pronoun "our" (1:3, 17; 5:20; 6:24), he always uses the order "our Lord Jesus Christ" (ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός). Here, however, he places the title "Christ" first and uses the article with it as if he wanted to emphasize that "Jesus our Lord" is "the Messiah" (cf. Col. 2:6). God decided before the world began not only to fulfill his purposes for the universe through his anointed king Jesus but also to make the fulfillment of his purposes through Messiah Jesus known to the inimical spiritual powers of the universe.

3:12 Prior to 3:11, Paul's last use of the first-person plural was in 2:11–18, where he said that "the blood of Christ" (2:13), shed on the cross (2:16), brought unity to Jews and Gentiles. "Through him," he said in 2:18, "we both have access [προσαγωγή, *prosagōgē*] in one Spirit to the Father." Paul now recalls this language, using both the first-person plural and the term προσαγωγή again. Here, however, his point is that the access Jewish and Gentile believers have together to God in Christ stands as a witness to the evil powers concerning God's unsearchable, complex wisdom.

Perhaps the memory that, at this point in his dictation of the letter, he is digressing from an intercessory prayer prompts Paul to nuance the notion of believers' access to God so that it refers specifically to access in prayer. Believers do not simply have access but ἡ παρρησία καὶ προσαγωγὴ ἐν πεποιθήσει (*hē parrēsia kai prosagōgē en pepoithēsei*, boldness and confident access). The term παρρησία (*parrēsia*, boldness) appears to have been used first in political contexts to refer to the freedom of speech granted to citizens of Athens in the public assembly (e.g., Euripides, *Hipp.* 420–23).[19] By Paul's time it had acquired both philosophical and moral connotations, particularly where telling others the truth about life in a philosophical discourse or speaking frankly in friendship were the issues (e.g., Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 9.2.9 [9.1165a.29–30]; Let. Aris. 125). Although people certainly could speak with inappropriate harshness (and Cynic philosophers were often charged with this fault), a sensitive candor in

19. Here and in what follows I am especially dependent on Marrow 1982. See also Schlier, *TDNT* 5:871–86 and Fredrickson 1996.

one's relationship with others was a sign of true friendship (e.g., Plutarch, *Adul. amic.*). This made παρρησία an appropriate term to use in Hellenistic Jewish and Christian literature for prayer (Job 22:26 LXX; 1 John 5:14–15; Philo, *Heir* 14; Josephus, *Ant.* 5.38).

Paul can use both the verb παρρησιάζομαι (*parrēsiazomai*, speak freely) and the noun παρρησία for the frank speech that those "in Christ" can have with each other (Philem. 1:8; cf. 2 Cor. 7:4) or for the bold proclamation of the gospel (1 Thess. 2:2; Phil. 1:20; Eph. 6:19–20; cf. 2 Cor. 3:12). The source of this "freedom" (ἐλευθερία, *eleutheria*) of speech (2 Cor. 3:17) is the intimate and open relationship that the believer has with Christ (2 Cor. 3:4–18). Here the thought is similar to 2 Cor. 3:4–18. Because they are in Christ (ἐν ᾧ, *en hō*, in whom), both Jewish and Gentile believers have access to God and may speak freely with him.

This access is also characterized by πεποίθησις (*pepoithēsis*), a term that appears only here and in the undisputed Pauline letters, where it means "confidence" (BDAG 796). Paul sometimes uses it to speak of confidence in other people (2 Cor. 1:15; 8:22), sometimes of confidence "in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3–4), and sometimes, when God, through Christ, is the source of one's strength, of confidence in one's competence to fulfill the task God has given (2 Cor. 3:4–5). Here in Eph. 3:12, in a way that is reminiscent of 2 Cor. 3:4–5, it is only ἐν ᾧ (*en hō*, in him [Christ]) that believers have προσαγωγὴ ἐν πεποιθήσει (*prosagōgē en pepoithēsei*, confident access) to God.

Because they are "in Christ," then, both Jewish and Gentile believers have a relationship with God so close that they can speak freely with him. This access is also characterized by confidence that he will hear and welcome what they have to say.

Believers appropriate this freedom of speech and confident access to God διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ (*dia tēs pisteōs autou*). This could mean "through his [i.e., Christ's] faith" and refer to Christ's faithfulness to God, especially in his obedient death on the cross; O'Brien (1999: 249) has provided a reasonable case for this meaning. The notion of trusting Christ, he says, has already been supplied by the phrase ἐν πεποιθήσει (*en pepoithēsei*, in confidence), and in 2:18 Christ is the means (δι' αὐτοῦ, *di' autou*, through him) by which access (προσαγωγή) to God is obtained.[20] Redundancy in Ephesians, however, should come as no surprise. Moreover, in 3:17 Paul speaks of Christ dwelling in the hearts of his readers διὰ τῆς πίστεως (*dia tēs pisteōs*, through faith), and this can refer only to his readers' faith.[21] The similar expression here, then, is also probably a reference to "faith in Christ."

20. O'Brien (1999: 249n114) also says (relying on Wallis 1995: 131) that "διά . . . followed by a reference to Christ in the genitive is often used in Ephesians to describe the means by which salvation is secured (1:5, 7; 2:8, 16, 18; 3:6, 16, 17)." It is true that three of these texts refer to the role of Christ's death in redemption (1:7), reconciliation (2:16), or obtaining access (2:18), but the relevance of the others to the point being made is not clear.

21. Wallis (1995: 132) argues that this too may be a reference to Christ's own faith. In 3:16, he says, Christians are strengthened διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ, meaning through Christ's Spirit,

3:13 Paul brings his lengthy digression to a close by circling back to the theme of his suffering, the theme that, in a manner reminiscent of 2 Cor. 2:14, sparked the lengthy reflection on his own place in God's administration of his plan to unite all things in Christ (vv. 2–12). Just as 3:1 spoke of his imprisonment "for" (ὑπέρ, *hyper*) his Gentile readers, so here too he speaks of his sufferings "for" (ὑπέρ) them.

He begins with a conjunction (διό, *dio*, therefore) that draws an inference either from the immediately preceding statement ("in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in him"; v. 12) or from the entire preceding section. Since the conjunction introduces a clause that brings the reader back to the theme of 3:1, Paul probably refers back to the entire digression. All that he has said in 3:2–12 leads to this point.

Precisely here, however, Paul's Greek becomes ambiguous. In the phrase αἰτοῦμαι μὴ ἐγκακεῖν (*aitoumai mē enkakein*), the term αἰτοῦμαι (*aitoumai*) could mean either to ask in prayer or simply to ask someone to do something. Since no subject is expressed, moreover, Paul could be referring either to his own discouragement or to that of his readers. Ancient commentators fluent in Paul's native tongue could take the phrase either way. Theodoret thought Paul was asking God to help him "bear nobly the troubles befalling me" (Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.44]). Theophylact thought he was asking his readers not to be troubled and discouraged (*PG* 124:1073).[22]

How do we sort this out? First, although the theme of prayer is in the air (3:1, 12, 14), Paul is not yet ready to return to his own prayer for his readers. That will not happen until 3:14, where the repetition of τούτου χάριν (*toutou charin*, on account of this) clearly demarcates Paul's return to prayer from what has gone before. From a lexical standpoint, moreover, there is no reason to translate αἰτοῦμαι as "I pray" rather than "I ask" (Robinson 1904: 173; cf. Best 1998: 331). Second, it is true that "suffering" (θλῖψις, *thlipsis*) sometimes led to emotional turmoil for Paul (2 Cor. 1:8–9; 7:5–6; cf. Phil. 2:27), but to strike that note here would be odd. Nothing in 3:2–12 prepares the reader for a reference to the inner suffering that Paul's often-difficult ministry involved. Instead, Paul celebrates God's gift to him of his role in proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles (3:2, 7–8).

Paul, then, is asking his readers not to "be discouraged" (ἐγκακέω, *enkakeō*) by his sufferings. The term ἐγκακέω could refer to a failure to perform one's duty (Polybius, *Hist*. 4.19.10), but in the NT it always means "grow weary" (Gal. 6:9; 2 Thess. 3:13) or "be discouraged" (2 Cor. 4:1, 16; Luke 18:1). In

and this stands parallel to 3:17, where Christ inhabits Christians διὰ τῆς πίστεως. Just as Christ's Spirit strengthens Christians, then, so also Christ's faith secures his habitation in their hearts. The antecedent of αὐτοῦ in 3:16, however, is not Christ but "the Father" of 3:14, and it seems likely that if Paul had intended the two διά phrases to parallel each other, he would have repeated the αὐτοῦ in the second phrase.

22. Theophylact, who is clearly relying on Chrysostom (cf. *PG* 62:50–51), is more explicit than Chrysostom about the meaning of the phrase. He paraphrases it αἰτοῦμαι ὑμᾶς ἵνα μὴ ἐκκακᾶτε ("I ask you that you not lose heart").

2 Cor. 4:16 it refers to an inner disposition: the suffering of Paul and his coworkers (4:7–12) has not "discouraged" (ἐγκακέω) them, he says, but rather their "inner person" (ὁ ἔσω, *ho esō*) is being renewed day by day (Robinson 1904: 173). Here in Eph. 3:13 Paul also refers to an inner disposition of his readers, as demonstrated a few phrases later by his prayer that they would be strengthened "in the inner human being" (εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, *eis ton esō anthrōpon*; 3:16).

Since 3:1 spoke specifically of his imprisonment, the hardships Paul has encountered in prison form the specific reason for his readers' discouragement (cf. Phil. 1:17; 4:14). If Paul wrote this letter during the imprisonment described in Acts 28, then by the end of that period he had been a prisoner about five years (Acts 24:27; 27:9; 28:11; 28:16, 30). Although many of Paul's readers knew him only by reputation (see 3:2 and the comments on that verse), they may well have been discouraged that "the apostle to the Gentiles" had for a number of years been unable to travel freely and proclaim the gospel in the manner described in 3:2–12 (cf. Cassidy 2001: 96–97).

If they were being marginalized in their own cities and neighborhoods, then Paul's fate may have seemed like a reflection of their own difficulties. During this period more than a few Christians in Ephesus must have wondered from time to time whether their commitment to the God of the gospel was a mistake. With their refusal to participate in the imperial cult or to sacrifice to the local deities, had they only succeeded in angering the gods who had placed Rome in power? Were Paul's troubles—and their own—a result of Christianity's demand for exclusive loyalty to the God of the Jews and his Messiah? A large part of the purpose of Ephesians may well be to urge such discouraged Christians to remember who the God they worship is and what he is doing through his Messiah and the Messiah's people, the church. They worship the Creator of the universe who is now, through Christ and the church, putting the universe back together after the ravages of sin.

Here, however, in a way that is consistent with 3:2–12, Paul concentrates on his own role, and specifically on the role of his "sufferings" (θλίψεις, *thlipseis*) in this grand design. His sufferings are "for" (ὑπέρ, *hyper*) them, and they should not be discouraged "inasmuch as" (ἥτις, *hētis*) his sufferings are their "glory" (δόξα, *doxa*).[23] When Paul speaks of suffering for others in other contexts, he has in mind the trouble, both physical and emotional, that he has endured in the course of his faithfulness to his commission to preach the gospel among the Gentiles. This faithfulness in the midst of suffering has brought life to those who have believed his proclamation (2 Cor. 4:7–12; cf. 1 Thess. 2:2, 9; 2 Cor. 2:14–16; Phil. 1:12–13; Col. 1:24). By the time Paul

23. By the time Paul wrote Ephesians, the indefinite relative pronoun was often synonymous with the simple relative pronoun (Zerwick 1963: 68–70), but it sometimes carried "a causal sense" (Zerwick 1963: 68). That is probably the case with ἥτις here (Best 1998: 331; Hoehner 2002: 469). Both ἥτις and the verb ἐστίν are singular because they have been attracted to the number of the predicate δόξα, an oddity that prompted comment as early as Origen (Heine 2002: 152–53) but was certainly not unprecedented. See Robertson 1923: 411–12.

wrote Ephesians, many in his audience would have had no personal contact with him, but Paul considered himself an apostle to all Gentile Christians, even those whom he had never met (Rom. 1:11–15; 11:13; 15:14–16). Despite his physical and personal distance from his readers, his suffering was for them. Paul's comment here, then, is close in meaning to Col. 1:24, where he refers to his sufferings on behalf of his readers in Colossae as suffering for the whole body of Christ, which is the church, and as a participation in the suffering of Christ himself.

What does Paul mean when he tells the Ephesians that his "sufferings" are their δόξα (*doxa*, glory)? Most commentators understand the term in a noneschatological sense as simply the "honor" or "dignity" that belongs to Paul's readers as a result of the way God brought the gospel to them. They have "glory" because God has provided them with good things at the expense of his own Son and the affliction of his servants (e.g., Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.*, hom. 7; *NPNF* 13:81; Alford 1857: 104; Ellicott 1859: 66; cf. Eadie 1883: 239; Hoehner 2002: 470), or because they can rejoice in how God powerfully used Paul for their conversion despite his many troubles (Calvin 1965: 165; 1973: 271; Muddiman 2001: 164).

Despite the wide support that this reading of the term has received over the centuries, the connection between δόξα and suffering elsewhere in the Pauline corpus makes it unlikely. Elsewhere in Ephesians, δόξα is usually something that belongs to God (1:12, 14, 17; 3:16, 21) or to his grace (1:6), but a reasonable argument can be made that in 1:18 "the saints" are God's inheritance and that they possess a richness of δόξα (cf. Col. 1:27; see the comments on 1:18 above). Since this description comes directly after Paul's prayer that his readers might understand the "hope" of their calling, the term δόξα in Eph. 1:18 probably carries an eschatological nuance (cf. Col. 3:4). Here too, then, Paul's suffering for his readers is their glory because his faithful proclamation of the gospel, in spite of the suffering that this faithfulness entails, has led to their salvation (1:13) and to a partial experience of the "glory" that one day will be theirs in full.

This thought is only a slight variation on the theme in Paul's earlier letters that the suffering of Christians, and of Christian apostles in particular, will eventually give way to glory for those who suffer (2 Cor. 4:16–17; Rom. 8:18; cf. Phil. 3:21). It is a variation because here in Ephesians the one who suffers is not the one who is glorified. Instead, his suffering leads to the glorification of others. This development reappears, fully articulated, in Paul's last letter: "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, from the seed of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer to the point of imprisonment as a criminal. But the word of God is not imprisoned. Because of this I endure everything for the elect, that they might experience salvation in Christ Jesus with eternal glory [δόξα]" (2 Tim. 2:8–10).[24]

24. Cf. Thompson 1960: 188; Lincoln 1990: 192; Best 1998: 332; O'Brien 1999: 250–52. Because this development from the undisputed letters is so natural, it should not figure in arguments about the letter's authorship (so, correctly, Best 1998: 332).

Summary

In 3:8–13 Paul continues his digression on the role that God has graciously given him in his plan to unify Gentile and Jewish believers into one people who belong to God. Here Paul's focus turns to how he fulfilled this role, its ultimate purpose, and the encouragement his readers should take from these elements of his role. Paul has fulfilled his responsbility by proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles and by proclaiming to everyone, whether Jew or Gentile, the nature of God's plan to unify both ethnic groups into one newly created humanity. The plan's purpose was ultimately the proclamation to God's cosmic enemies of the beautifully complex nature of God's wisdom: through the death of Christ, God has killed the enmity between Jews and Gentiles and formed a people, united across ethnic lines, in whom his presence lives. Paul tells his Gentile readers not to be discouraged, because he is suffering in the process of fulfilling his part in this grand plan, for his suffering means their glorification.

Additional Notes

3:9. In some early witnesses (א, A, 424^{c}, 6, 1739, 1881, Origen, Hilary, Jerome, Ambrosiaster) πάντας is missing. Without this term, the text would say that Paul was assigned φωτίσαι τίς ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου (to bring to light what the plan of the mystery . . . is), and the recipients of this illumination would remain unexpressed. It might seem, then, that πάντας (found in, e.g., 𝔓^{46}, א^{2}, B, C, D, F, G, Ψ, 33, 𝔐, and the entire Latin, Syriac, and Coptic traditions) fills out and clarifies the meaning of the text, making it the less-difficult reading and therefore unlikely to be original. An early copyist, however, might easily have assumed that an original πάντας, which is masculine, referred back to the neuter term ἔθνεσιν in 3:8 but was then in the wrong gender. Under this assumption, omitting πάντας would solve the grammatical problem and clarify the text (Metzger 1994: 534). When this consideration is added to the early and geographically diverse support for the inclusion of πάντας, this seems to be the best reading, despite the hesitation of a number of experts.[25]

3:13. Some witnesses, primarily from the Alexandrian tradition (e.g., 𝔓^{46}, C, 33, 81, 104, 436, 459, 1573, 1739, 1912, 2127), have ἡμῶν (our) rather than ὑμῶν (your) at the end of this verse. The antiquity and geographical spread of the witnesses to ὑμῶν, however, weigh heavily in its favor (e.g., א, A, B, D, F, G, Ψ, and most Byzantine manuscripts). The confusion between the two pronouns probably arose from the identical pronounciation of υ and η in later Greek (Metzger 1994: 535).

25. Tischendorf (8th ed.), Westcott and Hort, and NA^{25} all reject πάντας, and the editors of UBS^{4} accepted it only with hesitation (Metzger 1994: 534; cf. Best 1998: 319).

VI. Paul's Divinely Given Task and His Suffering for the Gentiles (3:1–13)
➤VII. Paul Prays for His Readers' Inner Strength and Praises the God Who Can Give It (3:14–21)
VIII. The Growth of the Church toward Unity and Maturity (4:1–16)
IX. A Reminder of How to Live as New Human Beings (4:17–5:2)

VII. Paul Prays for His Readers' Inner Strength and Praises the God Who Can Give It (3:14–21)

Perhaps reminded by mention of his imprisonment and his readers' discouragement (3:13), Paul now makes his way back to the intercessory prayer he had started in 3:1. In his first intercessory prayer report in 1:17–23, he had described his prayers that God might open the eyes of his readers' hearts so they might see the "surpassing greatness" of the "power" he had made available to believers (1:19). Since then, Paul has himself helped to answer that prayer by reminding his readers of all that God has done for them. God has saved them "in Christ" from the power of sin, the devil, and the flesh (2:1–10); he has overcome their alienation from his people Israel and from himself (2:11–22); he has created them anew (2:10); he has included them as building blocks in his spiritual temple (2:19–22); and he has revealed to them the critical role they play in his age-old plan for the universe (3:10; cf. 1:9–10). The instrument of this revelation, Paul himself, is an example of God's grace and power at work (3:2–13).

With all this behind him, Paul is now ready to launch a second intercessory prayer report, whose burden is similar to the first report. He wants his readers to know that he prays for God to strengthen them in the inner human being so that Christ might dwell in their hearts and they might become strong enough to grasp the vast dimensions of Christ's love for them. The ultimate goal of this prayer is that his readers might "be filled up to all the fullness of God" (3:19b), that is, that they might be all God has created them as individuals (2:10) and as the church (2:15) to be (O'Brien 1999: 266).

Paul next brings the entire first half of the letter to a close with an elaborate ascription of praise to God. This doxology incorporates some of the most important themes of his intercessory prayers (3:20–21). The God who is at work in Paul and his readers is powerful enough to do more than they can even imagine. Eternal glory is his, precisely in the place where his powerful work is evident (the church) and in the person through whom he has so lavishly blessed the church (Christ Jesus).

The whole section (3:14–21) consists of two long sentences, one of eighty-six words (vv. 14–19) and one of thirty-seven words (vv. 20–21). Both sentences are characterized by a peculiar combination of structure and looseness. The intercessory prayer report (vv. 14–19) contains an introduction (vv. 14–15) and three purpose clauses (vv. 16–17, 18–19a, and 19b). The first two purpose clauses each contain a main verb followed by two explanatory infinitives, and

the final purpose clause gives the climactic goal of Paul's intercession. Yet as the exegesis below will explain, important elements of the syntax and grammar within this larger structure remain profoundly ambiguous.

The doxology follows the same pattern: it has a standard liturgical structure, but it revises and expands this structure in crucial ways to accent the themes that have consumed Paul's attention in the letter so far. He becomes so redundant and expansive that he seems to be grasping to express the ineffable.

As we have sometimes seen elsewhere in the letter (1:4; 2:14–15a), this combination of formal structure and spontaneity probably originated in the letter's oral composition. When Paul dictated it, he was able by the cadence of his voice to solve the syntactical problems that now face us as we pore over the text in silent study.

The intercessory prayer report and the doxology, therefore, are not mere repetitions of traditional forms, and they certainly are not scholarly literary productions. They are heartfelt prayers and examples of exactly the kind of "boldness and confident access" that believers have through faith, as Paul has just mentioned in 3:12. God is Paul's Father, and so Paul can speak as freely as any son would speak with a father in whose love he has confidence. The mention of kneeling, the wordiness, the syntactical ambiguity, and the way that at least the intercessory prayer report unleashes "a flood of thoughts" in an intensifying crescendo (Schnackenburg 1991: 144–45) betray Paul's emotional investment in the subjects of the prayer and those for whom he prays. The apostolic responsibility he felt for the encouragement of his readers, combined with a deeply seated conviction that they could be encouraged by the power of God and the vast love of Christ, gives the intercessory prayer report and the concluding doxology their unusual character.

A. Paul Prays for His Readers' Inner Strength (3:14–19)

Paul's concern about his readers' discouragement (3:13) leads him to return to the theme of his intercessory prayers for them (cf. 1:17–23). Unlike the benediction in 1:3–14 and the doxology in 3:20–21, this is, precisely speaking, a prayer report rather than an actual prayer (cf. 1:15–23). Paul describes how he prays when he bows his knees before the Father on their behalf. This distinction helps to explain how Paul can, in the middle of the prayer, address his readers ("You are rooted and founded in love!"), but it would be a mistake to emphasize the distinction too heavily. The rush of the section's eighty-six words and the ambiguity of the syntax reveal that this is more than a "report." It is also an actual prayer for the readers.

Paul prays in order that God might, by his Spirit, give his readers strength in their inner selves to understand that Christ dwells in their hearts. He prays this so that they might be able to grasp what no human being can understand without God's help: the vast extent of Christ's love, a love so massive that, as the revelation of the mystery has shown, it includes "all the saints" in all their diversity (2:11–22; 3:6, 10). Grasping this truth will enable Paul's readers to progress toward the goal of reaching "the fullness of God," that is, of being everything God created human beings individually, and his people corporately, to be.

Exegesis and Exposition

[14]For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father ⌜ ⌝, [15]from whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named, [16]that he may grant you, according to the wealth of his glory, to be strengthened in power through his Spirit in the inner human being, [17a]so that Christ might dwell through faith in your hearts—[17b][You are] rooted and founded in love!—[18]in order that you may become strong enough to grasp with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth . . . [19a]and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, [19b]in order that ⌜you might be filled⌝ up to all the fullness of ⌜God⌝.

3:14–15 The phrase τούτου χάριν (*toutou charin*, for this reason) recalls the τούτου χάριν of 3:1 and signals the resumption of the prayer that Paul started but then interrupted at that point. In 3:1 the phrase pointed back to 2:19–22, with its discussion of how God has incorporated believing Gentiles, alongside believing Jews, into his people and therefore into his metaphorical dwelling place.

Here the phrase recalls not only that theme but also the intervening digression that describes Paul's personal role in assembling this ethnically unified group, a role that paradoxically brought suffering to Paul at the same time that it brought glory to the Gentiles. It is "for this reason"—in the service of this paradoxical calling—that Paul utters the intercessory prayer he is about to describe on behalf of his readers.

Paul describes the action of praying as bending his knees to the Father. The normal posture for prayer in antiquity, whether among Jews, Greeks, or Romans, was standing, although occasionally people knelt to pray.[1] Kneeling to request something from a powerful superior was common (2 Kings 1:13; 1 Chron. 29:20; Mark 1:40; Matt. 17:14; 20:20; cf. Isa. 45:23; Phil. 2:10; Rom. 14:11), and this apparently made kneeling, on occasion, an appropriate posture before God in prayer (Ps. 95:6; 1 Chron. 29:20; 2 Chron. 29:29; Acts 21:5; Dan. 6:11 Theod.). People sometimes knelt when uttering emotionally charged prayers (1 Esdr. 8:73; cf. Ezra 9:5; Luke 5:8; 22:41; Acts 7:60), and the reference to kneeling here adds to the pathos that is already present in the references to Paul's imprisonment and sufferings (3:1, 13). Paul's prayers for his readers are deeply heartfelt.

Paul prays to τὸν πατέρα (*ton patera*, the Father), a term that he uses frequently of God in Ephesians (1:2, 3, 17; 2:18; 4:6; 5:20; 6:23) and that communicates the intimacy of God's relationship with believers. As Father, God has adopted them into his family (1:5) and made them his heirs (1:11). They are part of his household (2:19–22), and by his Spirit they may speak with him freely and without fear (2:18; 3:12). Paul speaks freely to God when he prays for his readers, so addressing him as Father is fitting.

The term πατέρα (*patera*) also introduces a play on the closely related word πατριά (*patria*) that follows it. The basic meaning of πατριά is "family" or "clan" (e.g., Num. 1:4; 1 Chron. 6; Tobit 5:12; Jdt. 8:2, 18; Josephus, *Ant*. 6.51; Luke 2:4), although it could be used to cover larger people groups within a nation (Ps. 21:28 [22:28 MT; 22:27 Eng.]; 1 Chron. 16:28 LXX; Acts 3:25).[2] Every family "on earth" is easy enough to understand on this definition—the expression must refer to people groups, and especially to Jews and Gentiles (cf. 2:11–13; Abbott 1897: 94). But what could "every family in the heavens" mean? It probably refers to the groupings of evil spiritual powers mentioned elsewhere in the letter: rulers, authorities, powers, dominions, and world rulers (1:21; 3:10; 6:12).

Paul prays to the Father "from whom" these social groups "are named." Some commentators have thought that if the names of these groups originate with God, those located "in the heavens" could only be good angelic beings (Schnackenburg 1991: 310), and this has led Muddiman (2001: 167) to avoid understanding πατριά as a reference to angelic beings at all. Instead, he argues,

1. Schürer 1979: 449n106; *HDCLA* 1310, with illustrations; Greeven, *TDNT* 2:779; Versnel 2003.

2. *Pace* Bruce 1984: 325, πατριά should not be translated "fatherhood."

the term refers to a "Christian household" when used of earthly families and to "departed Christians who are thought of as still organized for worship in the same way" when used of heavenly families.

It is much more likely, however, that when Paul speaks of the Father as naming the families of earth and heaven he means that God created them and demonstrated his authority over them by naming them (cf. Ps. 147:4).[3] Precisely what these names were does not matter. Paul's point is that he prays to the one who is the Father of believers, who is the creator of the universe, and who is able to exercise authority over all he has created.

The God who created every social group, even the evil enemy powers that have such a stranglehold on "the Course of this world" (2:2), is the Father whom Paul addresses in prayer. God, then, is not only the Father to whom believers can speak freely and confidently in prayer but the Creator and the powerful authority over all social groups, including the inimical spiritual powers ranged against them (cf. Arnold 1989: 58–59).

3:16–17a Paul now begins to describe the substance of his prayer, but the organization of this description is ambiguous. In 3:16, 18, and 19b he uses three ἵνα (*hina*, that) clauses, which could indicate the three main petitions of his prayer: (1) "that" God might give his readers inward strength (vv. 16–17), (2) "that" his readers might be able to understand the magnitude of Christ's love for them (vv. 18–19a), and (3) "that" they might be filled with the fullness of God (v. 19b). A number of interpreters think the passage has this structure (Barth 1974: 368; Arnold 1989: 86; Lincoln 1990: 197; O'Brien 1999: 253).

As we will see in the exegesis of 3:18–19a below, however, the first two ἵνα clauses are not as closely parallel to each other as some interpreters think, and as everyone recognizes, the third ἵνα clause is much shorter and has little structural similarity to the other two. In addition, if the three clauses articulated the three main petitions of the prayer, we would expect Paul to coordinate them with each other using conjunctions ("I bow my knees before the Father [praying] that . . . *and* that . . . *and* that . . ."), but these conjunctions are missing (Hoehner 2002: 485). Instead, we should think of the prayer report's clauses as building on each other and of the prayer report itself becoming increasingly intense (Schnackenburg 1991: 144). Here in 3:16–17a, then, Paul introduces both the purpose of the prayer and its main request (Hoehner 2002: 485).[4]

The structure of this main request is also ambiguous. It begins with ἵνα δῷ (*hina dō*, that he might give), followed by two infinitival phrases that are roughly parallel to each other. Each has an aorist infinitive (κραταιωθῆναι,

3. Kraus (1993b: 557) comments on Ps. 147:4, "This calling is at the same time a creative act and a proclamation of the right of lordship."

4. Unlike the ἵνα in 1:17, which introduces the content of Paul's intercessory prayer (BDAG 476), this ἵνα introduces both the purpose of Paul's prayer and its content. The ἵνα in 1:17 is followed by δῴη, which is optative, a mood that by the first century was a rarity in ἵνα clauses indicating purpose (see the additional note on 1:17). Here, however, ἵνα is followed by the aorist subjunctive, and so the connotation of purpose is probably still present. As Hoehner (2002: 477) says, "In the case of prayer, it is difficult to distinguish between purpose and content."

krataiōthēnai, to be strengthened; κατοικῆσαι, *katoikēsai*, to dwell) followed by two prepositional phrases: one beginning with διά (*dia*, by), describing the means by which the action of the infinitive is accomplished; and one beginning with ἐν (*en*, in), describing the location of the action.

The two infinitival phrases, however, are only roughly parallel. The first phrase is preceded by two additional qualifiers (κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ, *kata to ploutos tēs doxēs autou*, according to the wealth of his glory; δυνάμει, *dynamei*, in power), and the second infinitival phrase has an expressed subject (τὸν Χριστόν, *ton Christon*, Christ).

The parallelism between the two infinitives and the prepositional phrases that modify them may mean that they are interdependent: the second infinitive and its modifiers restate in other terms the first infinitive with its modifiers. If this is correct, then the strengthening and the dwelling are conceived of as two ways of speaking of the same action; this action happens through faith and through the Spirit, and it takes place in the inner human being, that is, the heart (Lincoln 1990: 197; Schnackenburg 1991: 145, 149; Best 1998: 341; O'Brien 1999: 258).

Two considerations make it slightly more likely, however, that the second infinitival phrase advances the prayer by supplying the result of the first infinitival phrase. First, the two qualifiers that precede the first infinitive (κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ and δυνάμει) push the second infinitive so far from the main verb, δῷ (*dō*, might give), that it is difficult to see how it could be dependent on that verb. It must instead be dependent on the preceding infinitive, κραταιωθῆναι. Second, if the second infinitive merely restates the first infinitive in other terms, we would expect a coordinating conjunction such as καί (*kai*, and) to link the two infinitives (Hoehner 2002: 480–81).

Paul, then, is asking God to give his readers strength, and he is also asking God that, as a result of this strength, Christ might dwell in his readers' hearts (Alford 1857: 106; Ellicott 1859: 70, Eadie 1883: 246; Hoehner 2002: 481). The request for his readers "to be strengthened" (κραταιωθῆναι, *krataiōthēnai*) uses a term that in the LXX is frequently aligned with the inner qualities of courage (1 Sam. 4:9; 2 Sam. 10:12; Pss. 26:14 [27:14 MT, Eng.]; 30:25 [31:25 MT, Eng.]) and determination (Ruth 1:18). Paul also uses it this way in 1 Cor. 16:13: "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, be manly [ἀνδρίζεσθε, *andrizesthe*], be strong [κραταιοῦσθε, *krataiousthe*]."

As we just saw, he qualifies this term in four ways: two qualifiers appear before and two after κραταιωθῆναι. The two qualifiers before κραταιωθῆναι describe the resources from which this strengthening will come (κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ, *kata to ploutos tēs doxēs autou*, according to the wealth of his glory) and the specific respect in which Paul asks God to strengthen the letter's readers (δυνάμει, *dynamei*, in power).

The first qualifier makes clear that he wants them to be strengthened according to the standard of "the wealth of [God's] glory." God's "glory" could be his "brightness," his "greatness," or his "renown" (BDAG 256–58). The term sometimes has connotations of power, as it does in Col. 1:11, where Paul

tells the Colossians that he prays for God to empower them "with all power . . . according to the might of his glory" (ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει . . . κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ, *en pasē dynamei . . . kata to kratos tēs doxēs autou*); or in Rom. 6:4, where he says that Christ was raised from the dead "by the glory of the Father" (BDAG 257).[5]

This is certainly the connotation of δόξα here, as Paul's second qualifier of κραταιωθῆναι makes explicit. Δυνάμει (*dynamei*, in power) is a "dative of respect" (BDF §197) describing the particular facet of his readers' existence that Paul asks God to strengthen. If we put these two qualifiers together, Paul prays that God would give his readers fortitude, and do this out of the vast resources of his own majestic might.

The two qualifiers that come after κραταιωθῆναι tell the means and location of the strengthening. First, Paul prays that God would strengthen the power of the letter's recipients διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ (*dia tou pneumatos autou*, through his Spirit). Paul frequently links the Spirit with power in his letters (Fee 1994: 695), sometimes to refer to the divine power that accompanies the preaching of the gospel (1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Cor. 2:4) and sometimes to refer to the Spirit's power to effect such interior qualities as hope (Rom. 15:13) and avoiding cowardice (2 Tim. 1:7).

As the final qualifier of κραταιωθῆναι shows, Paul is concerned here with the interior life of his readers. He prays that God will strengthen them in power εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον (*eis ton esō anthrōpon*, in the inner human being). The expression ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος (or its equivalent) appears in two other places in Paul's Letters (see Jeremias, *TDNT* 1:365). In 2 Cor. 4:16 he contrasts his "outer human being" that "is being destroyed" with his "inner [human being]" that is "being renewed day by day." The contrast seems to be between Paul's physical body, subject to pain and hardship, and his inner self (Thrall 1994: 348–51; *pace* Harris 2005: 359–60). Because this inner self is being renewed daily, he is not "discouraged" (ἐγκακέω, *engkakeō*) by the hardships he faces in his ministry (4:7–12; cf. 4:1). In Rom. 7:22–23 ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος is, similarly, equivalent to the νοῦς (*nous*, mind).

The inner human being, then, is the interior life of the person, which God, by his Spirit, can strengthen with divine power. If Paul's readers were discouraged (ἐγκακεῖν, *enkakein*) because of the suffering that the apostle was experiencing in the course of his ministry to the Gentiles (Eph. 3:13), and perhaps because they too were suffering, then Paul prays that God might give them the inner strength that in 2 Corinthians he says he himself experienced under similar circumstances.

As a result of this inner strengthening, Christ will "dwell [κατοικῆσαι, *katoikēsai*], through faith, in [their] hearts." Paul does not imply by this that Christ is absent from their hearts. They could hardly be sealed by the Spirit (1:13), united with Christ in his resurrection and exaltation (2:5–6), and

5. Cf. *PGM* 4.1650–54, "Give glory and favor to this phylactery. . . . Give strength and honor to this phylactery."

incorporated into the place where God dwells (κατοικητήριον, *katoikētērion*) by his Spirit (2:22) yet fail to have Christ dwelling in their hearts. What they apparently lack is the inner strength and encouragement they should draw from these truths.

Once again, Paul prays that they might experience in their inner lives what he says elsewhere he has experienced: "I am crucified with Christ," he tells the Galatians; "indeed, I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:19b–20). There is an emphasis on union with Christ's death here that is absent from Ephesians, but otherwise the sentiment is close to Eph. 3:17a. Union with Christ by faith brings personal, inner strength that allows the believer to live in a world dominated by rebellion against God.

3:17b The next clause is fraught with syntactical ambiguity. To begin with, the initial prepositional phrase ἐν ἀγάπῃ (*en agapē*, in love) could go either with the preceding thought ("that Christ may dwell through faith in your hearts in love"; Robinson 1904: 85; cf. 175) or with the participles that follow it ("rooted and founded in love"). This same phrase shows up in five other places in the letter (1:4; 4:2, 15, 16; 5:2), and, where it is possible to be definite, it always follows what it modifies (4:2, 15, 16; 5:2). This might at first seem to be decisive evidence that here Paul speaks of Christ's dwelling in his readers' hearts in love.

If this were correct, however, not only would the preceding clause become overloaded with prepositional phrases ("through faith," "in your hearts," "in love"), but also the two participles that follow the phrase would be left dangling in the air. Paul's readers would simply be "rooted and founded," with no indication of the way in which Paul intended for them to understand this expression (Abbott 1897: 98; Westcott 1906: 52; Barth 1974: 371; Best 1998: 342; Muddiman 2001: 169). Paul's readers, then, are rooted and founded "in love."

Taking ἐν ἀγάπῃ with the two participles ἐρριζωμένοι (*errizōmenoi*, rooted) and τεθεμελιωμένοι (*tethemeliōmenoi*, founded) makes them less enigmatic, but they continue to dangle syntactically. Both are nominative plurals and therefore stand on their own with no obvious connection to anything that precedes them. As plurals, we might think they refer back to the plural pronouns ὑμῖν (*hymin*, to you; v. 16) and ὑμῶν (*hymōn*, your; v. 17), but if so, they should be in the dative or the genitive case rather than the nominative. The comments of Origen show how odd the expression looked even to those who shared Paul's native tongue. "It seems clear to me," he says, "that these words which follow are incorrect in reference to the preceding phrase" (Heine 2002: 160; cf. Photius [Staab 1933: 617]). None of the interpretive options is ideal, and none has gained a consensus.

A few interpreters (e.g., Westcott 1906: 52; Masson 1953: 181; Hoehner 2002: 483–84) think the two participles should be taken with the next clause, as if they came after the ἵνα of 3:18 and could modify the verb ἐξισχύσητε

(*exischysēte*, you may be able). The two clauses might then be translated "[I pray] that you, being rooted and founded in love, may be able to comprehend . . ." Although this makes good sense in English, the Greek would be very strange: it is not normal for elements that function as part of a ἵνα clause to come before the initial ἵνα.[6]

Other interpreters have given up trying to make sense of the grammar and have concluded that the use of the nominative case here is "incorrect" or "irregular" (e.g., Origen [Heine 2002: 160]; Alford 1857: 106). They then view the clause either as describing the result of Christ's living within the believer (e.g., Ellicott 1859: 70–71) or as introducing a new petition of Paul's prayer (e.g., Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 77; Schnackenburg 1991: 149n12; Lincoln 1990: 197).

Rather than understanding the forms as simply anomalous, however, it is probably best to see them as functioning in the same way that finite, indicative verbs function (Best 1998: 334, 342–43; cf. BDR §468n3).[7] This use of nominative participles has ample precedent elsewhere in the NT, and especially in Paul's undisputed letters.[8] If this is correct, then the phrase is an independent, parenthetical interjection: "You are rooted and founded in love!" This is similar to the syntactically confusing outburst at the end of 2:5: "By grace you are saved!" Here too, we may hear the voice of Paul dictating the letter. There is certainly passion and eloquence, but as we might expect in a relatively ad hoc composition, not much care for syntactical precision (cf. πεφωτισμένους [*pephōtismenous*] in Eph. 1:18).

Why would Paul interject such a statement? He may have done so to clarify the meaning of his request that Christ would dwell in his readers' hearts (v. 17a). As we have seen, that statement cannot imply the absence of Christ from his readers' hearts. Perhaps to make this explicit, he interjects here that they are already "rooted and founded in love." God has shown them his love through the death of Christ and through uniting them with his resurrection and exaltation (2:4; 3:19; 5:1–2, 25; cf. Gal. 2:20). Paul prays, then, that God will work both through the presence of his powerful Spirit in the lives of his readers and through his readers' faith to strengthen them so that they fully comprehend the meaning of the truth that Christ dwells within their hearts.

6. The parallels sometimes cited are not convincing. In Rom. 11:31, τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει probably goes with the preceding clause, not with the following ἵνα . . . ἐλεηθῶσιν. Similarly, in 1 Cor. 9:15, the ταῦτα before the ἵνα . . . γένηται is probably not the subject of γένηται. The relative pronoun ἥν in 2 Cor. 2:4 serves as the object of ἵνα γνῶτε, making it unnecessary to take the preceding τὴν ἀγάπην as the object and demonstrating how unnatural it would be to do so. In Gal. 2:10; John 13:29; and Acts 19:4, the object of the subjunctive verb following ἵνα is in each case placed before the ἵνα for emphasis. Here, however, the participles carry no emphasis (Alford 1857: 106; Haupt 1902a: 115).

7. A few grammarians agree that the participles function independently but think that they are imperatives (BDF §468.2; cf. Moule 1959: 105; MHT 3:230). Imperatives directed toward Paul's readers, however, seem ill suited to a prayer of intercession for them (Hoehner 2002: 483).

8. Among the examples in BDR §468n3, see especially the use of χειροτονηθείς and στελλόμενοι in 2 Cor. 8:19–20, πλουτιζόμενοι in 9:11, and δοξάζοντες in 9:13.

If this correctly represents the thrust of the passage, then "love" here is not the love of believers for one another (e.g., Calvin 1965: 168; Ellicott 1859: 71; Hoehner 2002: 482–83; cf. Eph. 4:2, 15, 16; 5:2, 25, 28, 33), nor is it the love of believers for God (e.g., Origen [Heine 2002: 161]) or Christ (e.g., Eadie 1883: 249–50; cf. 6:24). It is instead God's love, shown especially through Christ (Best 1998: 343; O'Brien 1999: 250; Eph. 3:18–19). This love is the fertile soil and solid foundation of the believer's life in Christ.[9] It is the believer's source of inner strength.

3:18–19a

This next ἵνα (*hina*, that) clause, like the first one, features a main verb (ἐξισχύσητε, *exischysēte*, you may become strong enough) completed by two aorist infinitives (καταλαβέσθαι, *katalabesthai*, to grasp; and γνῶναι, *gnōnai*, to know). The similar structure of the two clauses might be a signal that they are two petitions of the prayer and that this is the second petition (Arnold 1989: 86; Lincoln 1990: 197, 207–8; cf., e.g., Gnilka 1971: 185; O'Brien 1999: 253, 260; Muddiman 2001: 170).

Two characteristics of this second clause, however, weigh against this view. First, there is a significant difference between the use of the two infinitives in each ἵνα clause. In 3:16–17, no conjunction coordinates κραταιωθῆναι (*krataiōthēnai*, to be strengthened) with κατοικῆσαι (*katoikēsai*, to dwell), and so the second infinitive builds on the first, describing its result ("to be strengthened . . . so that Christ might dwell"). Here in 3:18–19, however, the two infinitives are clearly coordinated with each other by the conjunction τέ (*te*, and). Second, if we remember that this text was originally dictated in order to be read aloud, it seems unlikely that Paul would place the kind of mental demand on his hearers necessary for them, simply by listening to the text, to coordinate these two distantly separated uses of ἵνα (vv. 16 and 18). Surely if he had intended for them to do this, he would have used a coordinating conjunction to aid his listeners (cf. Hoehner 2002: 485).

The ἵνα clause of 3:18–19a, then, does not start the prayer's second request. Instead, it builds on the immediately preceding clause and gives the reason why Paul wants Christ to dwell in his readers' hearts through faith (Ellicott 1859: 71; Eadie 1883: 250; Aletti 2001: 192, 196; Hoehner 2002: 485).

The main verb, ἐξισχύω (*exischyō*) can mean simply "be able" (as it does in the B [Vat.] text of Sir. 7:6), but it often has the nuance of growing in power

9. Paul mixed architectural and agricultural metaphors previously in 2:20–22, where he says that the whole "building" (οἰκοδομή), comprised of Jewish and Gentile believers, "will grow" (αὔξει). The same mixture of metaphors occurs in 1 Cor. 3:6–17, where the Corinthian Christians are both God's "field" (γεώργιον) and his "building" (οἰκοδομή; v. 9). The language in Eph. 3:17b is especially close to Col. 1:23, where Paul assumes that the Colossian Christians are "founded and rooted" (τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἐδραῖοι) in the faith, and to Col. 2:7, where they are "rooted in and built upon" (ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ ἐποικοδομούμενοι) Christ. The contexts of these expressions are so different in Colossians and Ephesians that it is very difficult to imagine direct literary dependence. Instead, the language of one letter must still have been in the mind of the author of the other, a situation easily explained if Paul authored both at roughly the same time.

to the point of prevailing. Thus Josephus tells us that Herod's son Antipater, through a series of clever and unscrupulous tactics, eventually "became strong enough to bring" (ἐξίσχυσεν εἰσαγαγεῖν, *exischysen eisagagein*) his mother into the marriage bed that Herod's slain favorite Mariamne once occupied (*J.W.* 1.451). This is an especially significant example because it not only comes from roughly the time of Paul, but it also completes the aorist verb with an aorist infinitive, just as Paul does here.[10]

The infinitive καταλαβέσθαι is from a verb that can mean "attain . . . , seize . . . , catch," or especially in the middle voice "process information, understand, grasp" (BDAG 520; cf. Acts 4:13; 10:34; 25:25; Philo, *Moses* 1.278; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.167). Paul prays, then, that Christ will dwell in his readers' hearts by faith so that they "become strong enough to grasp" something mentally. The picture seems to be of a struggle to prevail over ignorance or confusion, a struggle that eventually breaks through to a realization of something.

The sense of anticipation about the identity of this "something" builds as Paul lists four terms for the measurement of its size: τὸ πλάτος καὶ μῆκος καὶ ὕψος καὶ βάθος (*to platos kai mēkos kai hypsos kai bathos*, the breadth and length and height and depth). Clearly, the knowledge he wants his readers to grow strong enough to understand is a knowledge of something immense. But what is it? At precisely this climactic point, the line goes dead, and the result is interpretive pandemonium. A number of views have failed to gain a consensus, at least in recent times.

The oldest known view, whose earliest and most convincing proponent was Origen (Gregg 1901–2: 411–12; Heine 2002: 161–62), assigns the terms to the four points of Christ's cross (cf., e.g., Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.17.4; Gregory of Nyssa [*ACCSNT* 8:155–56]; Severian [Staab 1933: 311]; Augustine, *Doctr. chr.* 2.41; Theophylact [*PG* 124:1076]; cf. Schlier 1957: 173–74).[11]

"Ambrosiaster," probably writing in the late fourth century, thought the four terms referred to the dimensions of a perfect sphere, which, in turn, stood for the perfection of the God that Paul wanted his readers to know (*ACCSNT* 8:155).

A set of commentators in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries believed the terms referred to the dimensions of the "Christian temple"

10. Other uses of the verb from about Paul's time and in the same sense of "prevail over" appear in Strabo (ca. 64 BC–after AD 21) *Geogr.* 6.3.4; 16.1.15; and 17.1.3. These examples, however, do not have a complementary infinitive.

11. Origen correlates the terms ὕψος and βάθος with Christ's ascent and descent in 4:8–10 and explains the terms πλάτος and μῆκος as a reference to the wide reach of the proclamation of the cross (cf. Ps. 19:4; Rom. 10:18). Paul wants his readers to grasp what it means to be crucified with Christ, figuratively stretching oneself out (συνεκτεινόμενος, *synekteinomenos*) with him on his cross (cf. Gal. 2:19). Although certainly not the most convincing reading of the measurements, this explanation perhaps deserves better than the contemptuous dismissal it has often received (e.g., Calvin 1965: 168; Eadie 1883: 252; Abbott 1897: 101).

described in 2:20–22 and that Paul wanted his readers to understand the all-encompassing nature of the church (e.g., Bengel 1860: 86; Eadie 1883: 254–55).

More recently, scholars have thought the four terms referred to the unseen dimensions or cubic shape of Christians' heavenly "inheritance" (cf. 1:18; Rev. 21:16; Herm. *Vis*. 3.2.5; Schlier, *TDNT* 1:518; Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 77).

More recently still, some have argued that the expression is a polemical move, defining language that once implied a flawed Christology (Gnilka 1971: 188–89) or a concern with magical manipulation of the divine (Arnold 1989: 90–96) to refer instead to Christ's love (Gnilka 1971: 189) or God's power (Arnold 1989: 95–96).

Three suggestions stand above the fray, however, because of their longevity and wide appeal:

1. A number of ancient interpreters believed Paul was referring to the universal dimensions of "the administrative plan [οἰκονομία, *oikonomia*] of the mystery" he had discussed in 3:9–10 (Ephraem of Syria [Mekitharistis 1893: 149]; Theodore of Mopsuestia [Swete 1882: 161]; Theodoret, *PG* 82:532).[12] Recalling the language of 3:9, for example, Theodoret says that these terms refer to "the greatness of the administration [οἰκονομίας, *oikonomias*] that has come about . . . since these things signify greatness" (my trans.). Later advocates of this position observe the use of similar language in various religious and philosophical contexts in antiquity when the topic is divine wisdom and the human ability to comprehend it (e.g., Job 11:7–9; 38:1–40:1; Sir. 1:3; Bar. 3:24–37; 1 En. 93.12–14; Cicero, *Tusc*. 1.64; *Corp. herm*. 10.25).[13] The Paul of the undisputed letters could certainly speak in these terms, correlating the wisdom of God with the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:7–10), and that is probably what he or the pseudonymous author of Ephesians is doing here (Schnackenburg 1991: 150–52; Bruce 1984: 327–28; cf. De Wette 1843: 126–27; Robinson 1904: 176).

This view has the merit of explaining why Paul adopts the unusual language of four measurements at this point, and it has the merit of placing the language firmly in the broader literary and theological context of Eph. 3. It is not without problems, however. As Best (1998: 345) points out, there is no exact match between the four terms used here and any religious and philosophical text from Paul's time. As others have observed, moreover, if Paul were referring to the administration, mystery, and wisdom of God in 3:9–10,

12. Theophylact is often listed in the commentaries as holding this opinion, but his view is a hybrid. Although he at first seems to support the view that Paul is referring to "the mystery," he is then led by Gregory of Nyssa to say that Paul wants the Ephesians "to grasp the mystery of the cross" (*PG* 124:1076).

13. For these and other references, see Schnackenburg 1991: 150–51; Faust 1993: 35–39; and Dahl 2000: 367–75.

he would be reaching back into what is clearly a separate section of the letter to do so (Abbott 1897: 99; cf. Eadie 1883: 253–54; Lincoln 1990: 213). This is a problem that does not afflict the next approach.

2. Calvin (1965: 168–69) insisted that Paul's reference is to "nothing other than the love of Christ, of which he speaks afterwards." He is impatient with the wide variety of suggestions about the object of the measurements that already existed in his own time, particularly with Augustine's case that Paul refers to Christ's cross. "All this," he says, "pleases us with its subtlety, but what has it to do with Paul's meaning?" Later advocates of this view point out that the four measurements are sandwiched between references to love in 3:17b and 3:19a, and that precedent exists in Rom. 8:39 for the Pauline use of the terms "height" (ὕψωμα, *hypsōma*) and "depth" (βάθος, *bathos*) in a discussion of Christ's love (Ellicott 1859: 72; Abbott 1897: 100; Lincoln 1990: 213; Best 1998: 346; O'Brien 1999: 263; Muddiman 2001: 172–73; Hoehner 2002: 488).

The parallel in Rom. 8:39, however, is far from exact: there "height" and "depth" stand opposite Christ's love as potential threats that, as it turns out, pose no threat at all, whereas here in Eph. 3:18 the four measurements are aligned with Christ's love as measurements of its vastness. If Paul had intended to refer only to the immensity of Christ's love, moreover, it is difficult to know why he chose these unusual terms to do so instead of using, for example, the language of wealth that appears so frequently elsewhere (1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16; cf. Col. 2:2).

3. It seems best, then, to adopt yet another view, which is also very old. It interprets the four measurements as primarily a reference to the vastness of divine love (v. 19a) but acknowledges that also in the background of this language lies Paul's concern with God's administrative plan, his mystery, and his complex wisdom (vv. 9–10). This idea goes back at least as far as Chrysostom, who thought that the measurements spoke of the mystery "administered" (οἰκονομηθέν, *oikonomēthen*) on behalf of believers (v. 9), especially as it was visible in the extension of God's love everywhere (v. 19a; Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.*, hom. 7; *NPNF* 13:81; *PG* 62:51).[14]

In more recent times several scholars have also taken this approach (Westcott 1906: 52; MacDonald 2000: 277; Aletti 2001: 196–97; cf. Alford 1857: 107).[15] They have recognized a link between the four measurements, the use of similar dimensional language to speak of God and his wisdom (Job 11:7–9; Sir. 1:3), and Paul's talk of God's wisdom in 3:10 (Aletti 2001: 196–97; MacDonald 2000: 277). They have also seen, however, that a concern with divine love in

14. Photius of Constantinople (tenth cent.) takes a similar approach (Staab 1933: 617–18) and makes sense of the syntax by suggesting that Paul is using either "ellipsis" to refer to the "mystery" or "hyperbaton" to refer to "the knowledge of Christ," expecting the reader mentally to transpose the term "knowledge" from the next clause.

15. Dahl (2000: 365–88) believes that the four measurements arise out of the environment of ancient speculation about the size of the universe and religious wisdom, but he thinks they function here in 3:18 as a "preamble" to Paul's primary concern, which is the love of Christ.

the immediate context (vv. 17b and 19a) means the primary reference here is to "the immense dimensions of the *agapē* of Christ" (Aletti 2001: 197; cf. MacDonald 2000: 277; *pace* Alford 1857: 107).

This understanding of the measurement language has the advantage of recognizing its affinity with wisdom concepts in Paul's broader cultural context (e.g., Job 11:7–9; 38:1–40:1; Sir. 1:3; Bar. 3:24–37; 1 En. 93.12–14), in Ephesians itself (3:9–10), and elsewhere in Paul's Letters (1 Cor. 2:7–10; Rom. 11:33). Yet it also recognizes that in this context Paul is primarily concerned with the magnificence of Christ's love. Like God's wisdom, Christ's love is so "wide and long and high and deep" that one can mentally grasp it only through the strengthening of God's Spirit and the indwelling of Christ himself. It is precisely for this that Paul prays (cf. 1:18–23).

That this reading of the four measurements is on the right track receives some confirmation from the phrase σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις (*syn pasin tois hagiois*, with all the saints). The phrase recalls the use of σύν (*syn*, with) language in 2:19–21 to describe the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers in the "dwelling place" of God's Spirit (συμπολῖται, *sympolitai*, citizens with; συναρμολογουμένη, *synarmologoumenē*, joined with; συνοικοδομεῖσθε, *synoikodomeisthe*, you are being built together with). The "administrative plan of the mystery" (3:9) that displays "the beautifully complex wisdom of God" (3:10) is revealed in the incorporation of Jewish and Gentile believers into this one people. The vast extent of Christ's love, then, is best comprehended "with all the saints," in all their social variety.

Rather than providing an object for his terms of measurement, Paul begins a new clause by using the aorist infinitive γνῶναι (*gnōnai*, to know).[16] This term parallels the previous aorist infinitive καταλαβέσθαι (*katalabesthai*, to grasp), and in this context has the same meaning. The switch to γνῶναι simply allows a rhetorically effective wordplay between the verb "to know" and the noun "knowledge" (γνώσεως, *gnōseōs*; Aletti 2001: 197; Muddiman 2001: 173).

After the syntactical suspense built up by the list of the four measurements and their missing object, we finally learn what Paul wants God to enable his readers to grasp. He wants them to know the vast extent of Christ's love for them (cf. Rom. 8:35, 39). Paul had himself experienced the encouragement of Christ's love during times of inner turbulence (2 Cor. 5:13–15; cf. Rom. 8:35), and he wanted this same encouragement for his readers during their time of discouragement (Eph. 3:13). Yet like the mystery (vv. 3–5), they could not understand the massive magnitude of Christ's love apart from God's revelation of it to them. This is the revelation for which Paul prays.

3:19b The third and final ἵνα (*hina*, that) clause does not introduce a third petition but provides the climactic purpose toward which the rest of the prayer has been

16. The two clauses are tied tightly together with τέ, whose "commonest significance is combination or addition," and which "denotes, on the whole, a closer connexion than καί" (Denniston 1950: 496). Cf. 1 Cor. 4:21, ἐν ἀγάπῃ πνεύματί τε πραΰτητος, where "love" and "spirit of gentleness" are basically synonymous.

moving. The ultimate purpose of Paul's prayer for his readers' inner strength and increased understanding, he now says, is that they "might be filled up to [εἰς, *eis*] all the fullness of God." As many commentators recognize, the preposition here cannot mean "with" but must refer to the extent of the filling and probably carries a temporal nuance (cf. 1 Thess. 2:16; 2 Cor. 4:17; 10:15).[17] Just as in 4:13 Paul speaks of arriving "at a mature man" (εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, *eis andra teleion*) and "at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *eis metron hēlikias tou plērōmatos tou Christou*), so here he speaks of reaching God's "fullness."

Interpreters have explained God's "fullness" in several different ways: his moral excellence (Eadie 1883: 258–59; cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.*, hom. 7; *NPNF* 13:82), his life and power (Lincoln 1990: 214–15), or his love (Best 1998: 348; Hoehner 2002: 491). The close correspondence between this expression and 4:13, however, provides the best key to Paul's meaning (Robinson 1904: 177). Just as in 4:13 Paul says that the saints are on the way to becoming "mature" (τέλειος, *teleios*) and to reaching the full stature that Christ already possesses, so here he probably means that his readers are in the process of becoming all that God created them to be (O'Brien 1999: 266). Just as God is perfect, so one day they too will be perfect.[18]

Summary

Paul prays that God, by his Spirit, would give his readers inner strength so that they could believe that Christ dwells in their hearts. This in turn will enable them to comprehend the vast extent of Christ's love. This inner renewal, Paul prays, will take them further along the path of becoming the people that God intended "all the saints" to be.

Additional Notes

3:14. A large number of witnesses include the phrase τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ after πατέρα, including Western (e.g., D, F, G, 1912), some Alexandrian (e.g., Ψ, 104), and most Byzantine witnesses. This is significant testimony, and on the basis of its geographical diversity, Hoehner (2002: 473n1) accepts the phrase as original. The phrase does not appear in a large number of witnesses, however, including the earliest manuscripts of Ephesians (𝔓[46], ℵ, A, B). The testimony to its omission is admittedly dominated by witnesses in the Alexandrian tradition, but the antiquity of these witnesses is strong evidence that the phrase was not original. Its addition, moreover, spoils the wordplay between πατέρα and πατριά (Best 1998: 377) and is easily explicable as a scribe's accidental expansion on the basis of familiarity with the longer expression (cf. 1:3; Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 11:31; Metzger 1994: 535).

3:19. Instead of ἵνα πληρωθῆτε εἰς πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ, some witnesses (e.g., 𝔓[46], B, 0278, 462, 1175) read ἵνα πληρωθῇ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ θεου (in order that all the fullness of

17. See especially Barth 1974: 373–74; Lincoln 1990: 214; O'Brien 1999: 265.

18. This does not contradict Col. 2:9–10, which says that "all the fullness of the deity dwells bodily in [Christ], and you are complete in him [ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι]" (2:9–10). The idea of growth toward maturity that lies beneath Eph. 3:19b also appears in Col. 2:19. Cf. O'Brien 1999: 265.

God might be filled). Although this reading does have the support of the early Alexandrian manuscripts $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ and B, the evidence for reading πληρωθῆτε εἰς is much stronger. Not only are the witnesses to it early and diverse (e.g., ℵ, A [Alexandrian]; D, F, G [Western]; K, L, P [Byzantine]), but also the reason for a change to the second option is clear: it removes the difficult εἰς, whose most obvious meaning is "into" rather than "up to." A few late witnesses (e.g., 1881, and some Old Latin and Vulgate manuscripts) read ἵνα πληρωθῆτε εἰς πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ (in order that you might be filled up to all the fullness of Christ). Although this reading has no claim to authenticity, it probably derives from a correct interpretive instinct to read the difficult εἰς in this text through the lens of εἰς in 4:13 and 4:15.

B. Paul Praises the God Who Is Able to Strengthen His Readers (3:20–21)

When Paul prays for his readers, his requests are not small. The goal of his prayer is that his readers, now discouraged (3:13), will eventually comprehend what is humanly impossible to understand and that this understanding will lead them to become all that God has created them to be (3:14–19). He now follows the report that this is how he prays with an actual prayer of praise to the God who is able to do the unimaginable and who is at work, with this great power, in believers. Believers make up the church, and God has created and richly blessed them "in Christ," so Paul appropriately says that God receives glory "in the church" and "in Christ Jesus." The expansiveness of his praise shows that he is reaching to express the ineffable, and at least once, his Greek becomes nearly untranslatable. The phrase ὑπὲρ πάντα . . . ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ὧν αἰτούμεθα ἢ νοοῦμεν (*hyper panta . . . hyperekperissou hōn aitoumetha ē nooumen*) can perhaps be rendered "beyond everything, infinitely more than what we ask or imagine" (v. 20).

This doxology is a fitting conclusion not only to Paul's intercessory prayer report but also to the entire first half of the letter. Paul has begun with a benedictory prayer (1:3–14), expressing praise to God almost entirely in the first-person plural (1:3–12), and now he ends this first major portion of his letter with another first-person expression of praise to God. Both prayers comprise lengthy sentences, are redundant, and reveal a mixture of adherence to form and spontaneity. The two prayers, then, fittingly bracket the letter's first half with its concern for God's gracious power made effective for the church.

Exegesis and Exposition

[20]Now to the One who is able to do ⌜beyond⌝ everything, infinitely more than what we ask or imagine, according to the power at work in us, [21]to him be the glory ⌜in the church and in Christ Jesus⌝ for all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.

3:20 Paul brings the first major section of his letter to a close with a liturgical form that has often been called a doxology.[1] Doxologies are expressions of praise to God that speak of his glory, honor, or might. They appear in the OT as part of temple worship (1 Chron. 16:28–29; Pss. 29:1–2; 96:7) and also show

1. On the doxology as a liturgical and literary form, see Delling 1962: 62–66; Deichgräber 1967: 25–40; and Aune 1997: 43–46.

up occasionally in the literature of Hellenistic Jewish piety (e.g., Pr. Man. 15 [Odes 12:15 LXX]; 4 Macc. 18:24). They became common in early Christian literature, where they tend to occur at the end of a section (e.g., 1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Clem. 20.12; 58.2; Mart. Pol. 21; 22) or near the end of a document (e.g., 1 Pet. 5:11; Heb. 13:21; 1 Clem. 64; Mart. Pol. 20.2). Paul frequently uses doxologies to conclude a section of a letter (Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; Rom. 11:36; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18). Once he places a doxology near the end of a letter (1 Tim. 6:16), and once, if Rom. 16:25–27 is genuine, at the very end (cf. Pr. Man. 15; 4 Macc. 18:24).

Hellenistic Jewish and Christian doxologies tend to follow a four-part pattern (Aune 1997: 44): (1) a reference to the one who receives the glory, (2) a reference to the glory itself, (3) a reference to the eternal duration of the glory, and (4) the term "amen." Paul's doxology in Eph. 3:20–21 has all four parts.

First, ancient doxologies begin with a reference to God or Christ,[2] often using a pronoun, and this reference is almost always in the dative case.[3] When the reference includes the article, the article is often followed by δέ (*de*, now), signaling that the doxology comprises a new segment of the discourse.[4]

In verse 20 Paul follows the form that opens the doxology with a dative-case articular expression and δέ. The doxology, then, clearly forms a new segment of the discourse, and the function of this new segment, as with Rom. 11:36, is to draw a major portion of the letter to a close.[5] Paul begins his doxology by ascribing glory τῷ . . . δυναμένῳ (*tō . . . dynamenō*, to the one who is able).

This same description of God appears in doxologies in Jude 24–25 and Mart. Pol. 20.2, but it would be a major mistake to conclude from this that it is merely a formal or traditional feature that Paul unthinkingly takes over at this point. The availability of God's power to believers has been a prominent theme in the letter so far. Paul has prayed for his readers to understand "the surpassing greatness of his power [δύναμις, *dynamis*] for us who believe" (1:19). He has then shown how God has used the same great power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him at God's right hand to unify believers with the victorious Christ and give them victory over evil powers as well (1:20–2:10). Despite his position as the least of all the saints, Paul's own historically crucial ministry to the Gentiles is also a demonstration of "the effect of his power

2. Most early Christian doxologies ascribe glory to God, but sometimes the glory goes to Christ (2 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 4:11[?]; 2 Tim. 4:18[?]) or to God through Christ (e.g., Rom. 16:27; Did. 9.4; 1 Clem. 58.2; 61.3; 64.1; 65.2). Rev. 5:13 ascribes glory to God and Christ, and Mart. Pol. 14.3 and 23.5 to all three persons of the Trinity.

3. E.g., ᾧ (4 Macc. 18:24; Gal. 1:5; 1 Tim. 6:16; 2 Tim. 4:18; 1 Pet. 4:11; Heb. 13:21; Mart. Pol. 21.1; 22.3); αὐτῷ (Rom. 11:36; 1 Pet. 5:11; 2 Pet. 3:18; Rev. 1:6). Pr. Man. 15 (Odes 12.15 LXX); Did. 8.2; 9.4; 10.5 are exceptions: all four begin with σοῦ.

4. BDAG 213. See, e.g., τῷ δὲ θεῷ (Phil. 4:20); τῷ δὲ βασιλεῖ (1 Tim. 1:17). Rev. 5:13 is an exception.

5. *Pace* Alford 1857: 108; Ellicott 1859: 74; Hoehner 2002: 92, δέ does not signal a contrast between the preceding intercessory prayer's concern with human beings and the doxology's concern with the praise of God.

[δύναμις, *dynamis*]" (3:7–8). He has just described his prayer that God would strengthen his readers "in power [δύναμις]" so they might grow strong enough to grasp Christ's love for them (3:16, 18–19). When Paul addresses God as ὁ δυνάμενος (*ho dynamenos*, the one who is able), then, he draws these threads together: God is the one who is powerful, and he has placed his power at the disposal of Paul's readers.

Paul expands this description of God in two ways.[6] First, the title ὁ δυνάμενος needs a complementary infinitive; elsewhere in doxologies that use this title, the infinitive specifies what God is able to do (e.g., φυλάξαι, *phylaxai*, to guard; στῆσαι, *stēsai*, to cause to stand [Jude 24]; στηρίξαι, *stērixai*, to strengthen [Rom. 16:25]; εἰσαγαγεῖν, *eisagagein*, to lead into [Mart. Pol. 20.2]). Here, however, in a way that is fully consistent with the tone of Ephesians, Paul complements the title with a general and expansive expression: God is able "to do" (ποιῆσαι, *poiēsai*) not some specific task, and not even anything he and his readers can ask or imagine, but ὑπὲρ πάντα . . . ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ὧν (*hyper panta . . . hyperekperissou hōn*, beyond everything . . . infinitely more than what) they can "ask or imagine."

The preposition ὑπέρ in the phrase ὑπὲρ πάντα means "over and above, beyond, more than" (cf., e.g., 1 Cor. 10:13; Philem. 21; BDAG 1031), and it is followed, redundantly, with the rare term ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ. This word appears here and twice in 1 Thessalonians (3:10; 5:13) for the first time in all known Greek literature. Apart from allusions to these texts, it seldom occurs for centuries thereafter (e.g., Epiphanius, *Pan.* 2.387, l. 8).[7] It is composed of two elements, ὑπέρ (*hyper*), which appears again with the meaning "over and above," and the phrase ἐκ περισσοῦ (*ek perissou*), which means "extremely" (Dan. 3:22 Theod.; Mark 6:51; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 31.64 [ἐκ περιττοῦ]; BDAG 298). The translation "infinitely more than" (BDAG 1033) captures the idea that the word communicates. Paul ascribes glory to the God who is able to do not merely what Paul and his readers *ask* but extremely far beyond what they can *imagine*. This is a fitting description of the God who has graciously made known the mystery of his administrative plan for the universe to Paul and his readers and has included them both individually and as a people in this plan. It also assures Paul's readers that although Paul wants them to have an inner strength to understand Christ's vast love that no one could possess on the basis of mere human ability, God is able to give it to them (Bruce 1961: 70).[8]

Second, Paul expands his description of the God "who is able" with an adverbial prepositional phrase that identifies the norm or standard against

6. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:17 and Jude 24–25, where an articular description of God in a doxology also receives elaboration.

7. The similar adverb ὑπερεκπερισσῶς appears in 1 Clem. 20.11 and in the text of 1 Thess. 5:13 in B, D, F, and G. It appears in the text of D and U in Mark 7:37 (BDF §116.3; BDAG 1033).

8. Cf. John Newton: "Thou art coming to a King, Large petitions with Thee bring; For His grace and power are such, None can ever ask too much" ("Come, My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare" [1742]).

which his ability is measured. He is able κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἡμῖν (*kata tēn dynamin tēn energoumenēn en hēmin*, according to the power at work in us). The term δύναμιν (*dynamin*, power) is simply the noun form of the participle δυναμένῳ (*dynamenō*, who is able), and so introduces a wordplay difficult to reproduce in English translation: "the one who is *able* . . . according to the *ability* at work in us" does not capture the nuance of the terms very well but does reproduce the rhetorical effect of the expression. In his first intercessory prayer report (1:19) Paul has also said that God puts his power into effect "for us who believe" and does this κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ (*kata tēn energeian tou kratous tēs ischyos autou*, according to the effect of the might of his strength). Since then we have learned that God does this "through his Spirit" and in "the inner human being" (3:16), and Paul is probably thinking of God's power at work in believers in terms of the Spirit here also (Fee 1994: 697–98).

The burden of Paul's two intercessory prayer reports (1:17–23 and 3:14–19) is that his readers might understand both the greatness of God's power and the availability of that power to them (cf. Phil. 4:13; Col. 1:29). The first element of his concluding doxology skillfully sums up both truths by speaking of God both as one who is able to do infinitely more than we can imagine and as one who is at work within believers.

3:21

The second element of early Christian doxologies assigns glory to God, often along with attributes such as honor, magnificence, and especially power (Deichgräber 1967: 28). Usually no explicit verb links God with these attributes, and so the understood verb could be optative (εἴη, *eiē*, may glory be yours), imperative (ἔστω, *estō*, let glory be yours), or indicative (ἐστίν, *estin*, glory is yours). All three moods appear in ancient doxologies when the verb is expressed, although the optative and indicative are the most likely options (Deichgräber 1967: 32). Commentators disagree about which mood is assumed here,[9] but Deichgräber (1967: 32) is surely correct in his assessment that it hardly matters: the person who expresses the wish that God should be praised is, at the same time, fulfilling that wish.[10]

Paul expands this second element of the doxology with a description of where glory is ascribed to God. Glory belongs to God "in the church and [καί, *kai*] in Christ Jesus." The church makes God's glory known because its very existence as a multiethnic community that is reconciled to God testifies to God's beautifully complex wisdom (3:10; cf. 2:11–22). Elsewhere in Paul, Christ has glory and is himself the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4; cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; Best 1998: 351), but here at the end of Eph. 1–3, and directly after mentioning that God's glory is present in the church, he is probably thinking especially of

9. E.g., Masson (1953: 183) picks the indicative, Caragounis (1977: 77) the imperative, and Hoehner (2002: 494) the optative.

10. Christian literature closest in proximity to Ephesians seems to use the indicative when a verb is expressed (1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Clem. 58.2; Did. 8.2; 9.4; 10.5), and so, if a choice must be made, it should probably be the indicative.

the close relationship between the church and Christ as the means by which God's glory becomes visible. The church is Christ's body, and God has given Christ, as head over all things, to the church (1:22–23). Christ is the one "in" whom the church exists as a people at peace with itself and with God (2:13–22; 3:6), and God put into effect "in Christ Jesus our Lord" his plan to make this beautifully complex wisdom known through the church (3:10).

There is no thought here of the church as equal to Christ or prior to Christ in importance. Paul is clear elsewhere that Christ is the head over all things, including the church (1:22–23; 5:23), but here the emphasis lies on the unity of Christ and the church, something Paul also emphasizes in Ephesians (1:23; 5:30–31). The plan of God for the unification of the universe revolves around the church and Christ and their close relationship with each other. It is fitting, then, for Paul to say that God is glorified in both.

The third element of early Christian doxologies is an expression for time, indicating that God's glory will exist forever.[11] Here Paul formulates this element in an unusual way, apparently combining the more common expressions "for all the generations of the age" (Tob. 1:4; 13:12; 14:5; cf. Exod. 12:14) and "for the ages of the ages" (e.g., LXX Ps. 83:5 [84:5 MT; 84:4 Eng.]; 4 Macc. 18:24; Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18) to produce the verbose phrase "for all the generations of the age of the ages" (εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων, *eis pasas tas geneas tou aiōnos tōn aiōnōn*; Lincoln 1990: 217).

It is possible that this is simply a rhetorically impressive way of saying "forever" and "should not be analyzed too precisely" (Lincoln 1990: 218; cf. Abbott 1897: 104). When we divide the phrase into its constituent parts, however, it is fully coherent: it describes a single age (τοῦ αἰῶνος, *tou aiōnos*) that consists both of a series of ages (τῶν αἰώνων, *tōn aiōnōn*) and of all generations (πάσας τὰς γενεὰς, *pasas tas geneas*). As one generation yields to another, and as one age passes to the next, for all time God will have glory both in the church and in Christ Jesus.

The fourth component of the doxology form is the concluding ἀμήν (*amēn*, amen), an element that derives from the use of the doxology in corporate worship (cf. Ps. 106:48; 1 Chron. 16:36; Neh. 8:6; 1QS 1.18–20; see *HALOT* 1:64; and cf. Delling 1962: 64). At least by the time of those who translated the Psalms into Greek, the word meant "may it be so" (γένοιτο, *genoito*; Pss. 40:14 LXX [41:14 MT; 41:13 Eng.]; 71:19 LXX [72:19 MT, Eng.]; 88:53 LXX [89:53 MT; 89:52 Eng.]) and was the means by which the worshiping congregation indicated that the praise of God uttered by others in worship was also the expression of their own heart (cf. 1 Cor. 14:16; Rev. 5:13–14; Delling 1962: 64).

There is no need to think, however, that Paul's use of the term in 3:21 means that the apostle expected the congregations of western Asia to respond with

11. E.g., εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων (Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; Heb. 13:21; 1 Clem. 58.2; Mart. Pol. 22.3); εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας (Rom. 11:36; 1 Pet. 5:11); εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας (Jude 25; cf. 1 Clem. 64); and καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς ἡμέραν αἰῶνος (2 Pet. 3:18).

"Amen" at this point in the oral reading of the letter (*pace* Bruce 1984: 331; Schackenburg 1991: 157; O'Brien 1999: 269). They certainly may have done this, but the "amen" here, like the "amen" in similar contexts elsewhere in Paul's Letters, is his own final, heartfelt expression that what he has said is true.[12] Paul firmly believed that the God who was powerful enough to bless his people with every spiritual blessing, to save them from the power of sin and the devil and the flesh, to reconcile them to one another and to himself, to employ them strategically in his age-old plan for the universe, to reveal this plan to them, and to strengthen their downcast inner selves with a knowledge of the vast expanse of Christ's love for them—this God would receive glory forever in the church that he had created, and in the Christ through whom he had created it.

Summary

Paul concludes the first major section of his letter with a doxology that praises the God who is able to accomplish what Paul desires for the letter's readers. God's power is immense, and he has made that power available to the church through the relationship that the church has with Christ Jesus. God's power works "in" the church by giving it resurrection life, victory over God's enemies, unity across ethnic lines, and peace with himself. God's power also works within the church by means of God's Spirit and the indwelling Christ, who encourages the church through helping it to understand the immensity of his grace. The God who is able to do all this—and much more—for the church is the God whom Paul praises, and when the church understands all that God has done for it in Christ Jesus, it too will praise God forever.

Additional Notes

3:20. The preposition ὑπέρ is missing in 𝔓46, D, F, G, and a few other witnesses. The geographical spread of the omission is interesting—it is found in a major Alexandrian witness as well as the three major Western witnesses—but the diversity and antiquity of the text with ὑπέρ (e.g., ℵ, A, B, C, I^{vid}, Ψ, and most Byzantine manuscripts) weigh heavily in its favor. A scribe probably dropped ὑπέρ to make the syntax simpler and the expression less redundant (Metzger 1994: 536; Lincoln 1990: 197; Best 1998: 349).

3:21. Mention of the church before Christ Jesus apparently created theological problems for some ancient scribes who copied the text, and some of them dropped the καί (the majority reading) or switched the order (D, F, G). Either way the implication that Christ is equal to the church is erased: either he comes before and is therefore superior to the church ("in Christ Jesus and in the church") or the church is defined by him ("in the church in Christ Jesus"). The oldest and best manuscripts (𝔓46, ℵ, A, B, C, 0278, 6, 33, 81) have the καί and the more difficult order, however, and so this is the much more likely reading (see the full discussion in Barth 1974: 375).

12. Cf. Gal. 1:5; Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36, where "amen" is Paul's own utterance.

VII. Paul Prays for His Readers' Inner Strength and Praises the God Who Can Give It (3:14–21)
➤VIII. The Growth of the Church toward Unity and Maturity (4:1–16)
IX. A Reminder of How to Live as New Human Beings (4:17–5:2)
X. Avoiding and Transforming the Deeds of Darkness (5:3–14)

VIII. The Growth of the Church toward Unity and Maturity (4:1–16)

Paul opens chapters 4–6, the second major part of his letter, with a paragraph whose focus on unity links the two major parts together. In chapters 1–3 he has explained that his readers play an important part in God's plan to sum up everything in heaven and on earth in Christ (1:10). The unity of the church across ethnic lines (2:11–22) accomplishes two critical elements of this plan. First, it restores the original unity of God's creation: in Christ, Jews and Gentiles form "one new human being" (2:15). Second, it reveals the complex beauty of God's wisdom to the inimical spiritual powers of the universe (3:10).

This "one new human being," however, is not yet complete. When Paul changes the metaphor to that of a temple, he explains that his readers are part of a divine dwelling place that is currently under construction: they are "being joined together," "[growing] into a holy temple in the Lord" and "being built together into the dwelling place of God" (2:21–22). In the second half of the letter, Paul will show his readers in practical ways how they can live in unity with one another and therefore fulfill the role that God has assigned them in the universe. In 4:1–16 Paul introduces these practical admonitions.

The section can be divided into two main subsections. In the first subsection (vv. 1–6) Paul launches a series of general but practical ethical admonitions based on the understanding of the church that he has developed in chapters 1–3. Paul's readers have been called to be a new, unified people, the initial stage of God's new creation (v. 1). Although the scope of this vision spans the universe, it is accomplished through the cultivation of such mundane qualities as humility, patience, and lovingly putting up with the foibles of others (v. 2). Paul's readers should zealously pursue "unity" (v. 3).

We are prepared for some further practical explanation of what this means, but apparently prompted by his mention of unity, Paul instead breaks off his practical admonitions to give seven affirmations of the theological unity on which the church's practical unity is based (vv. 4–6). The highly rhetorical—almost poetic—language that Paul uses has led a number of scholars to conclude that this section is derived from a traditional liturgy, perhaps used in a baptismal rite, but as the notes below explain, it is more likely that this is Paul's own freely composed oratory. He does not return to the sort of practical, first-person singular, authoritative ethical instruction of 4:2–3 again until 4:17. As we have found at several other sections of the letter, then, the structure

of the argument exhibits signs of a skillful organizational plan on the large scale, but also of spontaneous, probably oral, composition.

In the second subsection (vv. 7–16) Paul continues to lay the theological foundation for the church's practical efforts at unity. Whereas the first subsection had reached its climax with an affirmation of the unity and pervasive presence of God (v. 6), this second subsection grounds the unity of the church in the work of Christ. It skillfully uses the number "one," so prominent in 4:4–6, to shift the thought from the unity of the church and God to the importance of "each one" of God's people in moving the church toward this unity. In the first part of this section, Paul appeals to a heavily modified form of Ps. 67:19 LXX (68:19 MT; 68:18 Eng.) to support the idea that the very Christ whose ascent to heaven and descent to hades shows him to be victorious over the inimical spiritual powers of the cosmos is the Christ who has given gifts to each believer for building up the church. The gifts of some are intended for the equipping of others to do the work of ministry, but in each case Christ has measured out the appropriate amount of "grace" for the "activity" assigned to each believer. As each believer lovingly supplies the body with what it needs to grow, it matures into the "man" God intended it to be. This "man," as it turns out, is Christ himself, who fills the whole universe.

In 4:1–16 a number of scholars have found evidence that the letter was written in a post-Pauline environment. Two aspects of the passage are particularly important to this approach.

First, the passage seems to be heavily indebted to the language of other Pauline letters. The language of 4:1 is particularly close to 1 Thess. 4:1 and Rom. 12:1 (cf. also 1 Thess. 2:11–12). There is a similarly close correspondence between Eph. 4:1–6 and Col. 3:12–15, and between Eph. 4:16 and Col. 2:19. In these instances the language is so close that it appears to many interpreters that the author of Ephesians has derived his own language from these other Pauline passages (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 226–28, 230–31; Schnackenburg 1991: 173–74; Pokorný 1992: 159; MacDonald 2000: 295).

The discussion of the role of variously gifted individuals within the church in 4:7–16, moreover, recalls the similar discussions in 1 Cor. 12:4–31 and Rom. 12:3–8. In all three passages gifts are given to the "body," and gifted Christians are urged to work together for the body's unity. The differences between Eph. 4:7–16 and the other two passages, however, are significant (Lincoln 1990: 230):

- Christ gives the gifts (Eph. 4:7–8, 11) rather than God or the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4–11, 28; Rom. 12:3).
- The "gifts" are δόματα (*domata*; Eph. 4:8) rather than χαρίσματα (*charismata*), as in the other two passages (1 Cor. 12:4, 31; Rom. 12:6).
- Only five gifts are mentioned, and two of these, "evangelists and pastors," appear in none of the other lists (Eph. 4:11).
- Christ is the "head" of the body (Eph. 4:15) rather than the body itself (1 Cor. 12:12, 27; cf. Rom. 12:5).

Second, it is argued, the concerns of the author, reflected especially in the way he has nuanced the "gift" passages in the undisputed Paulines, fit best in a period after the apostle's death when "the charism associated with leadership in Paul's churches is apparently being routinized; it is becoming attached to an established teaching leadership" (MacDonald 2000: 299; cf. 1988: 135–36). The gifts given to the church are now narrowed to the five teaching offices listed in 4:11. Talk of the Spirit falls away and is replaced with the picture of an exalted Christ who authoritatively institutes these offices (Merklein 1973: 77–81; Zimmermann 1988: 114–15; Schnackenburg 1991: 180). Apostles lie in the past, and although prophets may continue to function in the author's community, the author is primarily interested in the foundational role of the prophets of a bygone age. The work of these now-foundational apostles and prophets continues, however, with the evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Schnackenburg 1991: 180–81; MacDonald 2000: 299). According to Zimmermann (1988: 116–17), even the Pauline category of "teachers" is beginning to diminish in importance as they are absorbed into the category of "pastors." The catalyst for these changes is the need to protect the church against disunity in the period after the charismatic leader Paul has passed from the scene and new waves of false teaching and persecution are washing over it (MacDonald 1988: 133, 135; 2000: 298).

This picture of Ephesians has considerable explanatory power, and its wide influence is understandable. It is heavily dependent, however, on a web of exegetical and historical decisions with several weak connections. Exegetically, it rests on a reading of 4:11 and 4:16 that is grammatically, lexically, and contextually improbable, as the exegesis below tries to show.

Historically, it adopts a model for the development of church structure that seems smoother than the complex realities reflected in early Christian literature will allow. Already in the mid-first century the indisputably authentic Paul can refer to "the instructor" (ὁ κατηχούμενος, *ho katēchoumenos*) as a paid class of believers who teach the Christian message (Gal. 6:6; Longenecker 1990: 279). In the late-first-century Didache (15.1–2), "prophets" and "teachers" labor alongside "bishops" and "deacons" and, confusingly, seem to do similar work. In the early second century, Ignatius assumes a highly structured threefold ministry with a single "bishop" at the top and "elders" and "deacons" taking lower positions under him (*Pol.* 6.1). In the mid-second century, however, Justin Martyr (*1 Apol.* 65; 67) reverts to the less-complex structure of a "ruler" (προεστώς, *proestōs*) assisted by "deacons."[1] As if this is not enough, in his comments on Eph. 4:11 (Heine 2002: 175), Origen entertains the possibility of miracle-working "apostles" in his own time, the mid-third century.

In the first two centuries there is clearly a general trend toward a more-authoritarian structure than we see in the undisputed Paulines. A plurality of leaders seems to sit at the top of Paul's congregational structure (1 Thess. 5:12;

1. See Purves 1889: 258–70; Lightfoot 1896: 210; Barnard 1967: 130–34; and Beyer, *TDNT* 2:620.

Phil. 1:1), whereas Justin speaks of only one "ruler" over each assembly. The situation is too complex and too conditioned by the specific circumstances of each writer, however, to draw conclusions about the date of a text from a given structure. The focus in 4:11 on gifts that preserve the apostolic tradition and stress the importance of teaching may merely reflect Paul's awareness that false teaching has become a problem in the churches of Asia (cf. 4:14; cf. Col. 2:8, 16–23).

A. Christian Unity and Its Theological Basis (4:1–6)

In 4:1–6 Paul provides a transition from his description of "the calling" with which his readers "were called" to his practical admonitions for how they should "walk." The inferential particle οὖν (*oun*, therefore) reaches back to all of chapters 1–3 (cf. Rom. 12:1), but particularly to the important theme of the church's unity that Paul has developed there. The newly constituted people of God is not divided along ethnic lines but is "one new human being" (2:15) at peace with itself (2:14) and with its Creator (2:13, 17). This unified church, moreover, proclaims to the inimical powers "in the heavenly places" the beautifully complex wisdom of God (3:10). With the present tenses in 2:21–22, however, Paul has already hinted that there is a tension here. The unity that the church already possesses by means of the death of Christ and the indwelling Spirit is, in some sense, not yet complete: the church is still growing into it (συναρμολογουμένη αὔξει . . . συνοικοδομεῖσθε, *synarmologoumenē auxei . . . synoikodomeisthe*, being joined together, it grows . . . you are being built together).

In 4:1–6 Paul introduces his practical admonitions on how the church can grow into this ultimate unity. He does this in two parts. The first part offers a general exhortation focused on loving deference to one another (4:1–3), and the second part grounds this general exhortation in the unity of God ("one Spirit . . . one Lord . . . one God and Father"), of God's people ("one body"), and of the response of God's people to God ("one hope . . . one faith, one baptism"; 4:1–6).

The two parts have a similar structure. Each part contains a list of items, with the last and longest item in each part bringing its part to a climax. The admonitions to exercise humility, gentleness, patience, and to bear with one another lead to the lengthy exhortation to be "eager to keep the unity of the Spirit by the fastener of peace" (4:3). In the same way, the affirmations of various unities conclude with the lengthy description of "one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (4:6).

This final affirmation of God's unity prepares the way for Paul's discussion of how he has given "each one" of his readers a measure of grace to use in aiding the church on its way to unity (4:7–16).

Exegesis and Exposition

[1]Therefore I encourage you, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, [2]with all humility and gentleness, with patience,

bearing with each other in love, [3]being eager to keep the unity of the Spirit by the fastener of peace.

[4]There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called with one hope of your calling. [5]There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, [6]one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and ⌜in all⌝.

4:1

Paul now shifts the discussion to the way of life that should arise from the blessings that God has given to his people. He signals this shift with the phrase παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς (*parakalō oun hymas*, therefore I encourage you). This movement from theology to ethics, from what God has graciously accomplished for his people to how they should live as a result, is a common feature of the Pauline Letters, and the movement from one to the other is often signaled with οὖν (*oun*, therefore; 1 Thess. 5:5–6; 2 Thess. 2:15; Gal. 5:1; Phil. 2:1; Rom. 6:12; Col. 3:5–6; Eph. 6:14).[1] Twice Paul uses the precise phrase he employs here, παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, to make this link (1 Cor. 4:15–16; Rom. 12:1).[2]

By his use of the term παρακαλῶ, Paul also signals that the ethical advice to follow in 4:1–6:20 is given in the context of friendship. This becomes clear from the definition he gives to the term in a letter to his friend and coworker Philemon, written at virtually the same time as Ephesians: "For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal [παρακαλῶ] to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing [παρακαλῶ] to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment" (Philem. 8–10 NRSV).[3] The advice Paul gives in Eph. 4:1–6:20, like the advice he gives to Philemon concerning Onesimus, is issued to friends. He does not know all of his audience personally, but he knows their situation well enough to be thankful for their faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints (1:15).[4] In his advice to them about how to "walk," he will remind them of what he assumes they have already learned for the purpose of encouraging them to love each other in concrete ways (4:20–24).[5]

1. See Nauck 1958: 134–35 and Engberg-Pedersen 2004: 63.

2. As Engberg-Pedersen (2004: 54–59) and Starr (2004: 100–104) show, this same movement from doctrine to ethical precepts was much discussed in Stoic ethics. See especially Seneca, *Ep.* 94 and 95.

3. Cf. 1 Thess. 4:1, where Paul couples παρακαλῶ with ἐρωτάω (ask) to give his instructions a friendly nuance: "We ask [ἐρωτῶμεν] and appeal [παρακαλοῦμεν] to you in the Lord Jesus that just as you received instructions from us about how it is necessary to walk [περιπατεῖν] and to please God (just as you are doing), you do so even more."

4. Royal decrees in antiquity, similarly, were often cast in the form of letters with their conventions of friendship, including the use of the phrase παρακαλῶ . . . ὑμᾶς, despite the lack of any personal relationship between the author of the decree and its recipients (e.g., 2 Macc. 9:19–27; cf. Bjerkelund 1967: 62–65).

5. Ephesians 4:1–6:20 is, therefore, a classic example of ancient paraenesis, which is a "concise, benevolent injunction that reminds of moral practices to be pursued or avoided, expresses or implies a shared worldview, and does not anticipate disagreement" (Starr 2004: 79). It appears in a wide range of ancient Greco-Roman ethical literature (Engberg-Pedersen 2004; Starr 2004).

Paul's reference to himself as "the prisoner in the Lord" recalls the similar self-description in 3:1, as well as the reference to his suffering for them in 3:13, and gives a certain gravitas to the instructions that follow. Paul so sincerely holds the convictions out of which this ethical advice flows that he is willing to suffer the physical pain and social stigma of imprisonment to be faithful to them (cf. the comments on 3:1 and 6:20).

He appeals to his readers to περιπατῆσαι (*peripatēsai*, walk) in a way that is worthy of the calling God has given them. He last used the term περιπατέω in 2:1–10, to bracket his description of how God has brought his readers from an existence under the power of the world, the devil, and the flesh to an existence as God's graciously restored creatures. Although they once "walked" in transgressions and sins (2:2), they now must "walk" in the good works God has intended for them from the first (2:10). In the second half of the letter, Paul will show in concrete terms how his readers' new way of "walking" should look (4:17; 5:2, 8, 15).

With the phrase ἀξίως . . . τῆς κλήσεως ἧς ἐκλήθητε (*axiōs . . . tēs klēseōs hēs eklēthēte*, worthily . . . of the calling with which you were called), Paul refers to his readers' conversion, the point at which they heard and believed the gospel (1:13; cf. Gal. 1:15; 1 Cor. 1:26; 7:18, 20–22, 24). In the Pauline corpus, God's call comes to people entirely at God's initiative (Rom. 4:17; 8:30) and as a free gift (Gal. 1:6, 15), unrelated to any prior merit in those whom he calls, no matter their socioeconomic status (1 Cor. 1:26), their ethnicity (Rom. 9:24–26), or their actions (Rom. 9:12; 2 Tim. 1:9).

This call certainly has immediate, present ramifications—it immediately places those who receive it in fellowship with God's Son, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:9)—but, as the other two references to it in Ephesians emphasize (1:18, 4:4), it is oriented primarily toward the believer's future "hope." It is a call to have a share in the future establishment of God's kingdom at the time of Jesus's coming (1 Thess. 2:12; 5:23–24; 2 Thess. 2:14; Eph. 1:18; 4:4; cf. Phil. 3:14; 1 Tim. 6:12).

In 1 Thessalonians, Paul's understanding of the call of God implies that between the time of conversion, when the call first comes, and the time of Jesus's parousia, when it is fulfilled, believers should "walk . . . worthily [περιπατεῖν . . . ἀξιως, *peripatein axiōs*] of the God who has called" them (1 Thess. 2:12; 5:23–24). Here in Eph. 4:1, Paul has the same idea in mind. God has called Paul's readers to be part of his people not because of anything they have done (cf. 2:8–9) or because of the social group to which they belong (cf. 2:11–13), but as a free gift. They now need to live in a way that is consistent with this past, free call of God and in light of the "hope" to which they have been called (1:18; 4:4; cf. 2 Thess. 1:11; Gal. 5:13; 1 Cor. 7:15; Col. 3:15; 2 Tim. 1:9).

4:2–3 Paul next uses four expressions to describe in general terms how he wants his readers to live out the calling they have received from God. The Greek can be construed in various ways, but the element of symmetry in the four expressions and the lack of any main verb for the two participles hints that it is best to see

all four phrases as adverbial qualifiers of the infinitive περιπατῆσαι (*peripatēsai*, to walk; v. 1). The first two expressions are prepositional phrases beginning with μετά (*meta*, with), and the last two expressions begin with nominative participles (ἀνεχόμενοι, *anechomenoi*, bearing with; σπουδάζοντες, *spoudazontes*, being eager). The nominative case is unusual, and most modern commentators think it signals an imperatival use of the participle (e.g., Best 1998: 364; O'Brien 1999: 278; Hoehner 2002: 510; cf. BDF §468.2), but the two participles probably simply agree with the logical subject of περιπατῆσαι, which is now understood in an imperatival sense (Abbott 1897: 106; Wallace 1996: 652). As Robinson (1904: 175) comments, "St Paul is fond of passing suddenly to the nominative of a participle," to which we might add, especially in Colossians and Ephesians (Col. 1:10, 23; 2:2, 7; Eph. 3:17). We should understand the four expressions, then, as adverbial modifiers of περιπατῆσαι: they tell Paul's readers how they should walk in a manner worthy of their calling.

First, they should do this μετὰ πάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης καὶ πραΰτητος (*meta pasēs tapeinophrosynēs kai praytētos*, with all humility and gentleness). The term ταπεινοφροσύνη (*tapeinophrosynē*, humility) is uncommon in first-century Greek, but when it occurs, it has decidedly negative connotations.[6] Josephus says that the Roman emperor Galba was accused of ταπεινοφροσύνη by the praetorian guard, to whom he had refused the usual celebratory pay bonus on his accession (*J.W.* 4.494). This was viewed as "low" or "base," and it turned out to be fatal (Cary 1957: 596–99). Ταπεινοφροσύνη was the opposite of "a noble spirit" (γενναῖος, *gennaios*; Epictetus [Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 3.24.54, 56, 58; cf. 1.9.10]), and by the late second century the cultivation of ταπεινοφροσύνη as a virtue among Christians became the object of ridicule (Origen, *Cels.* 6.15).

The Christian understanding of ταπεινοφροσύνη as a positive quality to be cultivated came from the Jewish Scriptures. There, to be humble (ταπεινοφρονέω, *tapeinophroneō*) is the opposite of having an exalted view of oneself (Ps. 130:2 LXX [131:2 MT, Eng.]),[7] and the "lowly" (ταπεινοί, *tapeinoi*) are those who have no resources of their own and so need to lean on the Lord for help (Isa. 11:4; 14:32; 49:13; cf. Luke 1:52). The Lord does not despise a "humbled heart" (καρδίαν . . . τεταπεινωμένην, *kardian . . . tetapeinōmenēn*; Ps. 50:19 LXX [51:19 MT; 51:17 Eng.]). Paul, then, also uses the term positively. In Phil. 2:3 it stands opposite "selfish ambition" (ἐριθεία, *eritheia*) and "conceit" (κενοδοξία, *kenodoxia*) and is aligned with "considering others better than yourselves" (BDAG 989–90; cf. 392, 538).

The meaning of the term here in Eph. 4:2 is perhaps best understood from its association with πραΰτης (*praytēs*), which is "the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance" (BDAG 861). Πραΰτης refers to "gentleness" (2 Cor. 10:1) and even "politeness," especially in circumstances

6. This is not surprising, since the more-common adjective ταπεινός (*tapeinos*, lowly) and verb ταπεινόω (*tapeinoō*, humiliate), although they could be used positively, most often refer to servility, weakness, and breaking the spirit of others (Grundmann, *TDNT* 8:1–5; cf. LSJ 1756–57).

7. Cf. the use of the verb ταπεινόω and the noun ταπεινόφρων in Prov. 29:23 LXX.

where it takes an effort to be gentle and polite (Sir. 4:8; Gal. 6:1; Titus 3:2; 1 Pet. 3:16). The two terms together, then, refer to an attitude that both recognizes one's true position before God (a suppliant in need of his help) and is willing to be kind and gracious to others even when circumstances might excuse one from showing these qualities (cf. Col. 3:12–13).

Second, Paul urges his readers to walk μετὰ μακροθυμίας (*meta makrothymias*, with patience).[8] Μακροθυμία refers to a persistence in one's convictions, even when circumstances make this difficult (2 Cor. 6:6; 2 Tim. 3:10; 4:2; James 5:10). It is linked with faithfulness in the Pauline corpus (Gal. 5:22; 2 Tim. 3:10; cf. Heb. 6:12). Sandwiched as it is here between references to humility and gentleness on one hand and bearing with others on the other hand, it clearly connotes "being able to bear up under provocation" (BDAG 612).

Third, Paul says that his readers should walk in a way worthy of their calling ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ (*anechomenoi allēlōn en agapē*, bearing with each other in love). The verb ἀνέχω (*anechō*) means to put up with something annoying (2 Cor. 11:1, 4, 19–20; cf. 2 Tim. 4:3) or harmful (2 Thess. 1:4; 1 Cor. 4:12). It is possible to "put up" with people that one nevertheless resents and dislikes, but the phrase "in love" shows that this grudging tolerance is not what Paul has in mind (Schlier 1957: 183). The idea is similar to Col. 3:13: they should bear with and forgive each other "even if one has a just complaint against another."

Fourth, Paul's readers should walk σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν τὴν ἑνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος (*spoudazontes tērein tēn henotēta tou pneumatos*, being eager to keep the unity of the Spirit). This final adverbial phrase is climactic. It is the goal toward which the other three phrases have been moving and a bridge to the next paragraph (vv. 4–6). Already the qualities of humility, gentleness, and patience (v. 2a) alerted Paul's readers that his concern lay with their relationships with others. His next phrase has told them that his concern lies even more specifically with their relationships with one another as people in the church (v. 2b). Now he becomes still more specific: they are to maintain energetically the unity that the Spirit has given them despite their differences with one another (2:18, 22). In addition, Paul's emphasis on "oneness" (ἑνότης, *henotēs*) points ahead to his main concern in the next three verses, where the term "one" will appear six times within the space of thirty-four words and itself serves as a transition to the next major section (vv. 7–16), where the unity of the church in the midst of a diversity of gifts is the main subject.

Paul seems to envision the unity of the church as something complex. At one level, the church already possesses unity because God's Spirit has already accomplished it when, in concert with Christ, he tore down the barriers that divided various social groups, giving them peace with each other and peace with

8. A few interpreters have taken either both μετά phrases with both participles (e.g., Bengel 1860: 88; Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.45]) or the second μετά phrase with the first participle (e.g., Muddiman 2001: 176, 179), but as Best (1998: 362) says, if the first of these options were correct, there would be no need to repeat the second μετά, and if the second option were correct, the symmetry of the two sets of phrases would be destroyed.

God (2:18, 22).[9] At another level, however, the church needs to maintain (τηρεῖν, *tērein*) unity, and it must live in a way that is zealous to do so (σπουδάζοντες, *spoudazontes*).[10] At this level, unity is kept "by the συνδέσμῳ [*syndesmō*] of peace."[11] The term σύνδεσμος (*syndesmos*) means a "fastener," such as something that holds clothing together, a conjunction that attaches clauses to each other, or a ligament that binds bone to muscle (LSJ 1701; cf. BDAG 966). It could also be used metaphorically to refer, for example, to the bond that unites the city (Plato, *Resp.* 7.520a) or, in Stoicism and Middle Platonism, to the bonds that hold the cosmic body of the universe together (van Kooten 2003: 30–53). For Paul, the metaphor was alive (Col. 2:19), and so here he probably has in mind the imagery of something that fastens things together: peace is the "fastener" that preserves the church's unity.[12] It must be energetically worked out in practical ways, such as lovingly putting up with each other's foibles, being polite and gentle under provocation, and being humble.

4:4

In 4:4–6 Paul utters a series of short statements that begin with the number "one" and focus on the church body, the Spirit, the Christian hope, the Lord, God the Father, the faith, and baptism. The theological importance of these subjects, that they number seven (a significant number in Judaism and early Christianity), the skillful repetition of the three genders for "one" in 4:5, the lack of any main verb, and the lack of any conjunction linking 4:4–6 to the previous paragraph—these features have led many interpreters to see an early Christian creedal formulation here, either in its entirety (Pelikan and Hotchkiss 2003: 34) or in part (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 228–29; Best 1997a: 64–66; 1998: 357–59).[13]

If these features are evidence of an early Christian creed, however, it is likely that Paul has used it with a free hand. He has probably at least added the phrase καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν (*kathōs kai eklēthēte en mia elpidi tēs klēseōs hymōn*, just as you were called with one hope of your calling). The use of καθώς (*kathōs*, just as) and a verb and noun from the same stem (ἐκλήθητε . . . κλήσεως, *eklēthēte . . . klēseōs*, you were called . . . with a calling) are both stylistic peculiarities of Ephesians (Lincoln 1990: 229; Best 1997a: 67; 1998: 358). Paul has probably also added the first set of terms, ἓν σῶμα καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα (*hen sōma kai hen pneuma*, one body and one Spirit), since these have been important in the letter up to this point (σῶμα, *sōma*, body [1:23]; ἓν σῶμα, *hen sōma*, one body [2:16]; ἓν πνεῦμα, *hen*

9. Cf. Mayer (2002: 61), who correctly identifies τοῦ πνεύματος as a subjective genitive.

10. Mayer (2002: 64–66) speaks of the unity portrayed in this passage as both "gift" (*Gabe*) and "task" (*Aufgabe*).

11. *Pace* Abbott (1897: 107), who says that "it is not by the bond of peace that the unity of the Spirit is kept" (cf. O'Brien 1999: 280; Hoehner 2002: 512). For the interpretation of the ἐν adopted here, see Schnackenburg 1991: 165; MacDonald 2000: 287; Aletti 2001: 210.

12. Τῆς εἰρήνης is, then, a genitive of apposition, as most commentators recognize. See especially the discussion in Alford 1857: 109.

13. Bruce (1984: 335, 337) refers to 4:4–6 as a "*credo*," but his exegesis shows that he thought Paul had altered the original confession.

pneuma, one Spirit [2:18]; πνεῦμα, *pneuma* [1:13, 17; 2:22; 3:5, 16]).[14] Indeed, the number "one" (ἓν, *hen*) itself seems to echo Paul's use of the term "unity" (ἑνότης, *henotēs*) in the immediately preceding clause (v. 3), and this makes the lack of a conjunction joining 4:3 to 4:4 somewhat more natural.

It seems likely, then, that Paul freely composed 4:4–6 as he dictated his letter, perhaps relying to some extent on traditional language from early creedal formulations. Something similar probably happened in 1 Cor. 8:4, where Paul reminded the Corinthians of a truth he and they both knew: "There is no God but one" (οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς, *oudeis theos ei mē heis*). This is traditional language (Rom. 3:30; Mark 2:7; 10:18 [par. Luke 18:19]; cf. 1 Tim. 2:5), but it is fully integrated into the surrounding argument. In Eph. 4:4–6 Paul has probably also used some traditional language, but just as in 1 Cor. 8:4, he has so fully integrated it into the context that it is difficult to identify precisely which elements come from the tradition and which elements come from Paul.

The section serves as a theological basis both for the practical admonitions to unity in 4:1–3 and for the emphasis on unity amid diversity in 4:7–16 (cf. Dahl 2000: 418). The sevenfold repetition of the number "one" shows the importance of the unity that Paul appeals to his readers to pursue in 4:1–3, but the diversity within this one God (Spirit, Lord, and Father; on this, see especially Barth 1974: 466–67) and the diverse ways in which his unity finds expression (body, faith, baptism) reveal that God's unity is nevertheless expressed in the kind of diversity that Paul will describe in 4:7–16.

Structurally, Paul expresses himself here in much the same way as he did in 1 Cor. 12:4–31. There too a description of the diversity within God ("the same Spirit, . . . Lord, . . . [and] God") and of the correspondingly diverse manifestation of his presence in the church ("gifts, . . . services, . . . and activities"; 12:4–6) lays the groundwork for a discussion of the various gifts given to "the one body" with its "many members" (12:7–31).

Paul begins this new paragraph by affirming that there is ἓν σῶμα καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα (*hen sōma kai hen pneuma*, one body and one Spirit). This phrase reaches back to 2:13–22, where he had described Christ as both "peace" itself (2:14) and the one who preaches "peace" (2:17). Sandwiched between these two references to peace lies the description of Christ's creation of "the one new human being" and the "one body" of the church through his death on the cross (2:15–16), a death that tore down the enmity between Jews and Gentiles and reconciled both groups to God. Paul then says that both groups have access to God "in one Spirit" (2:18) and, a few clauses later, that God dwells with his united people "in the Spirit" (2:22). When Paul says that "there is one body and one Spirit," therefore, he is reminding his readers that they should keep the church fastened together with peace because of what God has done for them both by uniting them together across entrenched social boundaries and by giving them his spiritual presence.

14. Cf. Lincoln 1990: 229, but not Best 1997a: 64–65; 1998: 358, who thinks that only 4:4b is the author's own composition.

There is "one body" and "one Spirit" in the same way that (καθώς, *kathōs*) Paul's readers "have been called" (ἐκλήθητε, *eklēthēte*) in one hope of their "calling" (κλήσεως, *klēseōs*). The repetition of the concept of "calling" from 4:1 and the use, as in that verse, of both the noun and the verb that express this concept lend it special emphasis. Here, however, Paul makes the future element of God's call explicit, just as he did in his first intercessory prayer (1:18): his readers were called ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι (*en mia elpidi*, in one hope).

Since his prayer, Paul has described this hope more specifically in 2:12. In that section, he said that his readers, prior to their conversion, had no "hope" and were "without God in the world." They were powerless before Satan's dominion, their own fallen flesh and mind, and the wrath of God, whom they had disobeyed (2:1–3). They were, moreover, separated from Israel, the people through whom God has worked to rescue human beings from this universal plight (2:11–12). "But now," because of the blood of Christ, shed on the cross, God has rescued them from this desperate situation by making them part of his people and reconciling them to himself (2:13–18). They now have hope, the same kind of hope that characterized Abraham, who believed that the God who could call things into existence out of nothing could also create a people for himself against all appearances to the contrary (Rom. 4:17–18).

Paul says that his readers were called ἐν (*en*) this hope. This means that hope accompanied God's call, as an integral part of it.[15] Like Abraham, their trust in the good news that God has included them in his people and reconciled them to himself is a trust in something they cannot see. It is the conviction that one day what they can now see only with the eyes of their hearts will be concrete, and they will experience for all time "the surpassing wealth of his grace by kindness . . . in Christ Jesus" (2:7).

4:5 Paul now picks up the pace of his discourse, dropping all conjunctions and qualifying phrases and skillfully varying the terms to which he refers to allow himself to repeat the number "one" in all three genders: εἷς κύριος, μία πίστις, ἓν βάπτισμα (*heis kyrios, mia pistis, hen baptisma*, one Lord, one faith, one baptism). The repetition shows that his emphasis lies on the numeral itself and not on the three terms to which it is attached. This should caution us against finding a subtle significance in the order of the terms or theological reasons why precisely these three terms and not others were chosen.[16]

His readers have "one Lord," the same Lord whom Paul serves as a prisoner (4:1) and who is identical with "Messiah Jesus," the one who stands at the center of God's purposes for the universe (3:11). He is enthroned at God's right hand with every other "lordship" (κυριότης, *kyriotēs*) beneath his feet

15. Cf. Paul's statements elsewhere that believers were called ἐν . . . εἰρήνῃ (1 Cor. 7:15) and ἐν ἁγιασμῷ (1 Thess. 4:7; Ellicott 1859: 80; Abbott 1897: 108).

16. Ellicott (1859: 80), for example, thinks that there is one faith and one baptism because there is one Lord, and many commentators puzzle over why Paul mentions baptism but not the Lord's Supper (e.g., De Wette 1843: 130; Alford 1857: 110; Eadie 1883: 275; Westcott 1906: 58–59).

(1:21). These "lordships" include that of "Nero, the lord of all the universe" (ὁ τοῦ παντὸς κόσμου κύριος Νέρων, *ho tou pantos kosmou kyrios Nerōn*), as one contemporary inscription described him (*SIG* 814, line 31, quoted in Foerster, *TDNT* 3:1056; my trans.; cf. Acts 25:26). Thus the early Christian confession of Jesus as the "one Lord" excluded the Roman emperors and anyone else from legitimate claim to that title (cf. 1 Cor. 8:5–6).

At the same time, the title boldly identified Jesus with the God of the Jewish Scriptures, who is often called ὁ κύριος (*ho kyrios*, the Lord) in the LXX. Deuteronomy 6:4 in the LXX, for example, reads, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord [κύριος] our God is one Lord [κύριος εἷς, *kyrios heis*]."

His readers also have "one faith." This could refer to the body of doctrine that all Christians believe (e.g., Best 1998: 368–69; O'Brien 1999: 283) or to the trust that all Christians place in Christ Jesus (e.g., Eadie 1883: 275; Hoehner 2002: 516–17). Up to this point in the letter, both the verb (πιστεύω, *pisteuō*, I believe) and the noun (πίστις, *pistis*, faith) have referred to the trust that Christians place in Christ (1:13, 15, 19; 2:8; 3:12, 17). In 4:13, however, Paul will speak of ἡ ἑνότης τῆς πίστεως (*hē henotēs tēs pisteōs*, the unity of the faith), clearly echoing 4:3–6 and just as clearly referring to the content of the faith that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers of 4:11 have handed on in their teaching. Here too, then, Paul probably means the body of teaching that Christians believe, what he calls in 1:13 "the word of truth, the gospel of . . . salvation" (cf. Gal. 1:23; 1 Cor. 16:13; Rom. 10:8).

His readers have experienced "one baptism." Most interpreters believe that this refers to the Christian practice of immersion in water (e.g., BDAG 165), although they sometimes allow that a reference to Spirit baptism may lurk in the background (e.g., Best 1998: 369). Yet we should remember that the word βαπτίζω (*baptizō*) means "I immerse," not "I immerse in water."[17] With this in mind, the evidence from the Pauline tradition should make us cautious about assuming that an unqualified reference to baptism, such as we find here, must refer to water baptism. The reference here is rich with echoes of 1 Cor. 12:13: "For we were all also baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we all were irrigated with one Spirit."[18] If Paul refers to water baptism at all in 1 Cor. 12:13, it takes a distant second place in importance to the notion that God has immersed his people in his Spirit (cf. Mark 1:8; Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:16; Dunn 1998a: 86–88, 95–96).

Similarly, in Gal. 3:26–29 Paul refers to the unity of Christians across boundaries of ethnicity, social class, and gender because of a common faith in Christ, a common faith that he then explains further in terms of baptism into Christ and putting on Christ. The reference to putting on Christ is metaphorical,

17. On this, see Dunn (1998a: 96n31), who illustrates the point from Josephus, *J.W.* 4.137. There Josephus says that a crowd of outlaws poured into Jerusalem and that this influx ἐβάπτισεν τὴν πόλιν (overwhelmed the city).

18. The translation "irrigated" for ἐποτίσθημεν is from Dunn 1998a: 95.

and so the reference to baptism is best understood as metaphorical also (Dunn 1970: 109–13). Paul thought that water baptism was important enough to practice it (1 Cor. 1:14–16), and he assumed that even Christians he did not know personally had experienced it (Dunn 1998a: 90, citing Rom. 6:3–4; Col. 2:12), but he also gave the ritual itself a place of secondary importance to the faith of the individual in the gospel and the transforming work of the Spirit (1 Cor. 1:13, 17; cf. Gal. 3:2, 5; Eph. 1:13; cf. Dunn 1998a: 95).

Despite all this, it seems likely that in a letter like Ephesians, written to a wide audience, a simple reference to baptism would at least include the Christian ritual (Bruce 1961: 79–80; *pace* Hoehner 2002: 518). It is perhaps best to think of "one baptism" as a shorthand expression for the whole process of conversion, summarized by reference to the visible ritual. It was "one" because it was distinctively Christian: it was done in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5) and symbolized the death (Rom. 6:3–4) and resurrection (Col. 2:12) of the believer with Christ. The ritual was an important symbol of this process but was not nearly as important as the spiritual reality that it signified (cf. Bruce 1961: 79; 1984: 336–37; Dunn 1998a: 93–101; O'Brien 1999: 284).

4:6 The seventh and final affirmation of unity is also the climax of the series (Lincoln 1990: 240). It focuses on the unity of God as seen in his sovereign fatherhood over "all." The four occurrences of the term "all" (πάντων . . . πάντων . . . πάντων . . . πᾶσιν, *pantōn . . . pantōn . . . pantōn . . . pasin*) in this affirmation could be masculine and so refer to people, or they could be neuter and refer to things.

A number of interpreters have thought the terms were masculine and referred to "all" believers (e.g., Alford 1857: 110–11; Eadie 1883: 275–79; Masson 1953: 187; Bruce 1984: 337–38; Schnackenburg 1991: 166–68; Hoehner 2002: 519–20). This reading would be consistent with the idea developed in the letter so far that God is the adoptive Father of believers (1:5) and that they have free access to their Father by means of the "one" Spirit (2:18). The statement that God is "over all and through all and in all," moreover, coheres nicely with the picture of God ruling over the church through Christ its head (1:20–23) and, by the Spirit, giving access to God (2:18) and indwelling his people (2:22).

Those who see the occurrences of "all" as neuter and interpret the statement of God's rule over the universe ("all things"), however, have the better argument (e.g., Gnilka 1971: 203–4; Barth 1974: 470–72; O'Brien 1999: 285; Lincoln 1990: 240–41; Darko 2008: 120). They point out that Paul uses similar affirmations elsewhere in his letters, and in those places "all" refers to everything (1 Cor. 8:6; Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:16–17). The notion that the one God and Father ties everything together, moreover, expresses an important theme throughout the letter so far:

He will sum up "all things" (τὰ πάντα, *ta panta*) in Christ (1:10).

He works "all things" (τὰ πάντα) to accomplish his will (1:11).

He has subjected "all things" (πάντα) to Christ (1:22).

He has created "all things" (τὰ πάντα; 3:9).

He is the Father who names "every" (πᾶσα, *pasa*) family, whether earthly or heavenly (3:15).

Taken together, these statements seem to spell out what Paul means when he says that God is "over all and through all and in all." He is "over" all in the sense that he created everything (3:9), named all the tribes of the universe (3:15), and subjected everything to Christ (1:22). He is "through" and "in" all in the sense that he is summing up all things in Christ (1:10) and works all things to accomplish his will (1:11).

As interpreters at least since Jerome (Heine 2002: 170) have sometimes noticed, this understanding of the phrase is consistent with the use of similar expressions within Stoicism of God's presence everywhere (e.g., Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* 7.9; cf. 4.23).[19] The expression also resembles affirmations in Hellenistic Judaism that the "one" God is the Creator of "all" (e.g., Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.193) or that God is the "one Father of all" creation (e.g., Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.14; cf. *Heir* 62; cf. Gnilka 1971: 204n2; Dibelius 1956: 24–25). In both the Stoic and the Jewish texts, the term "all" refers to everything that exists, and this broader religious context makes it likely that when Paul speaks in a similar idiom, he uses "all" in the same way.

Paul, then, brings his preface to the second main part of his letter to a climax with the affirmation that the one God is Father of and sovereign over all things. He has created everything and works intentionally through and in all things to accomplish his intended goal for the universe he created.

The church occupies a critical place in this divine plan (1:22–23; 2:11–22; 3:9–10) and so must itself be unified. The uniqueness of God and his plan for the unity of the universe should be reflected in practical ways in the unity of believers with one another.

Summary

Paul introduces the second part of his letter with a brief prologue in two parts. First (4:1–3), he tells his readers that he writes as a friend so committed to what he is about to say that he has been willing to suffer imprisonment for it. He wants to encourage his readers to live in the way their conversion and their hope imply they should live, which means cultivating four qualities in particular: humility that translates into gentleness (even toward difficult people), persistence in their commitment (even when this is difficult), willingness to put up with annoying people (even to love them), and zeal to preserve the Spirit-given unity of the church.

19. See the extensive collection of Stoic and other Hellenistic religious expressions of God's uniqueness and omnipresence in Norden 1923: 240–50.

Second (4:4–6), Paul summarizes the theological basis on which this way of life must be built. Christ died to make his church one body out of a diversity of ethnic groups, and the Spirit lives within the church to keep this unity. Christ also died to provide hope to those who had been without hope because they were without God. There is only one Lord, and all Paul's readers confess him as Lord. There is only one body of truth about this Lord and his significance, and all Paul's readers believe it. There is only one immersion in the Spirit at conversion (signified by water baptism), and all Paul's readers have experienced it. There is only one God who created all things and is summing them all up in Christ, and he is the object of the worship of all Paul's readers.

If Paul's readers are unified with one another in their willingness to confess these truths, then they should be willing to engage in the practical attitudes and actions that foster the unity of the church for which Christ died.

Additional Note

4:6. In a number of ancient witnesses (e.g., D, F, G, Ψ, 0278, 1739^{c}, most Byzantine manuscripts, the Old Latin and Syriac versons, and Irenaeus), the term ἡμῖν appears immediately after the phrase ἐν πᾶσιν (not before, as Best 1998: 371 says). If this is correct, then the debate over whether the four uses of πᾶς in 4:6 are masculine or neuter can be decided with a reasonable degree of certainty in favor of a masculine reference to the body of believers in the church. If Paul concluded 4:6 with the statement that God is ἐν πᾶσιν ἡμῖν (in us all), then the pronoun ἡμῖν (us) must refer to believers, as it has throughout the letter. The other three occurrences of "all" in 4:6, then, would also refer to believers. On the strength of the geographical diversity of the witnesses that have ἡμῖν, Hoehner (2002: 519n2) accepts this reading and interprets the rest of the verse accordingly.

Most commentators who address the issue, however, have decided to omit ἡμῖν (e.g., Ellicott 1859: 81; Abbott 1897: 109; Robinson 1904: 179; Lincoln 1990: 223; Best 1998: 371; Metzger 1994: 536). Some in the early church, such as Origen (Heine 2002: 168–69) and Marcion (Barth 1974: 471n224), were concerned with the question of whether God was the Father of all people or only of Christians, and a desire to confine God's fatherhood to believers may have led an early scribe to add the ἡμῖν. The addition also conformed the text to the first-person plural ἡμῶν in 4:7 (Lincoln 1990: 223; cf. Gnilka 1971: 204n3). A later addition of ἡμῖν to the text becomes even more likely when we consider the strength of the witnesses against including it (e.g., 𝔓^{46}, ℵ, A, B, C, P, 082, 6, 33, 81, 104, 1175, 1739*, 1881, 2464, the Coptic tradition, Marcion [according to Epiphanius], Jerome, and Augustine). It is true, as Hoehner (2002: 519n2) says, that this is primarily Alexandrian evidence, but the evidence is so early that it is still quite strong. It is likely, then, that ἡμῖν was not part of the original letter.

B. The Gifts of the Victorious Christ Cultivate the Body's Maturity (4:7–16)

Paul now moves from the general to the particular and from the given to what still needs attaining. Although there is a sense in which the unity of the body has already been created by the God who is sovereign over all (vv. 4–6), we now learn that there is also a sense in which "each one" in the body must work to attain the body's unity (vv. 7, 13, 16). This new focus leads Paul to view the body's unity through the metaphors of architectural completeness (οἰκοδομή, *oikodomē*, building up; vv. 12, 16) and human maturity (ἀνὴρ τέλειος, *anēr teleios*, mature man; v. 13), metaphors that recall the language of 2:11–22. In that passage, Christ creates "in himself one new human being" (ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον, *en autō eis hena kainon anthrōpon*) through his death (2:15–16) and becomes the most important stone used in the building (οἰκοδομή) where God dwells, a building constructed from both Jews and Gentiles (2:19–22). The building/body is not yet complete, and the effort of each believer is necessary for its completion.

The power for achieving this goal, however, comes not from the believer's own resources but as a gift from the victorious, ascended Christ. This point is so important that Paul begins the passage with it and supports it with a quotation and exegesis of Ps. 68:18. The very same Christ who has conquered every enemy power in every corner of the universe, whether high or low, is the one who now distributes gifts to each believer "for the building up of the body of Christ" (v. 12).

As with 4:1–6, this paragraph can be divided into two subsections. The first subsection (4:7–10) focuses on the gift-giver, Christ, and on his status as the one who has conquered the forces of evil. The second subsection (4:11–16) is one long sentence. It shifts the emphasis slightly from the gifts given to each person in the body to the gifts of five groups of people to the body of Christ so that they might in turn equip the "saints" for the work of ministry (4:11–12). With mention of the "work" of the "saints," however, the emphasis quickly moves back to the contribution that "all" make to the body's maturity (v. 13). This body of Christ, we now learn, is growing and maturing away from infancy (with its tendency to be swayed by various kinds of false teaching) toward full adulthood, and every "connection" in the body assists this growth by his or her loving witness to the truth of the gospel (vv. 14–16).

Exegesis and Exposition

[7]But to each one of us grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. [8]Therefore it says, "Ascending to the height, he captured captivity; ⌜he gave⌝ gifts to human beings." [9]And what does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended ⌜ ⌝ into the lower regions ⌜ ⌝ of the earth. [10]The one who descended is himself also the one who ascended far above all the heavens so that he might fill all things.

[11]And he himself gave ⌜some⌝ to be apostles, ⌜others⌝ to be prophets, ⌜others⌝ to be evangelists, ⌜and others⌝ to be pastors and teachers [12]for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, [13]until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at a mature man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, [14]that we might no longer be infants, wave-tossed and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human trickery, by cunning, in the service of the system of error, [15]but by speaking the truth in love, we might grow up to him in every respect, who is the head, Christ, [16]from whom all the body, being joined and held together through every assisting connection according to the activity in the measure of each single part, produces the growth of the body for the purpose of building itself up in love.

4:7

Paul makes a skillful transition to the new section by beginning his first sentence with ἑνὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν (*heni de hekastō hēmōn*, but to each one of us). The first term, ἑνί (*heni*, one), links the new passage to the theme of unity that has dominated the previous paragraph (4:1–6), and the δέ (*de*, but) alerts the reader that Paul is about to change directions slightly: he will now focus on the role of individuals in attaining the unity he has just summarized in 4:1–6.

Paul begins by saying that ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις (*edothē hē charis*, grace has been given) to each believer κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ (*kata to metron tēs dōreas tou Christou*, according to the measure of the gift of Christ). The combination of the terms χάρις (*charis*, grace), δίδωμι (*didōmi*, give), and δωρεά (*dōrea*, gift) last occurred in Paul's digression on his personal role in God's purposes as a herald of the gospel to the Gentiles (3:2, 7–9). He called this role "the grace [χάρις, *charis*] that God gave [δίδωμι] me" (3:2), said that he received it "according to the gift [δωρεά] of God's grace [χάρις] given [δίδωμι] to me according to the effect of his power" (3:7), and claimed that "this grace [χάρις] was given [δίδωμι] . . . to me" (3:8). Paul's particular role may be historically unique, but now we learn that just as God has graciously given Paul his role (3:2, 7, 8) and the power to carry it out (3:7), so also a role in the edification of the church is given "to each one of us" (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7, 11; Rom. 12:3; 1 Pet. 4:10).[1]

1. Elsewhere in his letters, when Paul lists the gifts given to believers, he calls them χαρίσματα (1 Cor. 12:4, 9, 28, 30–31; Rom. 12:6), "favors bestowed" or "gifts" (BDAG 1081). Here he may have chosen to use χάρις instead specifically to make the link between his own powerfully

A few scholars have argued that "us" here refers not to every believer but to "the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers" of verse 11. Merklein (1973: 58–62), for example, thinks that 4:7–16 comes from a time after Paul when the church's unity and doctrinal purity were at risk. He says Ephesians was written by a follower of Paul who sanctioned certain ecclesiastical offices to guard the church's unity and doctrinal purity. The offices of verse 11, then, are the "gifts" that Christ "gave" to the church in verses 7–8, and the "us" refers to Paul, his fellow apostles and prophets, and by implication, to the ecclesiastical authorities of the author's own day who carry on the tradition handed down by the first generation of authorities.[2]

As most commentators recognize, however, this is not a plausible reading of the shift to the first-person plural. So far, the author has used the first-person plural in the letter to include himself with his readers (1:3–12, 14, 17, 19; 2:3–5, 7, 14, 18; 3:12, 20), and it is unlikely that he would expect them suddenly to understand his use of it here in an exclusive sense (Schnackenburg 1991: 175).

Grace is therefore given to each believer, and it is given κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ (*kata to metron tēs dōreas tou Christou*, according to the measure of the gift of Christ). The expression κατὰ τὸ μέτρον means "according to the due measure, proportion, or limit" (cf. LSJ 1123; 1 Kings 7:48 LXX [7:11 MT, Eng.]; 2 Cor. 10:13). The phrase τῆς δωρεᾶς describes what is measured, and the phrase τοῦ Χριστοῦ explains who measures it: Christ gives "grace" to each believer, and he does so in proportions appropriate to each gift. Just as with 3:2, 7, and 8, the term χάρις carries with it the connotation not only of an assignment given by God but also of the gift of "the powers and capabilities requisite" to complete the assignment (BDAG 1080). Just as in Paul's own experience of God's grace (3:7–8), then, Christ measures out to each believer the right amount of power necessary to accomplish the task that the gift requires (cf. v. 16; Rom. 12:6; Pokorný 1992: 169).

4:8 Paul next introduces a quotation to support his claim that Christ gives to each believer both gifts and the necessary power to employ Christ's gifts. Paul's introductory phrase, διὸ λέγει (*dio legei*, therefore it says), is slightly odd. It appears only here, in 5:14, and in James 4:6 in the NT, and contrary to Paul's custom with similar introductory phrases, it does not identify the source of his quotation.[3] Although the quotation itself resembles Ps. 68:18 (68:19 MT;

transforming gift and the gifts that Christ gives to each believer. They are qualitatively alike. Cf. Best 1998: 377.

2. Schlier (1957: 191) also believes that the "us" of 4:7 refers to the offices of 4:11 but thinks that the letter comes from Paul himself.

3. These eccentricities should not, however, be exaggerated. Although the phrase διὸ λέγει does not occur in the undisputed Paulines, διό occurs more often in Paul's undisputed letters than anywhere else in the NT, and Paul frequently introduces quotations with λέγει. Moreover, Paul twice uses λέγει to introduce a quotation from Scripture and seems simply to assume that his readers know its source (Gal. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:2; cf. James 4:6). Philo often uses διὸ λέγει to introduce quotations of Scripture (*Alleg. Interp.* 3.172, 180; *Agriculture* 100; *Drunkenness* 138;

67:19 LXX), it differs from that text in such important ways that some scholars think Paul is not quoting Scripture at all (cf. 5:14).

A table with a literal translation of the relevant texts is perhaps the easiest way to show where the problem lies:

Psalm 68:19 MT	Psalm 67:19 LXX	Ephesians 4:8
You ascended (עָלִיתָ, *ʿālîtā*) to the height; you captured (שָׁבִיתָ, *šābîtā*) captivity; you received (לָקַחְתָּ, *lāqaḥtā*) gifts among humanity (בָּאָדָם, *bāʾādām*).	You ascended (ἀνέβης, *anebēs*) to the height; you captured (ἠχμαλώτευσας, *ēchmalōteusas*) captivity; you received (ἔλαβες, *elabes*) gifts among humanity (ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ, *en anthrōpō*).[4]	Ascending (ἀναβάς, *anabas*) to the height, he captured (ἠχμαλώτευσεν, *ēchmalōteusen*) captivity; he gave (ἔδωκεν, *edōken*) gifts to human beings (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, *tois anthrōpois*).

As the table shows, the MT and LXX are in step with each other, but Paul's quotation contains three differences from these other texts, listed here in ascending order of importance:

1. Paul changes the subject of the statement so that it no longer tells God what he has done in the second person but narrates what Christ has done in the third person.
2. He changes the collective singular noun "humanity" to the plural noun, "human beings."
3. He changes the verb "received" to its antonym "gave" and modifies the end of the statement so that instead of God receiving gifts among humanity (singular), Christ gives gifts to human beings (plural).

These changes produce a significant difference in meaning between Ps. 68:18 (Eng.) and Paul's quotation. In its original form, Ps. 68:18 tells God that after triumphing over his enemies, he has led them in triumphal procession to a mountaintop (probably Zion) and taken booty from them. Paul's text speaks quite differently of a triumphant Christ distributing gifts to each of his human subjects.

According to a number of scholars, both the similarity of Paul's text to Ps. 68:18 and its dramatic departures from the original can be explained if Paul (or the author of Ephesians) knew the Jewish interpretive tradition on this text.[5] With remarkable consistency ancient Jewish interpreters took Ps. 68:18 as a reference to Moses's ascent to heaven to receive the Torah from God. The

Confusion 182), although mostly in the passive voice (*Posterity* 96; *Drunkenness* 166; *Heir* 58; 233; *Flight* 159; *Names* 17; *Dreams* 2.280, 296; *Abraham* 80; *QG* 97). Hebrews uses the same idiom, if not the precise phrase, to introduce Scripture quotations (Heb. 3:7, 10; 10:5).

4. NETS translates, "You received gifts by a person," but for the use of ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ to mean "among humanity" or "in humankind," see, e.g., Xenophon, *Symp.* 5.3; Plato, *Resp.* 2.376b; Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 770a; Eccles. 2:24 LXX.

5. Some of the wording in what follows is indebted to Thielman 2007: 819–25, where a more-detailed treatment of the relationship between Eph. 4:8 and Ps. 68:18 may be found.

"you" in the text was not God but Moses; the ascension was not up Mount Zion but to heaven; and "captivity" was not a collective noun referring to prisoners of war but the Torah.

The phrase "you received gifts among humanity," however, created a problem for this interpretation. If the text speaks of Moses's receiving the law from God, then the gifts must be equated with the law. But if the gifts are the law, then they should come from God rather than from people, and Moses should receive them in heaven, where God dwells, not on earth "among humanity."

One strategy for solving this problem takes the phrase as a reference to "the Torah which was bestowed upon Israel as a gift, at no cost" (Midr. Teh. 68.11; Barth 1974: 475–76; W. H. Harris 1996: 77–95).[6] This interpretation assumes that Moses received the law after ascending to heaven in order to *give* it to God's people. The targum on Ps. 68:19 MT makes this assumption explicit by substituting "he gave" for "you received" in its paraphrase of the text: "You ascended to the firmament, Prophet Moses; you led captive captivity; you learned the words of Torah; you *gave* them as gifts to the sons of men" (Tg. of Ps. 68:19, trans. W. H. Harris 1996: 65, my italics).[7]

If we simply substitute "Christ" for Moses and "gifts" for Torah, the targum's rendering of Ps. 68:18 (Eng.) is close to Paul's quotation. Few scholars would say that the author of Ephesians was familiar with the targum as we now have it, since its present form comes from several centuries after Ephesians was written. Many scholars, however, think the author appealed to an exegetical tradition on Ps. 68:18 that also stands behind the targum.[8] Others think that Paul used the Mosaic interpretation of Ps. 68:18 in a polemical way to draw a contrast between Moses and Christ. Moses gave the people law, but Christ gave them grace (v. 7), and Moses ascended to heaven, but Christ ascended "far above the heavens" (v. 10; Lincoln 1982: 20; 1990: 243; Bruce 1984: 342–43).

A variant of this approach says that Eph. 4:8 is indebted to an early Christian argument against the association of Moses, the Torah, and Pentecost with Ps. 68:18. For Paul, as for the early Jewish Christians before him (cf. Acts 2:33), Christ's ascension to heaven and subsequent gift of the Spirit at Pentecost had trumped Moses's ascent to heaven and subsequent mediation of the law to Israel (W. H. Harris 1996: 171–72; cf. Schnackenburg 1991: 177; Moritz 1996a: 74–75; Muddiman 2001: 188–89).

6. Other strategies include taking "among humanity" to mean "by the virtue of Israel" (Pesiq. Rab. 47.4) or "because of the merits of the man," meaning the pious Abraham (Soperim 16.10; Midr. Teh. 22.19; Exod. Rab. 28.1). Some interpreters claimed that Moses received the Torah as recompense for the insult that the heavenly angels gave to him when they called him a mere "man" (*b. Šabb.* 89a) or, moving in the opposite direction, that Moses received the Torah "as a mere man" (Pesiq. Rab. 20.4). Cf. the summary in Schwindt 2002: 404.

7. The Aramaic text with German translation is available in Schwindt 2002: 403.

8. See, e.g., Abbott 1897: 112–13; Robinson 1904: 180; Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 80; Barth 1974: 476; Lincoln 1982: 19; 1990: 243; Gnilka 1971: 207; Pokorný 1992: 170; W. H. Harris 1996: 64–122; Aletti 2001: 215–16; Schwindt 2002: 403–23.

What are we to make of these approaches to Paul's quotation? Since Paul introduces an otherwise unknown saying with διὸ λέγει in 5:14, it is reasonable to propose that here too he quotes not Scripture directly but a traditional paraphrase of Ps. 68:18. Nevertheless, the balance of the evidence favors the view that Paul himself changed the text of the psalm so that it conformed better to his concerns in 4:7–16. This evidence can be summarized in two points.

First, the targum of Ps. 68:19 is the only unambiguous evidence of a Jewish exegetical tradition that actually replaces the verb "received" with the verb "gave" (cf. Schwindt 2002: 403). The other ancient Jewish comments on this text retain the verb "received" in the quotation and only imply in their interpretive comments that Moses received the Torah in order to "give" it to Israel. The targums on the Psalms in their present form, however, come from the fourth or fifth century after Christ, yet the christological reading of Ps. 68:18 was widespread long before this time (Justin, *Dial*. 39.4–5; 87.6; Tertullian, *Marc*. 5.8.18; cf. Schwindt 2002: 407). It seems at least as likely, then, that the targum represents a polemical response to the Christian exegesis of Ps. 68:19 as that it preserves a three- or four-hundred-year-old Jewish exegetical tradition that Paul knew and used.

Second, Paul wrote in Greek to Gentiles in Asia Minor (2:11; 3:1; 4:17), not in Aramaic to Jews, nor even in Greek to Jewish Christians. Yet the targums are in Aramaic, the vernacular of Judea, Syria, and Mesopotamia during the time of early Christianity (Kaufman 1992: 173). Paul could have certainly assumed some knowledge of the Greek rendering of the Scriptures among his readers, but he would not have assumed that they were familiar with an exegetical tradition preserved only in an Aramaic paraphrase of the Hebrew Scriptures. Even if some of his readers had heard of the rendering of Ps. 68:18 now preserved in the targum, moreover, it seems unlikely that they gave the targum the same status as the Greek Scriptures (cf. Best 1998: 379–80).

Paul himself, then, changed the Greek rendering of the text to suit his argument at this point in the letter. This should not surprise us. As Best (1998: 381) points out, when Paul quotes Hab. 2:4 in Gal. 3:11 and Rom. 1:17, he leaves out the possessive pronoun "his" so that Habakkuk's "the righteous person shall live by his faithfulness" becomes "the righteous person shall live by faith." Similarly, he quotes Deut. 30:12–14 in Rom. 10:6–8 to draw a contrast between the righteousness that comes by faith and the righteousness that comes by the Mosaic law (cf. Calvin 1965: 176). Deuteronomy 30:12–14 is a description of the ease with which one can obey the law. Paul, however, omits from his quotation any reference to the law, makes the text refer to the universal availability of the righteousness that comes by faith, and contrasts the effortlessness of faith with the impossibility of doing the law. Although in each instance Paul has introduced dramatic changes to the text that he cites, a reasonable case can be made that his overall argument is consistent with the overall argument of the passage out of which his citation comes.

Has Paul also followed this procedure in Eph. 4:7–11? Here too, a good case can be made that although Paul's changes to the Greek text of Scripture

are dramatic, they are consistent with the overall theological direction of Ps. 68.

As the threefold use of the verb δίδωμι (*didōmi*, give) in the passage (vv. 7, 8, 11) shows, the main theme of 4:7–16 is clearly that Christ gave gifts to the church to support its unity and to protect it against false teaching. The critical change in the wording of Ps. 68:18 from "you received" to "he gave" is consistent with this main theme. An important subsidiary theme in 4:8–10, however, is the triumph of Christ over the evil spiritual powers ranged against God and his people (cf. Arnold 1989: 56–57; Gombis 2005: 375–76). Paul not only describes this triumph explicitly in the quotation's statement that "he captured captivity," but he also hints at Christ's triumph over these powers when, in his interpretation of the quotation, he says that Christ ascended "far above all [ὑπεράνω πάντων, *hyperanō pantōn*] the heavens" (v. 10). This statement recalls Paul's earlier claim in 1:20–21 that when God raised Christ from the dead, he seated him "at his right hand in the heavenly places, high above all [ὑπεράνω πάσης, *hyperanō pasēs*] rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named." Paul's interest in Ps. 68:18, therefore, lay not only in the "gifts" that the psalm mentions but also in its expression of God's triumph over his enemies (cf. Col. 2:15).

The notion that God has triumphed over the enemies of his people is also a prominent theme in Ps. 68. The psalm begins with a request that God arise and scatter his enemies (vv. 1–2), continues with a historical review of God's military triumphs over Israel's enemies from the exodus to the battle of Deborah and Barak against the forces of Sisera (vv. 7–10; cf. Judg. 5:4–5, 21), and as it reaches its climax (Terrien 2003: 486–87, 490, 494; *pace* Moritz 1996a: 65–66), pictures God as sweeping all his enemies before him in a dramatic military drive from Mount Sinai to Mount Zion (vv. 17–18). It concludes with references to God's continued triumph over his enemies and the enemies of his people in the future (vv. 21–23, 28–30). Paul's quotation comes from the psalm's triumphant climax in verses 17–18. Although Paul has changed the wording of verse 18, therefore, he has done so in a way that is consistent with the psalm's theme of God's triumph over the enemies of his people (cf. Calvin 1965: 174–75; Gombis 2005: 374–76).

4:9 Paul's interest in Christ's triumph becomes explicit in his commentary on the psalm's reference to an ascent to the height. What could the statement "he ascended" mean, he asks rhetorically, except that "he also descended"? Paul's use of a rhetorical question here shows that he thinks his conclusion is obvious, but what was obvious to Paul and his readers is no longer so clear.

Does Christ's ascent make it obvious that he later descended, perhaps in the Spirit given at Pentecost? If so, then 4:11 would fit neatly with developments in the earliest church as they emerge from the Acts narrative. Just as the giving of the Spirit followed Christ's exaltation to heaven (Acts 2:33), so here Christ ascends to heaven and then gives the gifts of apostles, prophets,

evangelists, and teachers to the church (W. H. Harris 1996: 159–60; cf. Abbott 1897: 115–16; Lincoln 1990: 246–47).

Two problems, however, make this reading unlikely. First, in Acts 2 Christ sends the Spirit from heaven to all believers, but in Eph. 4:11 Christ sends certain gifted individuals to the church. Second, Paul makes a special point of saying in 4:10 that it was exactly the same person (αὐτός, *autos*), Christ, who both ascended and descended, and yet in Ephesians the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit are kept separate. The Spirit makes available to those who believe the gospel what Christ has accomplished (1:13; 2:22).[9]

Does Christ's ascent, then, make it obvious that he first descended? If this is the correct assumption, then Paul is drawing a conclusion from the widely accepted idea in early Christianity that Christ was with God prior to his manifestation among human beings. If that is true, and yet at some point he "ascended to the height" (Ps. 68:18), then obviously he first had to descend. As the early witnesses that added the term πρῶτον (*prōton*, first) after κατέβη (*katebē*, he descended) reveal, this was one of the earliest interpretations of the text (see the additional note). It has in its favor its conformity both to Paul's conviction, implied earlier in the letter, that Christ was with God before the world's foundation (1:4; cf. 1 Cor. 8:6) and its correspondence to claims elsewhere in the Pauline corpus that Christ went from a glorious, eternal existence with God to a humble existence among human beings (Phil. 2:6–8; 2 Cor. 8:9). Moreover, when the ascent and descent of Christ are discussed together in John's Gospel, the ascent is Christ's return to the place from which he had first descended (John 3:13; 6:33, 41, 50–51, 58, 62). This was apparently the most common way in which early Christians spoke of the "ascent" and "descent" of Christ.

If Paul had simply said that an ascent to the height also involves a descent or had spoken of a descent "to the earth," this would be the best understanding of the passage. Instead, however, he says that Christ went down εἰς τὰ κατώτερα τῆς γῆς (*eis ta katōtera tēs gēs*, to the lower regions of the earth). Does this mean that he descended "to the earth's lower regions" (taking τῆς γῆς as a "partitive" or "possessive" genitive), or does it mean that he descended "to the lower regions, that is, the earth" (taking τῆς γῆς as an "appositional" or "epexegetical" genitive)? Until the late nineteenth century, interpreters of Ephesians understood the phrase as a reference to "the earth's lower regions."[10] Christ's descent would then be to hades, the realm of the dead, thought of as below the earth's surface.

Why would Christ make such a journey? Perhaps to allow OT saints to become Christians (Tertullian, *An.* 55.2 [W. H. Harris 1996: 4]; Jerome [Heine 2002: 173]), to give the dead a chance to hear the gospel and be set free (Ambrosiaster, *ACCSNT* 8:164), or to rescue from the devil's captivity in limbo the saints who had died before Christ (Aquinas [W. H. Harris 1996: 6]). Or perhaps Paul simply means that Christ went to the place of the dead as a

9. On this second point, see especially Gombis 2005: 370–71.

10. On the history of interpretation of 4:7–11, see W. H. Harris 1996: 1–45.

human being who experienced death (Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.46]; Westcott 1906: 61; Büchsel, *TDNT* 3:640–42; Masson 1953: 190; Hoehner 2002: 536; Gombis 2005: 376–78).

Calvin's patience with all this was clearly wearing thin one Sunday morning in 1558. "Many have made glosses much too strong on this passage," he told his congregation, "saying that Jesus Christ went down not only into the grave, but also even into limbo, a place forged out of their own brain" (Calvin 1973: 350). Calvin, by contrast, proposed an elegantly simple explanation: Paul spoke of Christ's incarnation.[11] Although Calvin was not explicit about how he took the grammar of the phrase, he apparently understood τῆς γῆς in an appositional sense and took the larger phrase as a reference to the earth. He was one of the first in a long line of interpreters to do this.[12] By 1883 Eadie (293) could say that this interpretation was the position of "the majority of expositors," and a century later Schnackenburg (1991: 179n18) claimed that the old *descensus ad infernos* understanding had "now been abandoned."

The newer approach apparently solved several problems. First, early Christian literature pictures Christ ascending to heaven from the earth rather than from under the earth (Eadie 1883: 292; Haupt 1902a: 139; Best 1998: 384; cf. Barth 1974: 434). Second, Ephesians has a two-tiered (heaven and earth) rather than a three-tiered (heaven, earth, under the earth) view of the universe (Lincoln 1990: 245; W. H. Harris 1996: 179n26; Best 1998: 384; cf. Haupt 1902a: 139). Third, the enemy powers that Christ has defeated are located not under the earth but in the heavens (Barth 1974: 433), and in Ephesians, Christ defeated these powers at his ascension, not during a descent into hell between his death and resurrection (Barth 1974: 433; Best 1998: 384).

Despite the pleasing simplicity of this reading and the number of problems it seems to solve, however, it probably misconstrues the grammar. The expression τὰ κατώτερα τῆς γῆς is an odd way of referring to the surface of the earth. If Paul had intended to refer to Christ's (or the Spirit's) descent merely to the earth, he would have simply written εἰς τὰ κατώτερα (*eis ta katōtera*, to the lower parts), which would have been ambiguous enough, or εἰς τὴν γῆν (*eis tēn gēn*, to the earth). The most natural way to take the Greek as it stands is as a reference to subterranean regions (Muddiman 2001: 192–93).

Greco-Roman culture, moreover, was awash with stories of descent to the underworld: Dionysus, Aeneas, Orpheus, and Pythagoras, among others, visited the underworld and lived to tell the tale (Bauckham 1992: 149–54).[13] Relatively ordinary visionaries could sometimes do the same, at least by means

11. Calvin (1965: 176) says that Paul was "dealing only with the condition of the present life," although Calvin (1973: 350–51) also thought the phrase referred especially to Christ's passion and death.

12. He was preceded, according to W. H. Harris (1996: 14–15), by Theodore of Mopsuestia in the fifth century and perhaps P. Abelard in the twelfth century.

13. As Bauckham (1992: 152) observes, there is some inconsistency in *Od.* 11 about Odysseus. The realm of the dead seems to be at the ocean's edge, but then, in 11.475 Odysseus is said to have "come down" (κατελθέμεν) to the dead.

of trances and dreams (Bauckham 1992: 151).[14] The myth of Hades carrying Persephone down to the underworld was widely depicted on the coinage of Asia Minor in the first century (Kreitzer 1998b: 388), and locals in Hierapolis pointed a steady stream of tourists to a nearby gas-emitting cave where, they said, the famous abduction had taken place (Casson 1994: 232; Kreitzer 1998b: 388–90). Other "springs, rivers, lakes, caves, chasms, and volcanoes" could also provide access to the chambers of the underworld (Bauckham 1992: 150; cf. Arnold 1989: 57; Kreitzer 1998b: 385–87).[15]

Thus everyone knew that one went "down" to get to the underworld, and various words beginning with the preposition κατά (*kata*, down) were frequently associated with the realm of the dead. One was brought "down" (κατάγω, *katagō*; e.g., Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31; 1 Sam. 2:6; 1 Kings 2:6, 9; 1 Clem. 4.12; Lucian, *Men*. 1, 6) or simply "went down" (καταβαίνω, *katabainō*; Gen. 37:35 LXX; Num. 16:30, 33 LXX; Aristides of Athens, *Apol*. 11.3; Diodorus Siculus, *Biblio. hist*. 4.25.4; Artemidorus Daldianus, *Oneir.* 2.55; cf. BDAG 514) to hades (cf. Rom. 10:6–7), and the path to hades went "downward" (κάτω, *katō*), below the earth's surface (e.g., Aristophanes, *Ran*. 70; Plato, *Resp*. 10.614c; Deut. 32:22 LXX). Not surprisingly, then, the place of the dead could be referred to simply as τὰ κάτω (*ta katō*, the [parts] below; Lucian, *Men*. 2).[16]

It seems extremely unlikely that Paul would use the phrase κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα τῆς γῆς in such a cultural environment and expect his readers to understand by it anything other than a descent to the realm of the dead (cf. Arnold 1989: 57; Schwindt 2002: 395–96). According to Paul, then, the ascent of Christ inevitably implies his descent to the earth's lower reaches, the place of the dead.

This brings us back, however, to the original confusion that this interpretation introduces into Paul's argument. Why is it obvious to Paul that Christ's ascent implies his descent to the realm of the dead, and what was the purpose for such a descent?

The answers to these questions probably lie in seeing Christ's descent to the realm of the dead not as something that happened between his death and resurrection, but as part of a single, triumphant event that included his ascent. After his resurrection, Christ both descended into the regions of the

14. Dreams about descending into hades were common enough to merit a section on their interpretation in the *Oneirocritica* of Artemidorus Daldianus (*Oneir.* 2.55), a second-century-AD Ephesian.

15. Bauckham does not mention the ancient texts from which his list is constructed, but see, e.g., Aristophanes, *Ran*. 70; Plato, *Resp*. 10.614c; Virgil, *Aen*. 8.243–46; Lucian, *Philops*. 24. See also the texts mentioned in Kreitzer 1998b: 385–88 (Diodorus Siculus, *Biblio. hist*. 5.3.3–4; Pausanias, *Descr*. 1.38.5).

16. Paul did not need to use the term "hades," therefore, to make a reference to the realm of the dead understood (*pace*, e.g., Eadie 1883: 292; cf. Best 1998: 384), nor did he need to use the superlative form κατώτατα (Pss. 62:10 LXX [63:10 MT; 63:9 Eng.]; 138:15 LXX [139:15 MT, Eng.]) to draw a contrast with the phrase ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν (far above all the heavens) in 4:10 (*pace*, e.g., Lincoln 1990: 245).

dead and ascended to a position above all the heavens. As with Ps. 139:8, the reference to a descent below the earth and an ascent above the heavens is a way of emphasizing the reach of God to every corner of the universe (cf. Jer. 23:24; Jon. 2:2–9; Rom. 10:6–7).[17] In this case, the reach is that of Christ, and its purpose is the defeat and captivity of all the malevolent powers of the universe (v. 8).

It is true that elsewhere in Ephesians the evil spiritual powers are located above the earth, but for Paul they are both in the air (2:2)—the region between earth and heaven—and in the heavenly places (6:12). Clearly he was not concerned about their precise cosmic location (cf. Hanson 1980: 138–39; Schwindt 2002: 396). When he speaks of Christ's descent to the underworld, he is similarly not concerned with geography but with the common association in antiquity between the realm of the dead and the fear that many people felt of the evils harbored there. Hades was a place of torment (Luke 16:23) and decay (Acts 2:27, 31). To some, its entrance was guarded by the menacing goddess Hecate, "supreme," says Virgil, "both in Heaven and in Hell" (*caeloque Ereboque potentem*; *Aen.* 6.247, trans. Fairclough and Goold 1999–2000).[18] Hades himself was "dark and sinister, a god to be feared and kept at a distance" (Henrichs 2003a: 661; cf. Rev. 6:8; 20:14). Evil spirits, the offspring of the illicit union between rebellious angels and human women (cf. Gen. 6:1–4), existed "inside the earth" (1 En. 15.8–10 [*OTP* 1:21–22]), and rebellious angels were imprisoned in subterranean cavities, awaiting their final doom on judgment day (1 En. 10.12 [*OTP* 1:18]; cf. Jude 6, 13; 2 Pet. 2:4, 17).

All such powers, says Paul, in whatever corner of the cosmos they may cringe, are now conquered and have taken their place beneath Christ's feet (1:22). The thought is similar to Phil. 2:10, where at the name of Jesus every knee bows, whether heavenly (ἐπουρανίων, *epouraniōn*), earthly (ἐπιγείων, *epigeiōn*), or subterranean (καταχθονίων, *katachthoniōn*). It is also similar to 1 Pet. 3:19–22, where on the most probable interpretation, Christ preaches condemnation to imprisoned evil spirits and subjects "angels and authorities and powers" to himself before taking his seat at God's right hand (cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.*, hom. 11; *NPNF* 13:103–4).

4:10 Paul completes this thought with two assertions about Christ's ascent and descent. First, he says that the one who descended and the one who ascended are identical with each other.[19] He does this not to make a christological point about the identity of the incarnate with the heavenly Christ (*pace*, e.g., Jerome

17. See also Matt. 11:23 (par. Luke 10:15), where heaven and hades refer to the extremes of the universe and are used in this sense metaphorically.

18. On Hecate's often-menacing nature, see Henrichs 2003b.

19. Αὐτός does not mean "same" here but instead is emphatic (Abbott 1897: 116; Muddiman 2001: 196; Hoehner 2002: 536). This does not mean, however, that the statement is about something other than the identity of the one who ascended with the one who descended (*pace* Barth 1974: 434). The emphasis on identity comes from ἐστιν καί (is also). For this reason, the translation "He who descended is the same one who ascended" (NRSV) is not incorrect (*pace* Muddiman 2001: 196; Hoehner 2002: 536). Cf. Westcott 1906: 61.

[Heine 2002: 174]; Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.46]; Eadie 1883: 295), nor to make a pastoral point about the identity of the exalted Christ with the Spirit who is present in the church (*pace* W. H. Harris 1996: 182). Instead, the assertion that the Christ who ascended is identical with the Christ who descended prepares the way for the statement in 4:11 that the very one who both descended and ascended is the one who gave gifts to the church. This is why the emphatic αὐτός in 4:10 is repeated in 4:11. The Christ who is powerful enough to conquer the enemies of God's people in every corner of the universe is also the Christ who equips God's people to fulfill their destiny of full union with him. If he was strong enough for one task, he is strong enough for the other.

Second, Paul brings verses 7–10 to a conclusion with a statement of the purpose for Christ's descent and ascent. He descended to the earth's lower regions and ascended far above the heavens so that, like God himself in verse 6, he might fill all things (Aletti 2001: 217). The picture is similar to that of 1:20–23, where Christ is seated at God's right hand "in the heavenly places, high above" the malevolent powers who lie subjected beneath his feet. This victory was not merely for himself but also for the church, which as his body joins him in filling every corner of the universe (1:23). Having recalled the theme of Christ's universal victory over evil, Paul will now, in 4:11–16, show how the gifts that the victorious Christ gives to the church aid it in growing into unity with himself and thus, like him, filling all things (v. 15; cf. Bruce 1984: 344–45).

4:11 Christ, who has extended his victory over all opposing forces and his sovereignty over all creation, is the very one who (αὐτός, *autos*, he himself) now equips the church to join him in his sovereign reign over all creation (cf. 2:6; 4:15). He does this through giving gifts to discrete groups of people (v. 11) so they, in turn, can equip others to serve and edify the church (v. 12). Although the syntax of the list of gifted groups is complex and disputed, the most plausible understanding of the text places the emphasis less on the positions that certain people hold in the church and more on the activities that Christ has equipped certain people to perform (see the additional note). Paul lists five groups of these people.

First, he has given τοὺς μέν (*tous men*, some) to be ἀποστόλους (*apostolous*, apostles). The apostles and prophets together form the foundation of the new multiethnic people of God (2:20), a position that belongs to them because of their critical role in taking the gospel to the Gentiles (3:5). Of the two groups, however, the apostles are always mentioned first, and in 3:5 they are described as both "holy" and as Christ's apostles. They hold this place of greatest foundational importance because of their connection with the historical Jesus (see the comments on 3:5). Paul numbers himself among the apostles, although he considers himself to be the last and least of them (1 Cor. 15:8–9; see the comments on 1:1; 2:20; and 3:5).

Second, Christ has given τοὺς δέ (*tous de*, others) to be προφήτας (*prophētas*, prophets). As we saw above in the comments on 2:20, these prophets are not

OT prophets but people living in Paul's own time who were prompted by the Spirit to speak a particularly relevant message to an individual (1 Cor. 14:24–25) or to the church (Acts 11:27–30; 15:32; 21:10–11). The messages that prophets communicate seem to come at particularly critical moments in the lives of people or in the history of the church. The Spirit reveals "mysteries" to prophets that they then communicate to the church for its edification and encouragement (1 Cor. 13:2; 14:3–4, 31) and that they communicate to unbelievers for their conversion (14:24–25). Among these mysteries is God's plan to include the Gentiles as equal partners with the Jews as his people (Eph. 3:5–6; cf. Acts 13:1–3; 15:22, 32; cf. 19:6), and this particular role may have led Paul to give them a place of importance in his list second only to that of apostles. Paul's Gentile readers have heard and believed the gospel and so have become part of God's people because of the foundational witness of apostles and prophets.

Third, Christ has given "others" (τοὺς δέ) to be εὐαγγελιστάς (*euangelistas*, evangelists). The general meaning of the term is fairly obvious: it refers to one who brings good news, and since it is apparently of Christian coinage (*TLNT* 2:91), the good news proclaimed is the Christian gospel of peace with God through Christ's crucifixion (2:17; cf. 1:13; 3:6, 8; 6:15, 19). The term is used in the NT, however, in only two other places, neither of them very illuminating about its precise meaning (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5). If we use the closely related terms εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion*, good news) and εὐαγγελίζω (*euangelizō*, bring good news) to help define εὐαγγελιστής (*euangelistēs*, evangelist), we can be more specific. These other terms typically refer to glad tidings that reach people after messengers have traveled to bring the tidings to them. People make the "rounds" with the "good news" that an enemy's king has been killed in battle (κύκλῳ εὐαγγελίζοντες, *kyklō euangelizontes*; 1 Sam. 31:9 [par. 1 Chron. 10:9] LXX; cf. 2 Sam. 18:19–31 LXX; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.228–29), or return home with the good news of diplomatic success (Josephus, *Ant.* 11.65; 15.209). The good news of an emperor's accession spreads through the world (Josephus, *J.W.* 4.618, 656). Messengers run from one place to another to deliver good news (2 Sam. 18:19; Nah. 2:1 LXX, MT [1:15 Eng.]; Isa. 52:7), and ambassadors travel from place to place with it (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.418–20). Angels bring good news from heaven to earth (Luke 1:19). Jesus travels around Judea (Luke 4:43) and Galilee (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Luke 8:1) proclaiming it. His followers take it everywhere (Mark 13:10; 14:9; Matt. 24:14; 26:13; cf. Luke 9:6). In Ephesians, we read that Jesus "came" and proclaimed the good news of peace (2:17), and the gospel of peace is connected with the feet of believers (6:15). One can certainly tell good news without traveling (Pss. 39:10 LXX [40:10 MT; 40:9 Eng.]; 67:12 [68:12 MT; 68:11 Eng.]; 95:2 [96:2 MT, Eng.]), but the most characteristic uses of the noun εὐαγγέλιον and the verb εὐαγγελίζω involve the element of traveling.

"Evangelists," then, are probably those whom God has especially equipped to travel from place to place with the good news of peace through Christ. Although both Philip and Timothy are settled in one place when they are

called "evangelists" (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5; Best 1997a: 165), Philip has traveled around preaching the gospel (Acts 8:4–5, 35, 40), and Paul is ready for Timothy to pull up stakes and travel again (2 Tim. 4:9, 21). Paul, then, probably thinks of "evangelists" as similar to apostles but without their authority because of their lack of direct connection to the historical Jesus (Friedrich, *TDNT* 2:737). The evangelists proclaim the message to which the apostles have been eye- and earwitnesses (cf. Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 5.10.2; Schnackenburg 1991: 181).

The fourth and fifth gifts that Christ gives his church body, unlike the first three, are linked together with καί and share a single τοὺς δέ construction: τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους (*tous de poimenas kai didaskalous*, others to be pastors and teachers). This variation from the pattern has occasioned two interpretive debates.

First, some earlier commentators thought these two groups were linked together because they were attached to a local congregation, whereas the first three groups (apostles, prophets, and evangelists) traveled from place to place (e.g., Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.*, hom. 11; *NPNF* 13:104; Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.46]; Ellicott 1859: 87; Abbott 1897: 118; Robinson 1904: 181). Not all apostles and prophets, however, conducted itinerant ministries. James the Lord's brother was an apostle but stayed in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:18–19; Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18), and there is no evidence that the Corinthian prophets (1 Cor. 11:2–16; 14:1–40) traveled anywhere.

Second, some interpreters think that the single τοὺς δέ construction means that the pastors and teachers were the same people with two sets of skills (e.g., Alford 1857: 113; Eadie 1883: 304; Barth 1974: 438). The common τοὺς δέ, however, does not require this interpretation. Paul used one article to modify "apostles" and "prophets" in 2:20, for example, but apparently considered them to be separate groups (cf. Best 1997a: 168; Hoehner 2002: 543–44). Paul may have intended to imply that "pastors" and "teachers" were overlapping although not entirely identical groups. It is also possible that the τοὺς δέ was simply "dropped as unnecessarily tedious repetition" (Muddiman 2001: 199). Whatever the reason for the missing τοὺς δέ, the evidence is not clear enough to allow us to consider "pastors" and "teachers" as a single group.

The term ποιμήν (*poimēn*) simply means "shepherd" and was often used metaphorically for a political or religious leader in the ancient Near East (Jeremias, *TDNT* 6:486–87; Block 1998: 279–81). In the OT, too, God is often portrayed as a shepherd who tends his sheep, the people of Israel (e.g., Gen. 48:15; Pss. 23:1–4; 80:1; Isa. 40:11; 49:9–10; Jer. 50:19; Zech. 10:8–9; Jeremias, *TDNT* 6:487; Block 1998: 284–85). When Moses prays for a man to lead Israel so that they "may not be like sheep without a shepherd" (NRSV), the Lord answers the prayer with Joshua (Num. 27:16–18; Block 1998: 281). King David is said to "shepherd" Israel (2 Sam. 5:2 [1 Chron. 11:2]; Ps. 78:70–72; Jeremias, *TDNT* 6:488n30), and God will come through a future "David" and shepherd his people (Ezek. 34:11, 23–24; cf. Jer. 23:1–6; cf. Pss. Sol. 17.40;

Jeremias, *TDNT* 6:489). The metaphor also appears in Greek literature for a leader or king (e.g., Homer, *Il.* 2.85, 243; LSJ 1430). The Gospels sometimes picture Jesus as a shepherd who has compassion on the wandering flock of God's people (Matt. 10:6; 15:24; Luke 15:4–7; John 10:3, 11–14, 27; cf. Ezek. 34:11–16), and the metaphor reappears in 1 Pet. 2:25 (cf. Heb. 13:20; Jeremias, *TDNT* 6:490, 492, 494).

First Peter 5:1–4 explicitly connects Jesus's role as a shepherd with the work of "elders" (πρεσβύτεροι, *presbyteroi*), who should "shepherd the flock of God" (5:2 ESV) for the right motives, without being authoritarian, and by setting an example "for the flock" with their own behavior (5:3). If they shepherd their flocks this way, then the chief shepherd (ἀρχιποίμην, *archipoimēn*), Jesus, will reward them when he appears (5:4).

All this means that in Eph. 4:11 the ποιμένες (*poimenes*, shepherds/pastors) were probably leaders within Christian communities who held positions of authority and were charged with the community's well-being.[20] Since the wicked shepherds of the OT led God's people astray (Jer. 23:1–2; Ezek. 34:1–6), perhaps by the second half of the first century, Christian shepherds were especially concerned with protecting the flock from the "savage wolves" who invaded Christian communities such as Ephesus with false teaching (Acts 20:28–30; Matt. 7:15; cf. Eph. 4:14; Ezek. 22:27).

If the τοὺς δέ in front of ποιμένας and the καί after it were intended to join ποιμένας to διδασκάλους (*didaskalous*, teachers), a concern to keep false teaching at bay may be the reason Paul coupled these two groups. Later, he will say that as a result of the maturity toward which these five groups of leaders are leading the church, believers will "no longer be infants, wave-tossed and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human trickery, by cunning, in the service of the system of error" (4:14). Since the problem identified here is false teaching, the "teachers" of whom Paul speaks in 4:11 will play a particularly critical role in attaining this goal.

The first four groups in Paul's list will all have been teachers; indeed, there was a sense in which all Christians were to teach each other (Col. 3:16; Heb. 5:12; Best 1997a: 166–67). Nevertheless, as Paul's earliest extant correspondence shows, there was a group of people in the church who specialized in teaching (1 Thess. 5:12; cf. Gal. 6:6; 1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Acts 13:1; James 3:1; Best 1997a: 166; BDAG 241).[21] Insofar as we can distinguish "teachers" from "shepherds," we should probably think of people who are not necessarily skilled in administration (Ellicott 1859: 87), but whom Christ has equipped to instruct others in what 1 Tim. 6:1 calls "the teaching" (ἡ διδασκαλία, *hē didaskalia*), "the Christian message or doctrine by which the church is known" (Towner

20. Cf. the role of the מבקר in the Qumran Damascus Rule. He is "the head of the community" (*HALOT* 1:151) and "will heal all the afflicted among them like a shepherd his flock" (CD-A 13:9; trans. García Martínez and Tigchelaar 1997; cf. Jeremias, *TDNT* 6:489).

21. I am assuming here that we can equate those who lead (προϊστάμενοι, *proistamenoi*) and admonish (νουθετοῦντες, *nouthetountes*) the Thessalonian believers with teachers (1 Thess. 5:12).

2006: 382). In Ephesians, to sit under this teaching is simply to "learn Christ" (4:20; Best 1997a: 166–67), a phrase that probably refers to learning the basics of the gospel about Christ as well as its ethical implications (5:2).

4:12 Paul next dictated three prepositional phrases whose relationship to the five groups in 4:11 is unclear and whose interpretation has become the subject of sometimes heated debate. There are two main views of how these prepositional phrases function, although each main view has given birth to several variations.[22] The dispute focuses on how the middle phrase, εἰς ἔργον διακονίας (*eis ergon diakonias*, for the work of ministry), should be understood.

The first view takes this phrase as coordinate with the preceding phrase πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων (*pros ton katartismon tōn hagiōn*), which is translated as "for the equipping of the saints." On this view, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers not only bring the saints to full maturity, but they also do the work of ministry.

The second view claims that the phrase εἰς ἔργον διακονίας fills out the meaning of the term καταρτισμόν (*katartismon*), now translated as "preparation" or "equipping." The five groups of verse 11, then, prepare or equip the saints "for the work of ministry."

The temperature of the debate begins to rise when interpreters suspect that the exegesis of the text has been driven more by concerns about the structure of the modern church than by dispassionate scholarship. According to this text, who does the work of ministry in today's church: the officers of the church or the people whom the officers equip?

The first view is ancient, going back at least as far as Chrysostom (*PG* 62:85; cf., e.g., John of Damascus, *PG* 95:841, 843; Calvin 1965: 180–81) and is exegetically well supported. In its basic form, it takes all three prepositional phrases as coordinate with each other and sees each as a modifier of the verb ἔδωκεν (*edōken*, he gave) in verse 11. The three phrases describe three purposes for which Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to the church. He gave them

for (πρός, *pros*) the "equipping" of the saints
for (εἰς, *eis*) [the] work of ministry
for (εἰς) [the] edification of the body of Christ.

Supporters of this view argue that it fits the stylistic character of Ephesians since in this letter strings of coordinate prepositional phrases often modify a verb without coordinating conjunctions (Lincoln 1990: 253; Muddiman 2001: 200; Page 2005: 30–32). In 1:3, for example, God blesses believers "with [ἐν, *en*] every spiritual blessing in [ἐν] the heavenly places in [ἐν] Christ," and in 1:5–6 God has predetermined believers "for [εἰς, *eis*] adoptive sonship by means of [διά, *dia*] Jesus Christ, for [εἰς, *eis*] him[self], according to [κατά,

22. See the full taxonomy of views in Merklein 1973: 75.

kata] the pleasure of his will, for [εἰς] the praise of his glorious grace" (cf. 1:20–21; 2:7; 4:13–14; 6:12).

In addition, those who hold this view think that it makes the best sense of the term διακονία (*diakonia*, ministry) in the phrase "for the work of ministry" (e.g., Schnackenburg 1991: 183; Gordon 1994: 75–77; O'Neill 2001: 336–40; Page 2005: 35–40). This term often appears in Paul's Letters and elsewhere in the NT as a reference to "the ministry of the word" and frequently seems to carry an official nuance (Acts 6:4; cf. 2 Cor. 3:6–8; 4:1; 5:18; 6:3; Rom. 11:13; Acts 20:24; 21:19; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:5). The "work of ministry," therefore, probably belongs to the five groups listed in verse 11, all of whom fill roles that involve communicating the gospel and its implications to others.

This view, however, faces serious syntactical and contextual difficulties. Syntactically, it is true that Ephesians frequently modifies verbs with strings of prepositional phrases, but these strings are sometimes as ambiguous as this one. For example, in the phrase "having predestined us for adoptive sonship through Christ Jesus" in 1:5, does the phrase through Christ Jesus go with "predestined" or with "adoptive sonship"? A similar ambiguity arises in 2:7; 4:14; and 6:12. The only strings of prepositional phrases where this ambiguity does not arise are those whose prepositional objects contain no verbal idea (1:3, 20–21; 4:13). Here in 4:12, however, the noun καταρτισμός is a verbal noun and could easily itself be modified by a prepositional phrase to indicate the purpose of its implied verbal action.

The prepositional phrases, moreover, are not syntactically parallel. This lack of parallelism is not merely a matter of the shift from πρός to εἰς, which could be a stylistic variation (so Page 2005: 30). In addition, the object of πρός has an article whereas the objects of εἰς have no article.[23]

Contextually, 4:7–16 is concerned with the role of all believers in the unity of the church. In verse 7 at the beginning of the passage, "each one" (ἑνὶ . . . ἑκάστῳ, *heni . . . hekastō*) receives grace "according to the measure [μέτρον, *metron*]" that Christ decides. This matches the focus of verse 16 at the end of the passage when it says that "each single [ἑνὸς ἑκάστου, *henos hekastou*] part" assists the body in its growth "in the measure" (μέτρῳ, *metrō*) for which it has been empowered (cf. De Wette 1843: 135; Westcott 1906: 62–63; O'Brien 1999: 303; Hoehner 2002: 549).[24]

23. One path around this difficulty takes the πρός phrase as the ultimate purpose of the gift of offices to the church and the two εἰς phrases as intermediate steps in accomplishing this goal (e.g., Alford 1857: 113–14; Ellicott 1859: 88; Eadie 1883: 308; Abbott 1897: 119). Another path that avoids the problem is to explain the πρός phrase as the work of the pastors and teachers and the two εἰς phrases as the work of all five groups (Masson 1953: 193). Both solutions seem too complex to be plausible, and neither has gathered much support. O'Neill (2001: 339) perceives the magnitude of the problem clearly, but his idea that the late minuscules 1, 242, and 1149 preserve the correct reading when they omit the article after πρός is not a viable solution.

24. This correspondence of language makes it unlikely that the assisting connections of the body in 4:16 are the "ministers" of 4:11 (*pace* Lincoln 1990: 263; Schnackenburg 1991: 189; Muddiman 2001: 209).

It is true that the five groups of verse 11 are equipped with mainly verbal gifts and are therefore engaged in what Paul, in other contexts, refers to as the special "ministry" of communicating the gospel. In verse 15, however, we discover that all believers should speak the truth in love, and this refers primarily to speaking to others "the word of truth, the gospel of . . . salvation" (1:13), and in 4:29 everyone is to be ready to use their words for the edification (οἰκοδομή, *oikodomē*) of others where the need exists. In 1 Cor. 12:4–7, moreover, the term "ministries" (διακονίαι, *diakoniai*) stands parallel to "gifts" and "activities," and all three are manifestations of the Spirit given "to each person . . . for the common good."

Is this view of "the work of ministry" in 4:12 a relatively recent innovation that is suspiciously supportive of the egalitarian and democratic spirit popular in some circles at the end of the twentieth century (Lincoln 1990: 253; Gordon 1994: 77; Muddiman 2001: 200)?[25] It would be difficult to make this charge stick. Scholars as early and diverse as De Wette (1843: 135), Robinson (1904: 182), and Westcott (1906: 62–63) have argued for forms of this view. Westcott's (1906: 63) remarks are particularly instructive: "However foreign the idea of the spiritual ministry of all 'the saints' is to our mode of thinking," he says, "it was the life of the apostolic church." The idea was perhaps especially foreign to Westcott since he was bishop of Durham when he penned these words.[26]

The second view, then, is probably correct. The three prepositional phrases build on each other, and the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers of 4:11 equip all believers to do the work of ministry for the edification of Christ's body.

If this is right, then the term καταρτισμός (*katartismos*) has less the nuance of "completing" or "perfecting" the saints than of "equipping" them for a particular purpose. The noun is rare, appearing only here in the NT and seldom outside of medical texts prior to the first century. Its medical use refers to the straightening or setting of a joint or broken bone.[27] It also appears in nonliterary texts from roughly the time of Ephesians, where it refers to "outfitting" a guest room with furniture, the "equipment" that goes along with a couple of beds, and the "preparation" of woof and warp necessary for weaving a garment (MM 332; *NewDocs* 3:70, no. 42). Paul uses the term here with this

25. O'Neill (2001: 339–40) is more nuanced, recognizing that the view goes back at least as far as the early nineteenth century, but he still thinks that its current popularity has more to do with the spirit of the age than with sober exegesis.

26. This approach is also supported by a large number of more-recent exegetes from a wide variety of ecclesiastical contexts (e.g., Gnilka 1973: 213; Bruce 1984: 349; Best 1998: 395–99; Pokorný 1992: 175; O'Brien 1999: 301–5; Aletti 2001: 219–21; Hoehner 2002: 547–49).

27. It appears frequently in the first-century-BC commentary of Apollonius of Citium (ca. 90–15 BC) on Hippocrates' treatise "On Joints" and twice in a medical text by the Ephesian physician Soranus, who flourished in the second century AD (cf. LSJ 910; Hoehner 2002: 549). Since figures from human development and physiology appear in 4:13, 14, and 16, it is tempting to read the term καταρτισμός as a medical metaphor: the five specially gifted groups of 4:11, like the ancient physician, are charged with setting the body in order so that it can grow and function properly.

last meaning: the saints are prepared εἰς ἔργον διακονίας (*eis ergon diakonias*, for the work of ministry).[28] Christ has given the five groups of verse 11 to the church for the "equipping" or "preparation" of the saints, and the purpose of this preparation was that the saints might do the work of ministry.[29]

The ultimate goal of the preparation of the saints and the work of their ministry is the οἰκοδομὴ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ (*oikodomē tou sōmatos tou Christou*, the building up of the body of Christ). Οἰκοδομή is reminiscent of 2:20–22, where the "building" (οἰκοδομή) under construction is the "dwelling place" (κατοικητήριον, *katoikētērion*) of God. Its foundation is the apostles and prophets, Christ is its guiding and crowning stone, and its building blocks are believers from both Jews and Gentiles. Here the same idea is under consideration, but now evangelists, pastors, and teachers are involved in addition to apostles and prophets, and their job is to equip all believers ("the saints") to participate in the construction.[30] Already in 2:21 the architectural metaphor had started to break out of its boundaries when Paul says that the "building . . . grows" (οἰκοδομὴ . . . αὔξει, *oikodomē . . . auxei*). Here too the metaphor suddenly becomes organic since believers are constructing not a building but "the body of Christ," a metaphor Paul has already explained as referring to "the church" (1:22–23; cf. 5:23).

To summarize, the ascended and triumphant Christ has given an appropriate measure of grace to each believer. Among those whom he has gifted, Paul lists five groups especially equipped to prepare other believers for the work of ministry: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Those gifted in the ministry of the word and those whom they equip for ministry work together to build up the body of Christ.

4:13 Paul next describes the final goal of this construction work as union with Christ in all his fullness. The first clause of the verse, μέχρι καταντήσωμεν οἱ πάντες (*mechri katantēsōmen hoi pantes*, until we all arrive), should be attached not to the verb ἔδωκεν (*edōken*, he gave) in 4:11 (*pace* Hoehner 2002: 552) but to the verbal idea contained in the closer noun οἰκοδομήν (*oikodomēn*, building up). Paul is not saying that Christ continues to give apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to the church "until we all arrive," but that the work of building up the church continues "until we all arrive." The article οἱ (*hoi*) with πάντες (*pantes*, all) emphasizes that the whole is made up of individuals. It "gathers all the particulars under one view" (Robinson 1904:

28. *Pace* Page (2005: 33), who after a careful review of the evidence, nevertheless concludes that none of the nonliterary uses of the word closely parallels its use here.

29. Cf. Rom. 9:22, where the participle κατηρτισμένα is followed by the phrase εἰς ἀπώλειαν to indicate the purpose of the preparation (Aletti 2001: 221n69).

30. *Pace* Page (2005: 41), who appeals to the place of apostles and prophets at the foundation of God's household in 2:19–20 as evidence that in 4:12 the author assigns the task of building up the body to those who hold the teaching offices of 4:11. The apostles and prophets of 2:20–21, however, are not portrayed as building up the church. Instead, they form part of the building, albeit an important part. Moreover, Paul is explicit in 4:16 that the whole "body . . . produces the growth of the body for the purpose of building itself up [οἰκοδομή] in love."

182; cf. 1 Cor. 10:17; Rom. 11:32). The picture is of all believers employing the gifts Christ has given to them in order to reach a goal that will likewise involve them all.

What is this goal? Paul describes it in three parallel prepositional phrases, each beginning with εἰς (*eis*, at).[31] Unlike the three prepositional phrases in 4:12, these phrases do not build on each other but view the same result from different angles.[32]

First, Paul describes the goal of building up the body of Christ as arriving "at the unity [ἑνότητα, *henotēta*] of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God." Those who equip the saints for the work of ministry in 4:11 are all teachers, and in 4:14–15 Paul will say that a sign of the maturity toward which the church is moving is its purity from false teaching. "The unity of the faith," then, refers to unity in acknowledging a particular body of doctrine, the "one faith" of 4:5.

"Knowledge [ἐπίγνωσις, *epignōsis*] of the Son of God" is more difficult to define. The term ἐπίγνωσις appears elsewhere in the letter only in 1:17, where it refers to knowing God in a way that only he can make possible through the work of his Spirit. In this letter, "knowing" often means understanding the "mystery"—God's plan to unite the universe around Christ (1:9–10; 3:3, 5–6, 9–10; 6:19). Perhaps here, then, the compound term ἐπίγνωσις refers to a personal, experiential knowledge of God's Son, around whom God's plan for the universe revolves (cf. Phil. 3:8–11). If this is right, then in this first εἰς phrase Paul describes the goal of "the building up of the body of Christ" as the unity of all its parts in a common set of doctrines and in a common experience of knowing the Christ on whom those doctrines are focused (cf. Aletti 2001: 222).

Second, Paul describes this goal as ἄνδρα τέλειον (*andra teleion*, a mature man). Earlier Paul said that Christ, in his death, has abolished the Mosaic law so that he might "create" Gentiles and Jews "into one new human being [ἄνθρωπον, *anthrōpon*] in him" (2:15). He then portrays these two groups of believers as coming together to form a "building" (οἰκοδομή) that, "being joined together, grows [αὔξει, *auxei*] into a holy temple in the Lord" (2:21). Here in 4:13 Paul recalls this mixture of architectural and organic imagery: the end result of "building up the body of Christ" (v. 12) is "a mature man." Like the imagery in 2:15, 21, then, the "mature man" here is a reference not to the individual believer but to the church.

There are important differences, however, between the uses of this imagery in the two passages. One difference is that unlike ἄνθρωπος in 2:15, the

31. The verb καταντάω and the preposition εἰς were commonly used together to speak of arriving "at" a particular point. See, e.g., 1 Cor. 10:11; 14:36; Phil. 3:11; Polybius, *Hist*. 4.1.8; 4.34.2; 6.9.10; LSJ 903; BDAG 523.

32. This reading of the three prepositional phrases in 4:13 might seem at first to require the same parallel understanding of the three prepositional phrases in 4:12. In 4:12, however, the prepositions at the head of each phrase switched from πρός to εἰς. In addition, the objects of the last two prepositional phrases in 4:12 (καταρτισμός and διακονία) contain verbal ideas that are naturally completed with purposes clauses.

expression here is gender and age specific: ἀνήρ (*anēr*) refers to "an adult human male" (BDAG 79). This may simply be the result of Paul's desire to contrast human maturity with human immaturity, since in the next verse he will say that once all believers have arrived at the goal of maturity, they will no longer be "infants" (νήπιοι, *nēpioi*). In addition, however, he may be looking ahead to 5:29–32, where he compares the relationship between Christ and the church with the Genesis narrative's description of the relationship between husband and wife (Gen. 2:24). It is true that in 5:29–32 the church is the wife of the ἀνήρ rather than the ἀνήρ himself, as here, but it is also important to remember that the main point of 5:29–32 is the unity of man and woman in one flesh, just as here the church and Christ are one body.

Another difference is that in 2:15 the unity of Gentile and Jewish believers in "one new human being" has been accomplished for them by Christ's death. Here in 4:13 the unity of the church is something that lies in the future and involves the practical effort of exercising the gifts that Christ has given to the church so that believers might "build" it "up" (cf. 4:3).

Paul's third prepositional phrase affirms that believers must build up the body until it reaches μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ (*metron hēlikias tou plērōmatos tou Christou*, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ). This phrase could refer to reaching the mature age of Christ, an idea that the references to maturity in the previous phrase and to children in the next verse seem at first to support (Calvin 1965: 182; Abbott 1897: 120). But the phrase can also refer to the height of a person such as the mature man of the previous phrase, and this is probably Paul's emphasis (Alford 1857: 114; Ellicott 1859: 90).[33] Both the reference to "fullness" in this verse and the image of growth in verse 15 point in this direction, and the idea of measurement also coheres better than its alternative with the architectural metaphor that still hovers in the background from verse 12. Paul, then, intends for his readers to think of the church, which is the body of Christ, as eventually attaining Christ's full height.

The meaning of this image becomes clear if we remember what Paul has said in 1:20–23; 2:4–6 and in the present context, 4:8–10. Christ has conquered all the evil spiritual forces of the universe by filling every corner of the universe, whether high or low (1:20–22; 4:8–10). There is a sense in which believers have already joined him in this victory since they are his body (1:23) and are united with him in his heavenly place of victory at God's right hand (2:6). We now learn, however, that there is also a sense in which the church's union with Christ is not yet complete. Christ has already filled the universe (4:10), but the church is still moving toward full union with Christ in this specific sense. The Ruler of the realm of the air is still at work among the sons of disobedience (2:2); the waves and winds of false teaching still trouble the church (4:14); basic moral instruction is still necessary (4:17–6:9); and believers still need to be armed against the devil's strategies (6:10–20). These challenges mean

33. Best (1998: 403) believes that both ideas are present.

that believers must exercise the gifts that Christ has given them and work to build up the church until it attains the full union with the victorious Christ that God intends for it.

4:14 Paul's next clause provides a negative contrast to the positive picture of the church's destiny in verse 13.[34] The church's goal, negatively viewed, is to move believers out of childhood, with its susceptibility to various false teachings (v. 14). The term νήπιοι (*nēpioi*, infants) stands in sharp contrast to the ἀνήρ τέλειος (*anēr teleios*, mature man) of verse 13. The νήπιοι are many and, by their very nature, immature, but the ἀνήρ is both one and τέλειος. A church moving toward full unity with Christ is leaving behind immaturity, with its intertwined characteristics of ignorance (cf. 1 Cor. 13:11; 14:20; Rom. 2:20; Col. 1:28), gullibility (cf. Heb. 5:12–14), and individualism (cf. 1 Cor. 2:6; 3:1–4; Phil. 3:15).

In this passage Paul is particularly concerned about the vulnerability of the spiritually immature to false teaching. He brings out this emphasis by suddenly switching his metaphor from the stages of human development to that of a storm at sea. Just as in Luke 8:24 Jesus calms a gale whose two components are "the wind [ἀνέμῳ, *anemō*] and the surge [κλύδωνι, *klydōni*] of the water," so here the children of whom Paul speaks are "wave-tossed [κλυδωνιζόμενοι, *klydōnizomenoi*] and blown around by every wind [ἀνέμῳ, *anemō*] of teaching." It was perhaps the changeable, seemingly random, and potentially dangerous aspects of the weather that made it a metaphor of choice for doubt and false teaching in early Christianity (James 1:6; Jude 12; cf. Muddiman 2001: 205). In contrast to the focused and skillfully led church that is moving toward maturity in 4:13, the children of whom Paul speaks here follow a variety of teachings and lack any clear direction (cf. Lincoln 1990: 258).

These doctrinal ill winds toss and blow their victims around ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων (*en tē kybeia tōn anthrōpōn*, by human trickery). The term κυβεία (*kybeia*) literally means "dice-playing" (LSJ 1004) but also adopted the connotation simply of cheating and deceit. Epictetus (Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 2.19.28; 3.21.22) used the verb κυβεύω (*kybeuō*) to refer to philosophical cheating—claiming to be a philosopher but living in a way that belies the claim (BDAG 573). Paul uses the noun here in a similar way to say that the spiritually immature are gullible, carried away by the teaching of fakes who are playing dishonest games with serious religious matters (cf. Epictetus [Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 3.21.8–24]). The genitive phrase τῶν ἀνθρώπων is probably intended adjectivally, and it is certainly intended negatively. This deception has nothing to do with God; it is merely "human" (cf. Isa. 29:13 LXX; Gal. 1:11; BDAG 81). Although Paul's comments are general enough to fit a range of false teachings, he must have had in mind especially the "philosophy" at Colossae, which he also characterizes as merely "human" (Col. 2:8, 22; cf. Lincoln 1990: 258).

34. The ἵνα clause (v. 14) is not, therefore, subordinate to the μέχρι clause (v. 13; *pace*, e.g., Alford 1857: 114–15; Ellicott 1859: 91) but stands parallel to it (e.g., Abbott 1897: 121; Westcott 1906: 63; Hoehner 2002: 560). Both clauses complete the verbal notion contained in the noun οἰκοδομή (v. 12).

The next phrase probably does not build on the one before it but backs up and says the same thing in a single word (cf. Hoehner 2002: 562). The winds that blow the immature here and there do so ἐν πανουργίᾳ (*en panourgia*, by cunning). Elsewhere Paul uses this term to describe those who knowingly falsify the word of God (2 Cor. 4:2) and to describe Satan's shrewd deception of Eve (2 Cor. 11:3). It has precisely these connotations here. The immature are susceptible to deception by those who know how to use ruthless but clever tactics.

Paul's final phrase describes the goal (πρός, *pros*, for) of the various false teachings as ἡ μεθοδεία τῆς πλάνης (*hē methodeia tēs planēs*, the system of error). The term μεθοδεία is rare, apparently appearing here and in 6:11 for the first time in extant Greek literature.[35] It is often thought to carry sinister connotations (e.g., Abbott 1897: 122; Hoehner 2002: 563; BDAG 625), but when we next meet it in the second-century mathematical writer Claudius Ptolemaeus, it simply means a particular "method" of mathematical calculation (*Syntaxis mathematica* I.2:581, line 10).[36] Moreover, although its closely related verb could occasionally be used in a negative way (2 Sam. 19:28 LXX; Polybius, *Hist*. 38.12.10; Chariton, *Chaer.* 7.6.10),[37] it most often means simply to "treat or practice by rule or method" (LSJ 1091). Philo frequently uses it this way, and only this way, in his writings (*Moses* 2.212; *Eternity* 149; *Agriculture* 25; *Providence* 2.60; *Worse* 109). The term contributes to the phrase, then, not so much a sinister note as the idea of an intentional, organized approach to something.

The sinister element comes from the genitive phrase τῆς πλάνης (*tēs planēs*) that qualifies τὴν μεθοδείαν (*tēn methodeian*, the system). Although this term too could have an innocent meaning,[38] Paul uses it elsewhere of a planned deception (1 Thess. 2:3; cf. Matt. 27:64) and of an ethical deviation (Rom. 1:27). It could also refer to doctrinal error (2 Thess. 2:11; 2 Pet. 3:17; 1 John 4:6; Jude 11; cf. James 5:20), and that is the connotation it carries here. The genitive case probably gives the noun an adjectival force, just as τῶν ἀνθρώπων describes κυβείᾳ adjectivally in the preceding phrase. The false teachings that trouble immature believers were concocted in the service of "the system of error." Despite their variety, the false teachings of which Paul speaks serve one great, erroneous plan (Muddiman 2001: 207), and Paul probably thinks of this plan as guided by "the Ruler of the realm of the air, . . . the spirit now powerfully working in the sons of disobedience" (2:2; cf. 6:11).

In sum, Paul tells his readers that when the church's gifted teachers use their gifts to equip all believers for the work of ministry, the church progresses toward maturity. It also moves steadily away from immaturity with its fragmentation and susceptibility to deception by cunning theological cheats.

35. As a search of the *TLG* suggests; cf. Hoehner 2002: 563.

36. The use of the term in Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.1.19, seems to be dependent on Eph. 4:14.

37. Even in these places, however, it is debatable whether the word itself or the context in which it appears provides the negative connotations.

38. It could refer to an accounting error. See *NewDocs* 2:94–95, no. 69.

4:15 Paul now views the same progress toward maturity from a positive perspective. The verb αὐξήσωμεν (*auxēsōmen*, we might grow) stands in contrast to the phrase μηκέτι ὦμεν (*mēketi ōmen*, might no longer be) in verse 14 and, like it, is part of the purpose clause that begins with ἵνα (*hina*, that; v. 14). In contrast (δέ, *de*, but) to the deceit of the false teachings and the cunning with which they advance "the system of error," believers grow toward maturity as they speak the truth in love.

Ἀληθεύοντες (*alētheuontes*) is a participle of means, defining more closely the verb αὐξήσωμεν and describing the way in which the growth takes place. Ἀληθεύοντες does not simply mean "cherishing the truth" (Ellicott 1859: 93; cf. Abbott 1897: 123; Robinson 1904: 185) but refers specifically to speaking the truth. This is clear not only from Gal. 4:16, where ἀληθεύω (*alētheuō*) refers to telling the truth, but also from the use of the noun ἀλήθεια (*alētheia*) in Eph. 1:13, where the truth is something that people hear (cf. Gen. 42:16; Isa. 44:26 LXX; *NewDocs* 4:145, no. 47). In both instances the truth is specifically the truth of the gospel (cf. Gal. 2:5, 14). In contrast to "the error" of verse 14, then, Paul's readers should grow toward maturity by speaking the gospel truth to others.

The manner in which believers are to speak the truth to others also contrasts with the methods by which the false teachings of verse 13 operate. Whereas their "system of error" proceeds "by trickery" (ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ, *en tē kybeia*) and "by cunning" (ἐν πανουργίᾳ, *en panourgia*), believers are to speak the truth "in love" (ἐν ἀγάπῃ, *en agapē*).[39] Love involves seeking the benefit of the undeserving, even at one's own expense (2:4–5; 3:19; 5:2, 25; cf. Gal. 2:20b) and is bound up with humility, gentleness, and a willingness to work for unity and peace (Eph. 4:2–3). As those who have heard and believed the gospel themselves (1:13), Paul's readers are rooted and grounded in this kind of love (3:17; Best 1998: 407), and so they bear witness to the gospel not only by their faithfulness in representing it accurately but also by their motives and manner as they convey its message.

As believers speak the truth in love, they "grow up to him" (αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτόν, *auxēsōmen eis auton*). The figure is organic, referring to the growth of human beings from childhood (cf. νήπιοι, *nēpioi*, infants; v. 14) toward maturity. It therefore goes back to the picture of the church arriving eventually "at [εἰς, *eis*] a mature man" by growing to the size of Christ's full stature. Its use of the term αὐξάνω/αὔξω (*auxanō*/*auxō*, grow) is also reminiscent of the last use of that term in 2:21, where the "building" (οἰκοδομή, *oikodomē*) of God's people, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles, "grows [αὔξει, *auxei*] into [εἰς, *eis*] a holy temple in the Lord." This in turn is reminiscent of the use

39. This phrase, then, goes with the participle ἀληθεύοντες rather than with the main verb αὐξήσωμεν (*pace* especially Abbott 1897: 123). Not only does this preserve the contrast with the manner in which "every wind of teaching" operates (cf. Lincoln 1990: 259; Schnackenburg 1991: 187), but it also is the stylistically more probable interpretation. As Best (1998: 407) points out, unless we take ἐν ἀγάπῃ with ἀληθεύοντες, the participle remains alone, unqualified by anything, whereas both the false teaching of 4:14 and αὐξήσωμεν in 4:15 receive generous qualification.

of the term οἰκοδομή in 4:12 to speak of the purpose for which the victorious Christ has given gifts to all his people. He has done so for the "building up" of his body. These connections help us to understand what Paul means when he says that when believers speak the truth in love, they grow "up to" (εἰς) Christ with respect to all things: they are moving closer to the full union with Christ that is the church's eventual destiny.[40]

Perhaps to prevent the conclusion that the church is moving toward a union with Christ in which the distinction between the church and Christ is dissolved, Paul adds that Christ is "the head" (cf. 1:22; 5:23; cf. Col. 1:18; 2:19). Believers are not, then, growing "into the head," as some commentators think (e.g., Muddiman 2001: 208).[41] Instead, they are growing "up to Christ" in the sense of verse 13, but Christ, they must not forget, is still the head of his body, the church.

4:16 Paul now skillfully concludes the section by returning to the theme of Christ's gifts to every believer so that each one might contribute to building up the church. He does this by placing special emphasis on two themes, both articulated in terms of the metaphors of a growing body and building that he has been using since verse 12.

First, Christ is the source of the church's "bodily" growth. Just as in verses 7–11 the victorious Christ was the source of the gifts given to each believer for the church's edification, so here Christ is the one "from whom" (ἐξ οὗ, *ex hou*) the growth of the body comes. Since Paul has just spoken of Christ as "the head," he probably thinks of the head of the body as the control center of the body's growth, a concept that would correspond to at least some ancient physiological thinking about the function of the brain (Lloyd 1973: 77; Dawes 1998: 129–33; *pace* Bedale 1956: 68). Christ, as the head of the body, "produces" (ποιεῖται, *poieitai*) the growth of the body. He does this "for its own edification [οἰκοδομήν, *oikodomēn*]." Here the use of οἰκοδομή recalls both the use of this term in verse 12, where it leads into the figure of the church's growth into a mature man, and its use in 2:21, where the dwelling place of God, called an οἰκοδομή, "grows" (αὔξει, *auxei*) as Jews and Gentiles are tightly "joined together" (συναρμολογουμένη, *synarmologoumenē*) to form it. Here Christ is the head and therefore the source of this unity and growth, just as in 2:20–22 he is architecturally the most important stone in the οἰκοδομή, both guiding its construction and crowning its completion.

This growth, whether of body or building, takes place ἐν ἀγάπῃ (*en agapē*, in love; cf. v. 15). Only by "bearing with each other in love" will the body or building be able to maintain both its unity (4:2–3) and the integrity of its witness to the gospel truth (4:15).

40. The phrase τὰ πάντα is an "adverbial accusative," indicating that the growth takes place "in every respect" ("in jeder Hinsicht"; BDR §161.2). This probably corresponds to the statement in 4:13 that the edification of believers occurs until they arrive at "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

41. That idea would not quite "defy explanation" (Robinson 1904: 185), but it would certainly be odd.

Second, the various connecting parts of the body are the means through which this growth in unity continually takes place. The body, Paul says, is "being joined [συναρμολογούμενον, *synarmologoumenon*] and held together [συμβιβαζόμενον, *symbibazomenon*]." The term συναρμολογούμενον is a repetition of συναρμολογουμένη from the figure of the growing, united temple of Jewish and Gentile believers in 2:21. It recalls the image of a building held together by tightly fitted joints (see the comments on 2:21). The verb συμβιβάζω (*symbibazō*) clearly means "hold together" in this context, as it does in Col. 2:19, but this is not the most common use of the term. It more frequently appears in political contexts where warring parties "reconcile" their differences (e.g., Herodotus, *Hist*. 1.74; Thucydides, *Pel. War* 2.29.6; Plato, *Prot*. 337e; LSJ 1675; BDAG 956), and Paul may have intended for it to carry those overtones here also.

As we have just seen, Christ, the head, is the ultimate source of the body's unity, but Paul also says that this unity comes διὰ πάσης ἁφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας (*dia pasēs haphēs tēs epichorēgias*, through every assisting connection).[42] The meaning of the term ἁφή (*haphē*) is unclear and has been the subject of extensive discussion.[43] The common element of the term's many and varied meanings is the concept of touch or contact (LSJ 288; Hoehner 2002: 573; cf. Abbott 1897: 126; Best 1998: 411), but in the present context, where the structure of the body is under discussion, it probably has an anatomical meaning (Best 1998: 411). An ancient Greek medical dictionary defines the plural (ἁφάς, *haphas*) as "ties, from 'to fasten'" (τὰ ἅμματα παρὰ τὸ ἅψαι, *ta hammata para to hapsai*; Robinson 1904: 186).[44]

This might lead us to translate the term as "ligaments" or "tendons," but that translation would probably be too specific. Paul depicts these physical ties as giving the body ἐπιχορηγία (*epichorēgia*), a term that can mean "assistance" (cf. Phil. 1:19; BDAG 387), and he is probably thinking of any of the body's lines of connection, whether ligaments, arteries, nerves, muscles, or bones (cf. Best 1998: 411). Thought of as a unit, these "connections" provide a mechanical frame, a network of communication, and a means of conveying substances through the body.[45]

They are not, however, a special class of bodily components, corresponding to the five especially gifted groups of verse 11, who help other believers with their work of ministry and in this way nourish the growing body (*pace*, e.g., Lincoln 1990: 262–63; Schnackenburg 1991: 189; Muddiman 2001: 209). Instead, Paul pictures "every connection" in the body as performing its work of assistance "according to the activity in the measure of each single part"

42. The genitive phrase τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας is probably being use adjectivally. On this usage, see BDF §165 and Wallace 1996: 86–88.

43. Lightfoot (1879: 198–99): "joint"; Robinson (1904: 186): "ligament"; Hoehner (2002: 571–73): "contact"; van Kooten (2003: 57, 188–89): "cosmic bond."

44. The reference is to *Linguarum seu dictionum exoletarum Hippocratis explicatio* (Kühn 1821–33: 19.87), attributed to Galen.

45. On ancient anatomical knowledge, see Vallance 2003: 82–85.

(κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἑκάστου μέρους, *kat' energeian en metrō henos hekastou merous*). This recalls the language of 4:7, where Christ gave grace to "each" (ἑκάστῳ, *hekastō*) believer "according to" (κατά, *kata*) a certain "measure" (μέτρον, *metron*), and so it is unlikely that this language now implies the "activity" of only certain special groups within the body. Paul defines "every connection" as "each single part" of the body and uses the body figure to say what he had said at the beginning of the section: Christ measures out grace to each Christian in a way that is appropriate for that Christian's role in building up the body (vv. 7, 12).

Paul therefore ends the section as it began, with a reference to Christ's gift of power to every believer in a portion equal to that believer's role in building up Christ's body. The Christ who gives these gifts, we are reminded, is the Christ who has conquered all the evil forces of the universe, wherever they are located. He is, therefore, powerful enough to equip the church to keep false teaching at bay, maintain its unity, and reach its destiny of full union with him.

Summary

In 4:7–16 Paul demonstrates that the same power made available to him to fulfill the important responsibility that God has given him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles has also been given to every individual within the church to work for the church's unity and maturity. Christ has attained victory over the cosmic enemies of God and his people, and now, in a way that is consistent with the picture of God's victory in Ps. 68, Christ is distributing the spoils of that victory to his people. He has given every believer a role in supporting the church's growth. Some engage in apostolic activity, others in prophesying, others in evangelizing, others in shepherding, and still others in teaching. The purpose of all this activity is to equip God's people to build up the church. The ultimate goal of the church's construction and growth is its unified commitment to doctrinal truth and to the experience of the knowledge of Christ. The more mature the church becomes, the more effective it will be at refuting false teaching and maturing into the body of Christ. For this to happen, each connection within the body must lovingly contribute to the body's growth.

Additional Notes

4:8. A number of witnesses have καί before ἔδωκεν (e.g., ℵ², B, C*,³, D², Ψ, 1739, 1881, most Byzantine manuscripts). The καί smooths out the quotation, and this at first seems decisive against it. Yet it also introduces a difference between the quotation and Ps. 67:19 LXX, which does not have the καί (Ellicott 1859: 84). Would a scribe be more likely to make the Greek easier or to conform the text to the LXX? A number of editors (von Soden, Vogels, Bover; see NA²⁷, 764; cf. Abbott 1897: 114) have opted to include the καί, apparently deciding that the pressure to harmonize the quotation to the LXX prompted a scribe somewhere to drop it. The evidence for omitting it, however, is both ancient and geographically diverse (e.g., 𝔓⁴⁶, ℵ, A, C², D*, F, G, 33), indicating that it probably did not stand in the original text.

4:9. Some ancient witnesses to the text (e.g., ℵ², B, C³, Ψ, most Byzantine manuscripts) read πρῶτον after κατέβη. If this is the correct reading, then an ambiguity in the text is clarified. Without πρῶτον the timing of Christ's descent is unclear, especially since the quotation mentions only an ascent. The quotation and the interpretation of it might be understood to imply that the ascent from earth to heaven came first and was followed by a descent from heaven back to earth. This pattern would correspond to the legendary visit of several great figures in antiquity to heaven and their subsequent return (e.g., Enoch, Abraham, Moses). With the πρῶτον, however, there can be no doubt that the descent came "first" and was followed by an ascent. The descent, then, could either be from heaven to the earth or from earth to Hades, the regions under the earth. The ascent would, in either case, still be an ascent to heaven.

A copyist might naturally try to bring some clarity to such a difficult text, but it is hard to imagine a motive for omitting an original πρῶτον (Best 1998: 383; Hoehner 2002: 531n3). The ancient and geographically diverse witnesses to the text without πρῶτον (e.g, 𝔓⁴⁶, ℵ*, A, C*, D, F, G, 082, 6, 33, 81, 1739, 1881) make it virtually certain that it did not appear in the original.

The evidence of the witnesses for (e.g., ℵ, B, C, D², I, Ψ, most Byzantine manuscripts) and against (e.g., 𝔓⁴⁶, D*, F, G) reading μέρη after κατώτερα is more evenly divided. The witnesses that have μέρη are ancient and include representatives of the Alexandrian and Byzantine traditions (Hoehner 2002: 533n3). The witnesses that omit the word, however, include early representatives of both the Alexandrian and Western traditions (𝔓⁴⁶ and D*). Once again, scribal habits must decide the matter: it is difficult to imagine a scribe omitting the word if it were present, but fairly easy to see a scribe making the text more explicit by adding it.

4:11. Two relatively minor points of grammar in this verse have occasioned discussion. First, according to Schnackenburg (1991: 180–181), the μὲν . . . δὲ . . . δὲ . . . δέ construction sets up a contrast between the apostles on one hand (μέν) and the rest of the list on the other hand (δέ). This understanding of the grammar is consistent with Schnackenburg's exegesis of 3:5, where he argues that in the phrase τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ προφήταις (to his holy apostles, and prophets) the apostles are set apart from the prophets by the terms ἁγίοις and αὐτοῦ. From the viewpoint of the author of Ephesians, he says, the apostles' connection with the historical Jesus set them apart from all other early Christian leaders (Schnackenburg 1991: 133–34).

This understanding of the syntax of 3:5 is plausible (see the comments on 3:5), but it is not likely that 4:11 sets up a similar contrast. The μὲν . . . δὲ . . . δέ construction was a normal way of listing discrete items in Hellenistic Greek, with no clear intention of expressing a contrast between the first item in the list and the items that follow it. Justin, *Dial.* 39.2, is especially instructive, since the subject (receiving gifts from God) is similar to that of Eph. 4:11 but no clear literary relationship exists between the two texts: ὁ μὲν γὰρ λαμβάνει συνέσεως πνεῦμα, ὁ δὲ βουλῆς, ὁ δὲ ἰσχύος, ὁ δὲ ἰάσεως, ὁ δὲ προγνώσεως, ὁ δὲ διδασκαλίας, ὁ δὲ φόβου θεοῦ (For one receives a spirit of understanding, another of counsel, another of strength, another of healing, another of foreknowledge, another of teaching, and another of the fear of God [my trans.]; cf. Lucian, *Hermot.* 66; Justin, *Dial.* 35.6; and especially 39.2; Matt. 13:8, 23; BDAG 630). There is certainly no contrast between the first item in this list and any of the others. The same is true of Eph. 4:11.

Second, interpreters have understood the articles that accompany the particles μὲν . . . δὲ . . . δὲ . . . δέ in Eph. 4:11 in two different ways. According to one reading, they should be taken as attributive modifiers of their nouns, and each noun should then be taken as a straightforward direct object of the verb ἔδωκεν (*edōken*, he gave). The resulting translation is "He himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers" (e.g., Merklein 1973: 73–75; Lincoln 1990: 249).

According to the other reading, the articles function with their particles as pronouns. This is a common occurrence in the NT and is well illustrated in the quotation from Justin above. If the articles in Eph. 4:11 are understood in this sense, then each gift is linked to its article-particle combination

with an understood verb of being, and each gift forms the predicate of the resulting statement. This seems complex, but it is perfectly intelligible Greek and would yield the translation "He himself gave some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, and others to be shepherds and teachers" (BDAG 686; Muddiman 2001: 198n6; Hoehner 2002: 538).

What difference does it make? If the first way of taking the articles is correct, then the emphasis falls on certain people insofar as they hold particular *positions*; if the second way of taking the articles is correct, the emphasis falls on the gifts that these people are given and therefore on the *activities* they perform. The first option places the accent on the *role* certain people play whereas the second option places the accent on the *work* a particular gift allows certain people to perform.

The second option ("He himself gave some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, and others to be shepherds and teachers") is probably correct for two reasons. First, if the alternative reading were correct, there would be no indirect object for the verb ἔδωκεν (he gave), and the reader would be left with a sense of incompleteness: he gave apostles and prophets and so forth, but to whom did he give them (Muddiman 2001: 198n6)? Second, in the broader context of verse 11, the emphasis falls on the activities that gifted individuals perform rather than on the people themselves. Although interpreters dispute whether the five groups in verse 11 or all "the saints" perform "the work of ministry" and building up the body in verse 12, the most probable interpretation of this verse sees it as a reference to the work of all believers. If this is correct, the emphasis of verses 11–12 falls on the activities gifted individuals perform rather than on the "offices" they hold.

IX. A Reminder of How to Live as New Human Beings (4:17–5:2)

In a rhetorical move that by now has become characteristic of Ephesians (cf. 2:5a; 3:14), in 4:17 Paul signals a return to the subject he has left behind in 4:1–3. In that passage, he started to describe in practical terms what it means for the church to grow into the unity that the death of Christ on the cross has achieved for it, according to 2:11–22. It means walking in humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with each other in love, and zealously maintaining the oneness that, according to 2:22, God's Spirit has given them with each other. The notion of God's Spirit as the source for the unity of God's people has then led to a rhythmic set of affirmations of the unity of God (4:4–6) and from there into a description of the gifts that Christ has given the church to equip it to arrive at the unity and maturity that would be its destiny (4:7–16). With the phrase "this therefore I say and charge you in the Lord . . ." in 4:17, Paul begins a return to the practical matters he intended to discuss before the digressions of 4:4–6 and 4:7–16.

The movement into these practical matters is slow. In an opening section, Paul first lays a theological foundation by reminding his readers again of their conversion (4:17–24; cf. 2:1–10, 11–22). Here, however, the focus is not on what God has done for them, as in 2:1–10, or on their unity with each other across ethnic lines, as in 2:11–22, but on the practical, day-to-day ramifications of their movement from futility, darkness, estrangement from God, dullness, and despair to the experience of constant spiritual renewal and re-creation in the image of God (4:24; cf. 2:10, 15).

This opening section (4:17–24) can be divided into two parts. First, Paul exhorts his readers no longer to "walk" in the way that used to characterize their lives as unbelieving Gentiles, and then he provides a motivation for this exhortation by describing in bleak terms the existence of those who continue to live this way (4:17–19; cf. 2:1–3). Second, he reminds his readers of the traditional ethical instruction that he assumes they received after they believed the gospel (4:20–24). He describes the change in behavior that their conversion has entailed with a metaphor for conversion in use in ancient philosophical and religious circles, a metaphor of taking off one set of clothing and replacing it with a new set.[1] He couples this imagery with a second metaphor, which speaks of the change from existence as an old human being to existence as a new human being. At the end of the section, he identifies "the new human

1. Cf. 1 Thess. 5:8; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 13:12–14; Col. 3:8–10; and, e.g., Philo, *Drunkenness* 7, 86; Let. Aris. 124; Plato, *Resp*. 5.457a.

being" his readers have become as "created after the pattern of God" (ὁ καινὸς ἄνθρωπος ὁ κατὰ θεὸν κτισθείς, *ho kainos anthrōpos ho kata theon ktistheis*; 4:24), an allusion to Gen. 1:26.[2]

In 4:25–5:2 Paul is now finally ready to give the concrete ethical instruction he seems to have been preparing for since 4:1–3. The διό (*dio*, therefore) with which the section begins in 4:25 shows that he understands the exhortations that follow to be illustrations of what it means to live the new life he has just described, particularly life as a human being newly created in God's image. It seems reasonable to think of these exhortations as reminders of the traditional ethical teaching he hopes (εἴ γε, *ei ge*, as I assume; v. 21) his readers have received. A series of seven exhortations ensues, covering the following:

1. lying (v. 25)
2. anger (vv. 26–27)
3. stealing (v. 28)
4. unedifying speech (v. 29)
5. grieving the Holy Spirit (v. 30)
6. abusive speech (vv. 31–32)
7. sacrificial love in imitation of God and Christ (5:1–2).[3]

The place of the final set of exhortations (5:1–2) in the discourse is not clear. Some interpreters take these exhortations as the beginning of a new major division. Unlike the preceding admonitions in 4:25–32, the admonition in 5:1–2 contains no prohibition but is entirely positive (Barth 1974: 555). Like 4:1 and 4:17, verses that begin new major sections of the discourse, this set

2. There are conceptual and linguistic parallels between Eph. 4:17, 19, 22–24 and Col. 3:5, 7–10, and many interpreters (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 273; Schnackenburg 1991: 195; van Kooten 2003: 227–29, 268) see them as evidence that the author of Ephesians used Colossians as a source. There are also some odd differences between the two passages, however, if this is the case. Why are so many of the same words used, but in different forms (ἀκαθαρσία, πλεονεξία, περιπατέω, ἀποτίθημι, ἐνδύω, κτίζω)? Why the shift from νέον and ἀνακαινούμενον in Col. 3:10 to καινόν and ἀνανεοῦσθαι in Eph. 4:24? Perhaps one author simply had the other letter in mind when writing and did not follow it closely, but it seems at least as likely that Paul composed the two passages at about the same time and that the traditional language of one letter was still loosely in his mind as he composed the other letter.

3. Here too the correspondence between 4:25–5:2 and Col. 3:8–9, 12–14 has convinced some interpreters that the author of Ephesians was following Colossians (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 297–98; Schnackenburg 1991: 206; van Kooten 2003: 227–29, 270). But again, if this is so, the author of Ephesians has rearranged the material in curious ways. In Eph. 4:29, 31, for example, he has turned the admonition about anger, abusive speech, and shameful speech in Col. 3:8 into two separate admonitions, shifted the last admonition about shameful speech (αἰσχρολογία) to first place and changed its wording (πᾶς λόγος σαπρός), and then both changed the order and lengthened the list of terms describing anger and abusive speech (ὀργήν, θυμόν, κακίαν, βλασφημίαν becomes πικρία καὶ θυμὸς καὶ ὀργὴ καὶ κραυγὴ καὶ βλασφημία; Eph. 4:31). Why he did this is not clear. It is at least as plausible to ascribe both passages to Paul and to think of him as giving traditional ethical exhortation from memory in two separate letters composed at about the same time.

of exhortations contains both an οὖν (*oun*, therefore) and a form of the verb περιπατέω (*peripateō*, walk; Hoehner 2002: 643).

Others see 5:1–2 as the continuation and conclusion of the preceding exhortations. This section repeats the term γίνεσθε (*ginesthe*, be) from 4:32 and illustrates, with a reference to Christ's death, the costly nature of the forgiveness of God and therefore the quality of the forgiveness that believers should demonstrate toward each other (e.g., Schnackenburg 1991: 204; O'Brien 1999: 352).

A third approach, however, is probably best. Paul wanted this final set of admonitions to provide a fitting conclusion to the whole section by bringing his ethical advice full circle and so back to the theme of the imitation of God that prompted it (5:1; cf. 4:24).

A. No Longer Walk as "Gentiles" but as a New Human Being (4:17–24)

Perhaps it is the picture of the church's destiny as the mature, closely knit, and harmoniously functioning body of Christ in 4:16 that prompted Paul to return to the practical admonitions from which he began to digress in 4:4. In any case, in 4:17 he returns to the solemn, exhortatory language of 4:1 and begins in earnest his practical instruction about how his audience can maintain the oneness that the Spirit has given them according to 4:3.

The first section of this instruction (4:17–24) clarifies for Paul's audience that their new existence must stand in sharp contrast to the existence of those who stand outside the boundaries of God's people. Paul begins with the negative, urging his readers no longer to walk as the "Gentiles" walk, and then describes Gentile behavior and existence with four clauses (4:17–19). Their conduct originates in a "futile" way of thinking; their understanding is darkened; because of their ignorance and hard-heartedness, they are estranged from the life that God promises; and in their despondency they have given themselves up to behavior so crazed by greed that it has become antisocial.

It is possible to read this description as a blunt claim that unbelievers are simply foolish, stubborn, utterly selfish, and debauched. To read the text this way, however, is to fail to appreciate the subtlety of Paul's language. Paul probably linked the futility of the Gentiles' way of thinking to their failure to worship the true God. Similarly, the darkness of their understanding is related to their existence under the influence of "the world-rulers of this darkness" (6:12; cf. 2:2) or, as Paul put it to the Corinthians, "the demons" to whom Gentiles sacrifice when they worship idols (1 Cor. 10:20). Their ignorance and hard-heartedness are certainly culpable, but they also are pitiable. They are suffering, but they are unaware of why they suffer, and their hopelessness has left them with nothing to live for but their greed. Their greed has, in turn, produced in them all kinds of bizarre behavior.

To this horrific description of the Gentile worldview and the behavior to which it has led, Paul contrasts the worldview and behavior of his readers, assuming that they have actually both entered into a relationship with Christ and received sound instruction in his teaching (4:20–24). The idea that the transformation of their behavior requires a relationship with the living Jesus emerges from the syntactical oddity of following verbs of learning and hearing not with direct objects that describe the content of what was learned and heard but with references to Jesus himself as the object of the learning and hearing. Paul assumes that his audience has "learned

Christ" and "heard him." Their instruction in the foundational elements of the faith, moreover, has come to them "in him."

Paul summarizes this instruction in three steps. The first and last of these steps make use of a common ancient metaphor for personal transformation: taking off and putting on clothing.

First, if his readers have received sound teaching, they learned to put off the old human being, whose way of living was characterized by continual corruption. That old way of life could result only in personal disintegration, the kind of existence Paul has just described in 4:19—an existence that is guided by demons, hopeless, and so focused on greed that it leads to bizarre and antisocial behavior. It is also behavior that, in the end, is consumed by the wrath of God.

Second, they have learned to be continually renewed in mind. This, too, stands in contrast to the Gentile way of life described in 4:17–20, where the misguided thinking of the Gentiles has left them in darkness.

Third, they have been taught to put on the new human being, created after the pattern of God. Just as in 2:10 and 2:15, the allusion to God's creation of Adam, the first human being, is clear (cf. Gen. 1:26). Paul's readers have been newly created in God's image and therefore in the "righteousness and holiness" that characterize him. Paul's point is that his readers' behavior should reflect this new reality. They have been newly created in the image of a righteous and holy God. They too should be righteous and holy.

Exegesis and Exposition

[17a]Therefore I say and charge [you] in the Lord [17b]that you should no longer walk as the Gentiles walk in the futility of their mind [18]because they are darkened in understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the hardness of their heart, [19]who, ⌜because they have become despondent⌝, have given themselves over to unrestrained debauchery, which results in greedily doing all kinds of uncleanness.

[20]But you—not so did you learn Christ! [21]—If, as I assume, you heard and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, [22]to put off the old human being with respect to your former manner of life that was continually being corrupted because of the cravings of deceit, [23]to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, [24]and to put on the new human being, created after the pattern of God in the righteousness and holiness of the truth.

4:17a

With a brief introductory statement, Paul now returns to the moral exhortation from which he had wandered away after 4:1–3, and he signals this return by recalling the language of 4:1. He resumes the first-person singular of that verse, repeats the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ (*en kyriō*, in the Lord), uses μαρτύρομαι (*martyromai*, I charge [you]), which is a synonym of παρακαλῶ (*parakalō*,

I encourage [you]) in 4:1 (cf. 1 Thess. 2:12), and repeats the combination of οὖν (*oun*, therefore) with περιπατέω (*peripateō*, walk).

The τοῦτο (*touto*, this) points forward to the moral exhortation he is about to give (cf. 5:5; 6:22), and the emphasis in this introductory statement falls on the solemnity of what will follow. Paul communicates this solemnity in three ways.

First, he uses redundancy. He does not merely "say" what his readers should do; he also "charges" them to behave in a certain way.

Second, he shifts back to the first-person singular and uses the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ. This recalls the language of 4:1 and before that of 3:1, with their connotations of authority. Paul, the prisoner "in the Lord" (4:1) and "of Christ" (3:1)—one of the holy apostles (3:5), who form the foundation of the church (2:20)—issues the instructions that follow.

Third, he uses the term μαρτύρομαι to describe his charge to them. This is a solemn term, often used to put people on notice that they must carry out a particular behavior or serious consequences will follow (Thucydides, *Pel. War* 8.53.2; Polybius, *Hist.* 13.8.1; Jdt. 7:28; Josephus, *Ant.* 10.10; cf. Gal. 5:3).[1] The moral exhortation here is not merely advice that Paul's readers can take or leave at their discretion but is critical instruction for becoming the human beings and the community that God intends for them to be.

4:17b–19 Paul begins his exhortation by describing how his readers should not "walk." Although there is a physical sense in which they are still Gentiles—they are not circumcised (2:11; 3:1)—they have nevertheless been created anew by their union with the crucified, risen, exalted Christ (2:5–6, 10, 15), and so there is another sense in which they are no longer Gentiles (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1; 12:2). Paul speaks of this sense when he now says they should no longer walk as Gentiles.

Gentiles who have not experienced union with Christ have four problems that Paul describes in language typical of Hellenistic Jewish descriptions of Gentile vices.

First, they walk ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοὸς αὐτῶν (*en mataiotēti tou noos autōn*, in the futility of their mind). The adjective μάταιος (*mataios*, "idle, empty, fruitless, useless, powerless, lacking truth" [BDAG 621]) was sometimes used as a plural substantive in the literature of Hellenistic Judaism to refer to Gentile idols (Jer. 2:5; 8:19 LXX), and so Gentiles, who worshiped these dumb images, were naturally thought of as ματαιόφρονες (*mataiophrones*), "empty minded" (3 Macc. 6:11). They were "ignorant of God, . . . foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know the one who exists" (Wis. 13:1 NRSV), or as Paul puts it in Rom. 1:21, "although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give him thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts [ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς, *ematαiōthēsan en tois dialogismois*], and their senseless [ἀσύνετος, *asynetos*] heart was darkened

1. Paul uses it in 1 Thess. 2:12 (alongside παρακαλέω and παραμυθέομαι) with somewhat different connotations.

[ἐσκοτίσθη, *eskotisthē*]." The worshipful acknowledgment of the one God is foundational to all useful knowledge. Without this foundation, Gentile knowledge about how to live one's life is deeply flawed.

Second, they are ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντες (*eskotōmenoi tē dianoia ontes*, darkened in understanding).[2] The language is close to Rom. 1:21, and just as in that text, the two ideas of a useless mind and a darkened understanding should not be interpreted separately: they are mutually reinforcing. Formally, ὄντες is an adverbial participle of cause, describing why the Gentiles conduct their lives according to a futile way of thinking. They do this "because," as far as their understanding is concerned, they exist in darkness.

Later Paul will say that his readers, in their former existence, "were . . . darkness [σκότος, *skotos*]" (5:8) and that they should avoid partnering with "the unfruitful works of darkness [σκότος]" (5:11). That way of life is closely allied with the evil spirits that continue to have power in the present age of "darkness" (6:12; cf. 2:2–3).

The picture is of an existence that is aimless because it is ignorant of the truth and is kept in this condition by powerful spiritual forces.[3] It meshes with 2:2–3 and is probably intended to remind the readers of that description of their existence prior to experiencing the mercy, love, and grace of God (2:4–9), and prior to their own re-creation for the purpose of "walking" in good works (2:10; Heil 2007a: 189).[4]

Third, they are ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ θεοῦ (*apēllotriōmenoi tēs zōēs tou theou*, alienated from the life of God).[5] The perfect participle ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι must have recalled for Paul's readers the use of precisely the same word in the same form in 2:12, where it referred to their plight before

2. The participle ὄντες could go with ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι rather than with ἐσκοτωμένοι (Eadie 1883: 329; Robinson 1904: 189). This would correspond to Col. 1:21, but here in Eph. 4:18 such a construction would destroy the symmetry of the two clauses, each beginning with a perfect participle whose last three syllables (ω-μεν-οι) match (cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 83.11; Ellicott 1859: 97; Westcott 1906: 66; Best 1998: 418; Hoehner 2002: 585). Best takes ὄντες with both participles, but this introduces unnecessary complexity into the sentence.

3. Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 9.57, where Josephus retells the story of how God blinded the Syrian soldiers so that they could not recognize Elisha and were led by him into the camp of their enemies (2 Kings 6:8–23). According to Josephus, God used a mist to obscure the vision of the Syrians, and so "they enthusiastically went, with the prophet in the lead, because their eyes and understanding had been darkened by God [τὰς ὄψεις ὑπὸ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐπεσκοτημένοι]" (my trans.). For the metaphorical use of this language, see 1 Clem. 36.2 and T. Dan 2.4.

4. Commentators often observe the contrast between the darkened understanding of Gentiles in this passage and the enlightened eyes that Paul prays for his readers to experience in 1:18. The use of light-dark imagery and of perfect participles (πεφωτισμένους, ἐσκοτωμένοι) in both passages is noteworthy, but there is an important difference in the imagery. The implied contrast in 1:18 is between believers who understand God's blessings and discouraged believers (cf. 3:13) who do not understand them. In 4:18, however, the implied contrast is between unbelievers, who are completely in the dark, and believers, who have experienced the enlightenment of conversion (cf. 5:13–14; 1 Clem. 36.2).

5. Cf. L.A.E. 21.6 (*OTP* 2:281), where Adam exclaims to Eve in dismay, ἀπηλλοτρίωσάς με ἐκ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ (You have estranged me from the glory of God).

they believed the gospel: they were "alienated" from citizenship in Israel, from the covenant promises of Israel's Scriptures, and from the God who made those promises. God's most important covenant promise to Israel was that he would give them "life" (Deut. 30:15–20). Both Jews and Gentiles had become estranged from the life that God promised (2:2–3; cf. Gal. 2:15–16; Rom. 1:18–3:20), but here Paul's focus is on the Gentiles.

Paul describes the cause of this alienation in two prepositional phrases that stand parallel to each other and are probably meant to interpret each other. Their estrangement from God, he says, is because of the ἄγνοια (*agnoia*, ignorance) that exists within them. This term is associated with sin in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period (e.g., 1 Esd. 8:72 LXX [8:75 Eng.]; 9:20; Wis. 14:22; Sir. 23:3), sometimes with the connotation that the sin is less culpable because it was committed in ignorance (Pss. Sol. 13.7; 18.4; cf. Lev. 5:18). The word appears twice in the NT with this connotation (Acts 3:17; 17:30).[6] Here Paul is not trying to play down the complicity of the Gentiles in their rebellion against God (something he clearly affirms in 4:19; 2:2; and 5:6), but his emphasis does lie less on the willfulness of their disobedience than on their lack of understanding and aimlessness.

Paul next repeats the same thought in different terms. Ἡ πώρωσις τῆς καρδίας (*hē pōrōsis tēs kardias*, hardness of heart) has produced their estrangement from God. In the NT, "hardness of heart" can refer to a stubbornly negative response to Jesus, such as when the Pharisees plot Jesus's murder after he heals on the Sabbath (Mark 3:5), or to God's action of hardening the heart of those who have refused to believe in Jesus (John 12:40; cf. Rom. 11:25). The image can also be used of Jesus's disciples, however, with a slightly different nuance. Their hardness of heart is connected with a more pitiable failure to understand, a dullness that leaves them fearful and clueless about the true state of affairs (Mark 6:52; 8:17). There is no doubt that the disciples' lack of understanding is an indictment—it places them with "those on the outside" (Mark 4:11), but their hardness of heart is still not precisely like the hardness of the Pharisees' heart.[7] This "numbness" is Paul's emphasis here (Theodoret: ἀναλγησία, *analgēsia* [*PG* 82:537]; Abbott 1897: 131; Robinson 1904: 273). Unbelieving Gentiles are people who do not understand God or the world as it truly is.[8] Their life, as John of Damascus put it, "has neither finish line nor goal, but is carried out in futility" (*PG* 95:844, my trans.).[9]

6. Its other NT use (1 Pet. 1:14) couples "ignorance" (ἄγνοια) with "lusts" (ἐπιθυμίαι).

7. Cf. Epictetus (Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 1.5), who distinguishes between "two kinds of petrification [ἀπολίθωσις]: one is the petrification of the intellect [νοητικός], the other the sense of shame" (trans. W. Oldfather 1925–28). Intellectual hardness comes from the mental inability to understand (συνιέναι) an argument, but the petrification of shame recognizes the truth of an opponent's argument and, simply to avoid embarrassment, refuses to acknowledge its validity. The latter is more culpable. The second-century-AD grammarian Aelius Herodianus equates πώρωσις with ἀπολίθωσις (*Partitiones* 113, l. 3).

8. For the same sentiment in connection with Jews who do not understand the true significance of the old covenant because they have not turned to the Lord, see 2 Cor. 3:14–16.

9. Οὐκ ἔχοντα σκοπόν, οὐδὲ τέλος, ἀλλὰ ματαίως φερόμενον.

Fourth, Paul confirms the statement he has just made with a further, lengthier explanation.[10] Gentiles, "because they have become despondent [ἀπηλγηκότες, *apēlgēkotes*], have given themselves over [ἑαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν, *heautous paredōkan*] to unrestrained debauchery [ἀσελγείᾳ, *aselgeia*]." The participle ἀπηλγηκότες gives the cause of the Gentiles' abandonment of moral restraint. This is the only occurrence of the term ἀπαλγέω (*apalgeō*, become despondent) in the NT, and it is not common in classical literature. It can mean to abandon (ἀπό, *apo*) one's personal sense of pain (ἀλγεινός, *algeinos*) in a noble act of self-discipline for the common good (Thucydides, *Pel. War* 2.61.4; Plutarch, *Ag. Cleom.* 22.3). It can also mean, although rarely, to act without a conscience, as a historian does when he knows full well that some fantastic rumor is false and useless but incorporates it into his account anyway (Polybius, *Hist.* 16.2). This is the way most commentators take it here in Ephesians, and since the previous verse has referred to the "dullness" or "numbness" of Gentiles, this understanding of the term may be correct.

Most often, however, the term refers to despondency so severe that one has abandoned, or nearly abandoned, hope (Polybius, *Hist.* 1.35.5 [cf. 1.31.8]; 1.58.9). Such desperation could, in turn, lead to violent public policy (Polybius, *Hist.* 9.40.4) or suicide (Philo, *Rewards* 135). Robinson (1904: 189) comments perceptively that desperation and reckless living "are moods which stand not far apart," and it seems likely that both "moods" overlap in Paul's use of the term here. The early interpreter of the text who first replaced ἀπηλγηκότες with ἀπηλπικότες (*apēlpikotes*, because they despaired) failed to copy the text correctly (see the additional note) but correctly understood Paul's meaning. The stupor and aimlessness with which Gentiles make their way through life leads them to despair, and in their despair, they give themselves over to "unrestrained debauchery" (ἀσέλγεια, *aselgeia*).

In Hellenistic Jewish texts, ἀσέλγεια refers to twisted behavior (e.g., Wis. 14:26; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.252), often of a sexual nature and in defiance of God (e.g., 3 Macc. 2:25–26 [cf. 1:10–12, 26]; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.318). There is an open, shameless element to ἀσέλγεια (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.112; cf. 108). Those who engage in it indulge a selfish desire to assert one's absolute right (αὐτεξούσιος, *autexousios*) to pleasure, no matter what anyone else might think of it, and in flagrant rebellion against the law (Josephus, *Ant.* 4.151; cf. 145–49). Paul drives this element of the word home with his comment that the ἀσέλγεια of the Gentiles "results in greedily doing all kinds of [πάσης, *pasēs*] uncleanness."[11] When ἀσέλγεια appears in vice lists elsewhere in Paul's

10. BDAG 729–30 says that οἵτινες is used here "to emphasize a characteristic quality, by which a preceding statement is to be confirmed."

11. For the use of εἰς to indicate result in the construction παραδιδόναι εἰς, see BDR §187.2. I have taken ἀκαθαρσίας as an objective genitive and the phrase ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ (literally, "with greediness") as a kind of adverbial description of the action noun ἐργασίαν. According to BDAG 330, ἐν can be used as a "marker denoting kind and manner." That is probably how Paul uses it here.

letters, he always associates it with other words that refer to unrestrained sexual activity (Gal. 5:19; 2 Cor. 12:21; Rom. 13:13), and that is probably the meaning here.

The Gentiles, Paul says, have "handed themselves over" (ἑαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν) to this sort of behavior. The picture is of people so unhappy that they have delivered themselves up to the destructive forces of their own, unrestrained appetites.

4:20–21 The behavior of Paul's readers must bear no resemblance to the way of life he has just described. The ὑμεῖς (*hymeis*, you) is first in the sentence for emphasis, and the δὲ οὐχ οὕτως (*de ouch houtōs*, but not so) strikes a strong note of contrast difficult to reproduce in English. The translation, "but you—not so did you learn Christ!" although hardly elegant, perhaps communicates the rhetorical emphasis. The expression "learn Christ" is unusual since the verb μανθάνω (*manthanō*, learn) does not typically have a person as its object. The construction is not, however, as rare as some commentators imply (e.g., Ellicott 1859: 99–100; Robinson 1904: 190; Abbott 1897: 134; Lincoln 1990: 279; Schnackenburg 1991: 199). Philosophical writers of roughly Paul's time could apparently speak of "learning God" in the sense not merely of learning about him but in the more relational sense of "renewing" one's "kinship with him" ("Chion of Heraclea," *Ep.* 16.8; cf. 16.6; Tatian, *Or. graec.* 9.2).[12] This is similar to the way Paul uses the phrase here. Paul conceives of Christ as a living person, seated with God in the heavenly places (1:20), and so he thinks of those who believe in Christ as having a relationship with him: they are seated with him in the heavenly places (2:6), and Christ lives in their hearts (3:17). When they first believed the gospel (1:13) and then continued to mature in their faith (4:13), they certainly learned about Christ and his teachings, but they have also developed a relationship with him as a living person (cf. Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; 3:8–10; 4:13; Col. 3:3; Best 1997a: 141).

Just as in 3:2 (see the comments there), the γέ (*ge*) adds emphasis to the εἰ, and together the two words communicate an assumption—something Paul knows to be true, but not on the basis of firsthand experience: "if, as I assume, you heard him." Much had changed in the more than seven years since Paul was last in Ephesus, and even when he was there, some of the Christians in the city had only a loose connection with him (Acts 18:24–28; cf. Trebilco 2004: 115–27). There is no irony here (*pace* Muddiman 2001: 216–17). Rather, the slight note of uncertainty in the phrase εἰ γέ probably reflects Paul's knowledge that false understandings of the Christian tradition were abroad (4:14; Col. 2:8–23). It is just possible, he hints, that some of his readers have not heard the Christian message "as the truth is in Jesus."

The expression αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε (*auton ēkousate*, you heard him) is almost as unusual as "you learned Christ" in verse 20 (Best 1998: 427; *pace* Lincoln

12. See the text and English translation of Düring 1979: 74–77. According to Düring (1979: 24), the fictional letters of "Chion" were written "in the second half of the first century A.D."

1990: 280; Hoehner 2002: 595).[13] As with that expression, the implication is that Christ is alive and that when one hears the gospel preached, as Paul assumes his readers have (1:13), one is put in touch with a living person (Best 1997a: 141). The Paul of the undisputed letters can speak in the same way of announcing Christ as good news (Gal. 1:16; Phil. 1:16–17), of preaching Christ (1 Cor. 1:23; 15:12), and of gaining Christ (Phil. 3:8).[14]

The relational emphasis continues in the next phrase, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε (*kai en autō edidachthēte*, and you were taught in him). Paul assumes that after his readers heard and believed the gospel, they continued to learn more about the Christian tradition. He not only gives this kind of instruction to the Christian communities he has established through his own preaching (1 Thess. 4:2, 11; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6; 1 Cor. 11:2); he also assumes that it is a standard feature of Christianity generally (Rom. 6:17). The qualifying phrase ἐν αὐτῷ (*en autō*, in him) reveals, however, that once again Paul is referring to more than learning information about Christ. The teaching has taken place in the sphere marked out by the living Christ and thus in a way that is possible only for those who have a relationship with him (Best 1997a: 141).

Paul's next phrase is puzzling for several reasons. First, it is unclear how he uses the adverb καθώς (*kathōs*). Does it introduce the reason why Paul's readers learned Christ (Best 1998: 414, 428–29)? Or does it tell the manner in which they were taught (Ellicott 1859: 100; Eadie 1883: 337; cf. La Potterie 1963: 47–48; Hoehner 2002: 598)? This second way of construing the grammar is the simplest since it attaches καθώς to the immediately preceding ἐδιδάχθητε (*edidachthēte*, you were taught) rather than to the more remote verb ἐμάθετε (*emathete*, you learned).[15]

Second, without the article in front of ἀλήθεια (*alētheia*, truth) the meaning of ἐστιν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ (*estin alētheia en tō Iēsou*, truth is in Jesus) is unclear. Should we use a preparatory "there" to translate ἐστιν ("there is truth in Jesus"; Westcott 1906: 70–71)? Should we take "Christ" from the end of verse 20 as the subject of ἐστιν ("he [Christ] is the truth in Jesus"; cf. F. J. A. Hort [Westcott 1906: 70–71]; Abbott 1897: 136; La Potterie 1963: 48)?[16] Or is ἀλήθεια the subject, despite its lack of an article to indicate this clearly ("the truth is in Jesus"; Lincoln 1990: 281)? The last solution makes the most sense of the (admittedly unusual) syntax and at the same time yields

13. BDF §173.1 could be understood to mean that ἀκούω followed by the accusative of a person is a regular idiom for hearing "about" someone. BDR §173.1n4, however, is somewhat clearer that, although the accusative of the thing(s) about which one has heard is normal Greek, the use of the same idiom for a person, as in Eph. 4:21, is less usual.

14. See Muddiman (2001: 216), who interprets αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε (you have heard of him) differently, but in commenting on ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν, he uses the texts cited above to illustrate how authentically Pauline this unusual idiom is.

15. Barth's idea (1974: 498, 505, 530, 533–36) that καθώς introduces the quotation "Truth in Jesus!" from a supposed body of early Christian teaching seems too speculative to be useful in interpretation.

16. Both Hort and Abbot recognized the oddity of this expression and, in apparent desperation, emended ἀλήθεια to the dative form ἀληθείᾳ ("as he [Christ] is in truth, in Jesus").

the most intelligible meaning. Abstract nouns, even when they are definite, often omit the article (BDF §258; Zerwick 1963: 57 §179; Lincoln 1990: 281; Wallace 1996: 249), and the simple aphorism "the truth is in Jesus" is more readily understandable than the other options.[17]

Third, it is not clear why Paul has switched from the designation "Christ" to the name "Jesus." This might simply be a stylistic variation with little or no significance (Lincoln 1990: 281–82), but it is the only place in the letter where the name "Jesus" is used alone. Most commentators are probably correct, then, in thinking that Paul places special emphasis here on the foundation of Christian teaching, particularly its ethics, in the teaching and conduct of Jesus during his earthly ministry (cf. 4:32; 5:2; Aletti 2001: 236).

If we put these three exegetical decisions together, then in this final clause of 4:20–21, Paul describes to his readers the manner in which he assumes they have been taught the Christian tradition. He thinks and hopes that their teaching has been consistent with the truth as it is found in the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Paul is aware of other, erroneous forms of teaching about Jesus (4:14–15; cf. Col. 2:8–23), but he trusts that the foundation of his readers' faith was laid by the apostles with their connection to the historical Jesus. Even if most of his readers have heard the gospel and were encouraged in the faith through the work of prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (2:20; 3:5; 4:11), what they heard and believed, he assumes, was nevertheless the apostolic "word of truth" (1:13).

In 4:20–21, then, Paul begins to set Christian teaching in contrast to a Gentile worldview. To guide their lives, Christians have both a relationship with the living Christ and concrete instruction, derived from the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. The shape of their lives, thus guided, stands utterly apart from the hopeless and socially destructive behavior of their unbelieving Gentile neighbors.

4:22 In 4:22–24 Paul uses three infinitives to specify what his readers were taught (ἀποθέσθαι, *apothesthai*, put off [v. 22]; ἀνανεοῦσθαι, *ananeousthai*, being renewed [v. 23]; ἐνδύσασθαι, *endysasthai*, put on [v. 24]). From the forms of these verbs, it is not possible to tell whether the original instruction consisted of statements (e.g., Eadie 1883: 338; Hoehner 2002: 600–602) or commands (e.g., Bruce 1984: 357–58; Best 1998: 430–31; Darko 2008: 39).[18] Were Paul's readers taught that the transformation of their lives has already happened or that it should happen?

The close parallels to Paul's language in Romans and Colossians can help with this question. In Rom. 6:6 Paul *states* that "our old human being has been

17. "There is truth in Jesus" is, from the perspective expressed in this letter, a major understatement (Hort [Westcott 1906: 71]; Best 1998: 429). "He is in truth, in Jesus," however, is (*pace* Hort [Westcott 1906: 71]; Abbott 1897: 136) a very complex way of saying that the true Messiah is the historical Jesus.

18. In grammatical terms, this is the use of the infinitive in indirect discourse, but the original discourse could have been either in the indicative or the imperative mood (see Wallace 1996: 605). The ὑμᾶς resumes the ὑμεῖς at the beginning of the sentence (v. 20). For this understanding of the Greek, see Alford 1857: 119 and Ellicott 1859: 100–101.

crucified together with [Christ]" (cf. Rom. 6:8; 8:8, 10; Gal. 2:19; 3:27; 6:14), and in Rom. 13:12 and 14 he *commands* his readers to "put off" (ἀποθώμεθα, *apothōmetha*) the works of darkness and to "put on" (ἐνδυσώμεθα, *endysōmetha*; ἐνδύσασθε, *endysasthe*) the armor of light and the Lord Jesus Christ. Similarly, in Col. 3:8 Paul *commands* the Colossian Christians to "put off" (ἀπόθεσθε, *apothesthe*) a list of vices but then in 3:9 *asserts* that they "have put off the old human being" (ἀπεκδυσάμενοι, *apekdysamenoi*). Paul can easily swivel between indicative and imperative statements when he uses this kind of language, but in either case the overall purpose is imperatival. He urges his readers to live in a way that is consistent with their new identity in Christ. Here in Eph. 4:22–24, then, the question of whether indicatives or imperatives lie beneath the infinitives ἀποθέσθαι, ἀνανεοῦσθαι, and ἐνδύσασθαι remains unclear, but the passage has an imperatival intent. Paul assumes that his readers have been taught, in Christ, to "put off" their old way of life, "to be [continually] renewed" in their thinking, and "to put on" a new way of life that matches God's original design for his human creatures.

First, then, they have learned "to put off . . . the old human being" (ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς . . . τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον, *apothesthai hymas . . . ton palaion anthrōpon*). As the corresponding expression "put on the new human being" (ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον, *endysasthai ton kainon anthrōpon*) in verse 24 shows, Paul refers to taking off and putting on clothing. Some interpreters have thought that this language reflects an early Christian baptismal ritual in which clothing was removed before baptism and then replaced afterward (e.g., Meeks 1974: 182, 183–85; 1983: 151; Dahl 2000: 427–28; Kim 2004: 96, 175–91; cf. Wedderburn 1987: 339), but this is not likely to be correct. It is true that elsewhere Paul connects the metaphor of putting on (Gal. 3:27) or taking off clothing (Col. 2:11–12) with baptism, but he does not even mention baptism here, and no clear evidence exists for a Christian ritual of undressing before baptism and re-dressing afterward until the third century (Hippolytus, *Trad. ap.* 21.3, 11, 20). Even when it does finally appear, the ritual involves taking off and putting on the same set of clothes, not putting off old clothes and putting on new ones, and its purpose probably had more to do with allowing the waters of baptism unimpeded contact with the whole person than with any symbolism connected with the clothing itself (Stewart-Sykes 2001: 120).

It is more likely that Paul uses the language of taking off and putting on clothing here in a metaphorical way, much as it is used in the OT (e.g., Job 29:14; 40:10; Pss. 93:1 [92:1 LXX]; 104:1 [103:1 LXX]; 132:9 [131:9 LXX]), Hellenistic Judaism (e.g., Philo, *Drunkenness* 7, 86; Let. Aris. 124), and Greek philosophy (e.g., Plato, *Resp.* 5.457a).[19] In these contexts, the metaphor refers to adopting certain qualities such as strength, righteousness, honor, majesty, and virtue, or to "putting off the human being" (ἐκδῦναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, *ekdynai ton anthrōpon*) in the sense of working against instinctive human

19. Cf. van der Horst 1973: 182; Lincoln 1990: 284; and Best 1998: 431.

habits.[20] Paul, too, is concerned with ethics, both putting off the old human being that behaves according to "the desires of deceit" (v. 22; cf. v. 25) and putting on the new human being that behaves as its Creator intended, with "the righteousness and holiness of the truth" (v. 24).

Paul, then, assumes his readers have learned "to put off" τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον (*ton palaion anthrōpon*, the old human being) and that they are to do this κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν (*kata tēn proteran anastrophēn*, with respect to your former manner of life). The preposition κατά (*kata*) here means "with respect to, in relation to" (BDAG 513; Ellicott 1859: 101; Abbott 1897: 136), and the phrase itself reveals what the term "old human being" means: it refers to "the manner of life" (ἀναστροφή, *anastrophē*) that defined the existence of Paul's readers before they believed the gospel (cf. Gal. 1:13). Paul has described this way of life clearly in 2:1–3 (where he uses the verbal form of the noun ἀναστροφή) and in 4:17–19. Both passages depict an existence characterized by numbness, ignorance, and rebellion against God, of people led to destruction by evil powers and inward rebellions that they are helpless to remedy.

Paul now complements that bleak picture by describing the "old human being" as φθειρόμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης (*phtheiromenon kata tas epithymias tēs apatēs*, continually being corrupted because of the cravings of deceit).[21] The term φθειρόμενον (*phtheiromenon*) is in the present tense and so refers to an ongoing process of ruin. Paul uses the term elsewhere only in his Corinthian correspondence, where it appears five times and refers to the moral corruption of people through deceitful and harmful teaching (1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 11:3; cf. 2 Cor. 7:2) and once, in a play on the word's range of meaning, to refer first to the corruption of the church and then to God's punishment of those responsible for the church's corruption: "If anyone ruins [φθείρει, *phtheirei*] the temple of God, God will ruin [φθερεῖ] that person" (1 Cor. 3:17). In other contexts the term can have specifically sexual connotations of corruption through seduction (e.g., Josephus, *Ant*. 4.252; Rev. 19:2; Justin, *1 Apol*. 9.4; BDAG 1054).

The origin of these continually corrupting desires, Paul says, is ἀπάτη (*apatē*), a word that could mean either "deceit" or "pleasure," and like φθείρω it often has sexual connotations. Judith, for example, can use it of the "deceit" by which she lured the evil Assyrian general Holofernes to his doom through a promise of sexual pleasure that she never intended to

20. See van der Horst 1973: 184–87. The phrase appears in the humorous story of a dog chasing the philosopher Pyrrhon in terror up a tree. As a Skeptic, Pyrrhon was supposed to remain calm in the face of such emergencies, and when confronted with the inconsistency between his touted philosophy and his behavior, he apparently responded that it was difficult to "put off the human being." The account appears in Eusebius, *Praep. ev*. 14.18 [p. 763a] in a quotation from the third-century-BC artisan Antigonas of Carystus (cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil*. 9.66). Van der Horst (1973: 186) has made a good case that Antigonas's writings were popular in the first century AD.

21. On the use of κατά to mean "because of, as a result of, on the basis of," see BDAG 513.

fulfill (Jdt. 9:10, 13; cf. 16:8). The goddess Aphrodite, says Strabo, was called "Deceiver" (Ἀπάτουρον, *Apatouron*) for much the same reason. She lured a group of attacking giants to their deaths ἐξ ἀπάτης (*ex apatēs*, by deceit) when she tricked them into allowing her to receive them in a cave one by one. As each giant entered, she handed him over to the god Heracles, who was hidden in the cave and killed each one (Strabo, *Geogr.* 11.2.10; Spicq, *TLNT* 1:155).

Ἀπάτη and φθείρω come together in 4 Macc. 18:8. There the pious Jewish mother of the Maccabean martyrs describes herself this way: "No seducer corrupted (ἔφθειρεν, *ephtheiren*) me on a desert plain, nor did the destroyer, the deceitful (ἀπάτης, *apatēs*) serpent, defile the purity of my virginity" (NRSV; cf. 2 Cor. 11:3).

Paul would probably have been more specific if sexual sins were his only concern here, but the mechanism of sexual sin illustrates Paul's point well. False ideas made persuasive by the promise of pleasure lead to destructive behavior. The destruction is both self-inflicted in the present (cf. Eph. 4:19) and eventually results in the eschatological ruin that God will bring "upon the sons of disobedience" (2:2–3; 5:6).[22]

In summary, Paul assumes that his readers have received instruction first about putting off their old way of life in which deceit and desire combined to produce a ruinous existence. The end of that way of life could only be destruction.

4:23 Second, Paul assumes that his readers have learned to be renewed continually in their thinking. Like φθειρόμενον (*phtheiromenon*, being corrupted), the verb ἀνανεοῦσθαι (*ananeousthai*) is in the present tense, referring to an ongoing process. The two processes of continual corruption and continual renewal, then, stand in contrast to each other: Paul's readers are no longer on a self-destructive and ultimately ruinous path but are experiencing continual renewal (cf. Rom. 12:2).

This renewal takes place τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν (*tō pneumati tou noos hymōn*). This phrase could mean either "by the Spirit of your mind" and refer to the work of God's Spirit in the renewal of the believer's mind,[23] or it could mean "in the spirit of your mind" and refer to the location of the renewal as the inward life of the believer.[24] Out of fourteen uses of the term πνεῦμα (*pneuma*, spirit) in Ephesians, twelve clearly refer to the Spirit of God and one, just as clearly, refers to an evil spirit (2:2). In other words, in this letter the term tends to refer to a spiritual being, not to a faculty or aspect of human existence.

22. Cf. the use of φθείρω in 1 Cor. 3:17b and 2 Pet. 2:12 to mean eschatological ruin (BDAG 1054).

23. See, e.g., Ellicott 1859: 102–3; Masson 1953: 202n3; Schlier 1957: 220; Gnilka 1971: 230; Schnackenburg 1991: 200.

24. See, e.g., Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.48]; Eadie 1883: 342; Calvin 1965: 190; De Wette 1843: 142; Alford 1857: 120; Abbott 1897: 137–38; Haupt 1902a: 178–79; Barth 1974: 508; Lincoln 1990: 287; Fee 1994: 709–12; Aletti 2001: 237; Muddiman 2001: 220; Hoehner 2002: 608–9.

It would clearly refer to God's Spirit here if it were not for the genitive qualifier τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν (*tou noos hymōn*, of your mind). This phrase would be an odd way of saying "within your mind" and is most naturally understood to mean that the spirit belongs to the mind or is identical with the mind (Eadie 1883: 342; Abbott 1897: 137; Lincoln 1990: 287). It is likely, then, that in a way typical of the use of the genitive elsewhere in this letter, the expression is redundant (Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 87; Lincoln 1990: 287), an emphatic way of referring to what Paul calls in 3:16 "the inner human being" (ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, *ho esō anthrōpos*) or in 1 Cor. 2:11 "the spirit of the human being, which is in him" and "knows" him.[25]

Having said all this, it is still appropriate to see God's Spirit "hovering nearby," as Fee (1994: 712) memorably puts it. Paul speaks of "being renewed," in the passive voice, and the agent of the passive action is clearly God. God works "through his Spirit in the inner human being" (3:16), and so the inward renewal that Paul describes here is something that the Spirit accomplishes in believers.

4:24 Third, Paul's readers have learned to "put on [ἐνδύσασθαι, *endysasthai*] the new human being." Paul has described the old human being as "being corrupted because of the cravings of deceit." Now he describes the new human being, in contrast, as τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα (*ton kata theon ktisthenta*, created after the pattern of God). This language recalls Gen. 1:26 LXX: "Then God said, 'Let us make humankind according to our image [κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν, *kat' eikona hēmeteran*] and according to likeness [καθ' ὁμοίωσιν, *kath' homoiōsin*]'" (NETS). The echo is more explicit in the closely related Col. 3:10 ("And having put on the new human being, renewed in knowledge according to the image [κατ' εἰκόνα, *kat' eikona*] of the one who created him"), but since the theme of a new human creation has already risen to prominence in Eph. 2:10, 15, Paul's audience would not miss it here. The renewal of their minds from the corruption and despair characteristic of the worldview of those in rebellion against God is part of God's re-creative work of restoring the universe to its original harmony with himself and, internally, with itself. The theme is also present, although less prominently, in the undisputed Pauline letters (Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17).

If Paul's readers are created in God's image, then, like God, they exist ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας (*en dikaiosynē kai hosiotēti tēs alētheias*, in the righteousness and holiness of the truth). The two virtues "righteousness" and "holiness" are often paired in ancient philosophical and religious literature. Sometimes these terms (whether in nominal, adjectival, or adverbial form) are used to describe the divinity or his actions (e.g., Deut.

25. Cf. Muddiman 2001: 220, although his "1 Cor. 1.12" should be 1 Cor. 2:11. The thought (if not the language) here is close to Col. 3:10, which speaks of "putting on the new man that is being renewed in knowledge." Here, too, the renewal is inward and has a mental component. Cf. Lincoln 1990: 284, although the lack of verbal agreement does not seem to support Lincoln's idea (1990: 273–74) that the author of Eph. 4:23 closely followed Colossians.

32:4; Ps. 144:17 LXX [145:17 MT, Eng.]; Pss. Sol. 10.5; Rev. 16:5; Epictetus [Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 3.26.32]; BDAG 728), sometimes to describe the character that people should have (e.g., Plato, *Apol.* 35d; *Crito* 54b; Wis. 9:3; Pss. Sol. 15.3; 1 Thess. 2:10; Titus 1:8; Luke 1:75), and occasionally, as here, to say that people should imitate the character of God (Plato, *Theaet.* 176b; Philo, *Flight* 63; Wild 1985: 130).

It is possible that Paul intends to distinguish between the two virtues, as, for example, Philo does when he speaks of "holiness [ὁσιότης, *hosiotēs*] toward God and righteousness [δικαιοσύνη, *dikaiosynē*] toward people" (*Abraham* 208; e.g., Eadie 1883: 345; cf. Hoehner 2002: 612). The two qualities could be used together in a more general way, however, simply to mean "virtue" (Plato, *Theaet.* 176b), and Wild has shown that when Philo distinguishes between the two terms, he carefully lists "holiness" before "justice." Since the order here in Eph. 4:24 is the reverse, Wild (1985: 134) concludes that the two terms probably "refer simply to 'virtuous living' as a whole."

We might add to this that in 4:24 Paul is still introducing his more specific and concrete ethical instruction. He has not yet started to speak in practical terms of how the believer should live—that will come in the next verse. It is likely, then, that here he intends to speak in a general way of putting on the virtuous qualities that characterize God himself rather than of specific duties to God and neighbor.

Paul qualifies both "righteousness" and "holiness" with τῆς ἀληθείας (*tēs alētheias*, of the truth). Some interpreters (e.g., Best 1998: 438; Muddiman 2001: 221) take this qualifier as an adjective ("true righteousness and holiness"), but for two reasons this is probably too bland an understanding of the word. First, "righteousness" and "holiness" are self-evidently "true," and so to explicitly describe them this way seems to add redundancy to an already-redundant phrase. Second, Paul's previous uses of "truth" as a concept are connected with specifically Christian truth: the gospel and the Jesus whom it proclaims (1:13; 4:15, 21). It seems more likely, then, that τῆς ἀληθείας is a genitive of source (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 288; Hoehner 2002: 613). Just as deceit was the origin of the evil desires that continually corrupt "the old human being" (4:22), so now Paul says that the righteousness and holiness characteristic of the "new human being" originate in the truth about God as it is described in the gospel (1:13; 4:15) and is seen in the Jesus whom the gospel proclaims (4:21).

Summary

In 4:17–24, Paul says that the lives of his readers should reflect the dramatic transformation that has taken place in them at their conversion. They should no longer live in a way that speaks of the confusion, demonic control, and despair that characterize those who are estranged from the life God provides. They should instead live in ways that show their thinking is continually being renewed spiritually and that reveal their re-creation in the image of a God who is righteous and holy.

Additional Note

4:19. Instead of ἀπηλγηκότες, a few manuscripts (e.g., 𝔓[99], D, P, 1241), versions (e.g., some Old Latin manuscripts, the Vulgate, and the Armenian, Ethopic, and Slavic versions), and fathers (e.g., Irenaeus [in Latin translation], Victorinus of Rome, Ambrosiaster, Jerome, Pelagius, Speculum) read ἀπηλπικότες (because they despaired). Two codices (F, G) have the alternative spelling ἀφηλπικότες. Although there is a bit of geographical diversity among these witnesses (D, F, and G are Western; P is Alexandrian), ἀπηλγηκότες has on its side virtually the entire Alexandrian and Byzantine traditions. It is easy to imagine a scribe harmonizing this text with 2:12 by the slight alteration of what was probably an unfamiliar word. There can be little doubt, then, that ἀπηλγηκότες is the right reading.

B. Living as Human Beings Newly Created in God's Image (4:25–5:2)

Paul now begins to give practical advice on how his readers can live out the new existence he has just described in 4:20–24. The "therefore" with which the section begins probably connects these specific admonitions not only to the whole concept of taking off the old human being and putting on the new human being, but especially to the idea articulated in 4:24 that the newly donned human being is created in the image of God. The admonitions in 4:25–5:2, then, are practical illustrations of what it means to live as a new creature, made in God's image, and no longer under the sway of the old human being.

This idea of living as a creature in God's image reemerges at the end of the passage in 5:1–2, a section that looks back over the admonitions just given and offers a summary statement of their implications. "So," Paul says, "be imitators of God." To imitate God, he continues, means to live in love, and the supreme example of the kind of love that God exercises is Christ's willingness to atone for the sins of others by means of his sacrificial death.

The specific, practical admonitions in 4:25–32 are sandwiched between the reference to believers as created in God's image and the summary statement that they should be imitators of God's love. They illustrate the meaning, then, of living out one's new existence as a re-created human being in relationship with others.

These admonitions exhibit the same mixture of rhetorical order and disorder that appears elsewhere in the letter. The four admonitions in 4:25, 28, 29, and 31–32 show an unmistakable pattern: an admonition not to do something (lie, steal, use foul language, and angrily abuse people) is followed by a matching positive admonition to do something (tell the truth, work hard for what is good, use edifying speech, and forgive) and then a motivating reason for following the admonition (we are members of each other, to help the needy, to give grace to the hearer, because Christ forgave others). The admonition in 4:26–27, however, follows the pattern only in rough terms: a positive command is followed by three negative commands, the last of which probably supplies a motivation for the previous admonitions, but does so rather indirectly: "Do not . . . give place to the devil." The admonition in 4:30, moreover, probably supplies a second motivation for avoiding foul speech (not avoiding this grieves God's Holy Spirit), but it is phrased in the imperative mood, as if it functions as a separate exhortation (cf. v. 27).

In addition to these irregularities, there is a rhetorical imbalance in the attention given to the subjects addressed. Most of the admonitions concern speech, especially if we remember that in antiquity the verb ὀργίζομαι (*orgizomai*; v. 26) and the noun ὀργή (*orgē*; v. 31) described the open and often-violent expression of what we call anger today (W. V. Harris 2001: 50–70). Lying, screaming in rage, foul talk, and slander, then, consume much of the paragraph. By comparison, the admonitions about stealing and grieving the Holy Spirit are brief.

The combination of order and disorder in this section point both to the extemporary nature of the discourse and to its exemplary function. These admonitions were composed on the spot and give examples of what it means to live as a new human being who reflects the image of its Creator and imitates the quality of his love.

Exegesis and Exposition

[4:25]Therefore, put off falsehood and speak the truth—each of you—with his or her neighbor because we are members of one another.

[26]Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun set on your wrath, [27]nor give place to the devil.

[28]Let the one who steals steal no longer, but rather let him labor by working ⌜what is good with his own hands⌝ that he might have something to share with the one who has need.

[29]Let no rotten speech come out of your mouth, but if there is anything good [let it come out of your mouth] for building up ⌜where the need exists⌝ that it might give grace to those who hear.

[30]And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

[31]Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and yelling be removed from among you, with all mean-spiritedness. [32]But be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God also forgave ⌜us⌝ in Christ.

[5:1]So, then, be ⌜imitators of God⌝ as beloved children, [2]and walk in love, just as Christ loved ⌜us⌝ and gave himself ⌜for us, an offering and sacrifice⌝ to God, for a fragrant aroma.

4:25 Most commentators think that the particle διό (*dio*, therefore) refers back to the entire previous paragraph and that Paul here gives specific examples of how his readers should live since their experience of the conversion described there. Διό, however, can refer back to the immediately preceding statement about the new human being's creation in the image of God (v. 24; cf. the use of διό in 4:8 and 5:14); since Paul summarizes his specific instructions in 4:25–32 with the admonition "So, then, be imitators of God" (5:1), it seems likely that διό points back primarily (although not solely) to 4:24, where the image-of-God theme is articulated as a motivation for ethics (cf. Lincoln 1990: 300). In what

follows, Paul will give concrete examples from everyday life of what it means to live out the new life he has just described in 4:22–24, but especially the new reality of re-creation in the image of God.

This is the first of four admonitions in 4:25–5:2 that take first a negative form, then a positive form, and then supply a clause giving the reason for the admonition (cf. vv. 25, 28, 29, and 31). Here Paul gives a negative exhortation not to lie, then a positive command to speak the truth, and finally a clause indicating why truthfulness with each other is important.

The negative part of the admonition uses an aorist participle of ἀποτίθημι (*apotithēmi*, put off) and urges Paul's readers to put off "falsehood" (τὸ ψεῦδος, *to pseudos*).[1] This language recalls the figure from 4:22 of putting off the clothing of the old human being that "deceit" (ἀπάτη, *apatē*) was busily corrupting, and provides a concrete example of how the old human being manifests itself in day-to-day life: telling lies is perhaps the most obvious vice of a former way of life whose chief characteristic was deceit.

It is perhaps not accidental that Paul used the expression τὸ ψεῦδος (*to pseudos*, a lie) in Rom. 1:25 to say that Gentile idolatry exchanges the truth about God for falsehood. Here too he may be thinking not merely of lying in general (cf. Col. 3:9) but also of the kind of theological falsehood concerning the divine that filled Gentile religion, the kind of religious lying that eventually leads to the human disorientation and despair described in 4:17–19 (and in Rom. 1:18–32).

Paul next articulates the same admonition in positive terms. His language is so close to Zech. 8:16 LXX that there must be some connection:

Zechariah 8:16 LXX	**Ephesians 4:25**
λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ	λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ
laleite alētheian hekastos pros ton plēsion autou	*laleite alētheian hekastos meta tou plēsion autou*
speak the truth—each of you—to his [or her] neighbor	speak the truth—each of you—with his [or her] neighbor

The only difference is the exchange of μετά (*meta*, with) for πρός (*pros*, to) and then the necessary change in the case of the article. Both statements have basically the same meaning.

To what extent this literary connection between the two texts also implies thematic connections is unclear. Some interpreters have argued that Eph. 4 and Zech. 8 are woven together at a "profound salvation-historical and typological" level (O'Brien 1999: 337). Zechariah 8 promises that God will restore the fortunes of Jerusalem for the remnant of his people after the difficult days during which God had punished them for their refusal to listen to him. After describing the idyllic scene of the restored Jerusalem, the Lord issues several

1. For the syntax, cf. James 1:21; Heb. 12:1; and, less exactly, 1 Pet. 2:1 (BDAG 124).

ethical admonitions to his people, the first of which is to speak truthfully to each other—the text whose language reappears here in Eph. 4:25. Zechariah 8 ends with a promise that the nations will one day converge on Jerusalem to seek the Lord's favor (Pokorný 1992: 191). The use of Zech. 8:16 here, then, implies that Paul (or the author) considers his readers to be God's newly created humanity and the fulfillment of these promises:

> What is predicated of the eschatological future of God's people in terms of new Jerusalem language in the OT passage is picked up by Paul in relation to the "new person," God's new community in Christ, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. The salvation-historical and typological connections between the two communities, and thus the accompanying practical exhortations, are patent. (O'Brien 1999: 338)

Others have not taken the correspondence this far but believe that the close correspondence between the language of the two passages (Moritz 1996a: 889) or the similar structure of the ethical admonitions in Eph. 4:25–30 to Zech. 8:16–17 (Sampley 1972: 107–8) at least show that the author was aware he was quoting the OT.

On the other side stand those who think that the author of Ephesians simply took over a traditional sequence of ethical exhortations that had already absorbed the language of Zech. 8:16. These interpreters point to the coupling of anger with deceit in Jewish literature devoted to ethical instruction (e.g., T. Dan 1.3; 2.1–2, 4; 3.5–6; 4.7; 6.8) and to allusions to Zech. 8:16 in admonitions not to lie in this same literature (T. Reu. 6.9; T. Dan 5.2; T. Benj. 10.3). They point out the close parallel to Eph. 4:25–26 in T. Dan 4.7–5.2, where an admonition to beware of anger is followed by an admonition not to lie, and this is backed up by a clear allusion to Zech. 8:16.[2] Such parallels, the argument goes, make it likely that the author of Ephesians has simply taken over Zech. 8:16 from traditional Hellenistic Jewish ethical exhortation.

Perhaps the best way forward is to recognize that Paul probably found the reference to Zech. 8:16 in the tradition but, even so, both recognized Zechariah as the source of this traditional language and knew the broader context in Zechariah from which the language came.[3] Since he drew no theological implications from the wider context, it remains unclear whether he expected his Gentile readers to pick up detailed echoes of Zech. 8 in this language. He may simply have left the matter open, recognizing that the language could be understood on a deeper level by those who were able to do so, but believing that it was not critical for his basic meaning that his readers be able to do this.

Last, Paul provides a motivation for putting off "lying" and speaking truth to one's neighbor: "we are members [μέλη, *melē*] of one another" (cf. Rom.

2. Gnilka 1971: 234; Lincoln 1982: 43; 1990: 300; cf. Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 87.

3. Moritz (1996a: 88) is on the right track, then, when he argues that the author's sensitivity to the language of the OT elsewhere in the letter makes unnecessary the theory that he simply took it over from Jewish ethical tradition. See also Thielman 2007: 826.

12:5; 1 Clem. 47.7). This recalls Eph. 4:15–16, where speaking the truth in love is the antidote to the trickery of false teaching, and each "part" (μέρος, *meros*) of the body plays a role in helping the body grow to maturity. Although any lying within the body of Christ would be covered by this admonition, Paul may have been thinking especially of theological lying—the sort of false teaching about God that leads to the bleak existence of unbelievers described in 4:17–19 and that can even lead believers astray (cf. Jude 4; 2 Pet. 2:2, 18; Thielman 2005: 512–16, 522–27, 652–55).

4:26–27

Paul next forbids his readers from allowing anger to fester since doing so gives the devil an opportunity to advance his strategies (cf. 6:11). The set of imperatives, one positive and one negative, repeats the wording of Ps. 4:5 LXX, MT (4:4, Eng.) exactly: ὀργίζεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε (*orgizesthe kai mē hamartanete*, be angry, and do not sin).[4] The psalmist (Ps. 4:3 LXX, MT [4:2 Eng.]) directs these imperatives to his enemies, important people who have sullied his reputation with "empty" words (ματαιότητα, *mataiotēta*; cf. Eph. 4:17) and "lying" (ψεῦδος, *pseudos*; cf. Eph. 4:25).[5] In this context, the command "Be angry and do not sin" could be paraphrased, "Be angry if you must, but stop sinning by continuing your empty, false speech." This seems to be Paul's meaning also, although there is some debate about this.

Some interpreters believe Paul's first imperative (ὀργίζεσθε) implies that in some settings anger is not only appropriate but also necessary. Paul is, then, both instructing his readers to show this appropriate anger and urging them to deal with the cause of this anger quickly (Wallace 1989; 1996: 491–92; cf. Hoehner 2002: 620–21). On the side of this interpretation lies the coordinating conjunction καί (*kai*, and), which on this reading performs its usual function of linking two syntactically equal elements: a command to be angry and a command not to sin. Paul could have used a participial form of ὀργίζω (*orgizō*) if he had intended to give this verb a conditional or concessive nuance ("If you are angry . . ." or "Although you are angry . . .").

This consideration is outweighed, however, by the emphasis the context places on the second imperative in this two-imperative couplet ("Be angry and do not sin"). The next two imperatives, like the second member of the couplet, are prohibitions ("Do not let the sun set on your wrath, nor give place to the devil"). The context, then, is concerned with avoiding sin in situations where anger is present. This makes it likely that the first, positive imperative in the whole series is simply intended to set the stage for the prohibitions that follow.

Whether the anger is justified seems to be outside the purview of the admonition. Where anger is present, Paul says, a potentially sinful situation

4. The LXX has interpreted the ambiguous Hebrew term רִגְזוּ, probably correctly, as a reference to anger.

5. Here I follow the interpretation of the Hebrew Psalm in Craigie and Tate 2004: 79–81. This interpretation works equally well for the LXX version despite the slight differences between the two texts.

exists. Those who are angry should recognize this and take practical steps to avoid sinning.

Paul expresses no interest in the philosophical debate current in his time over whether all anger is harmful and should be eliminated or some anger is justified and people should seek to channel it in useful directions (W. V. Harris 2001: 102–4, 110–20).[6] Here he views anger simply as an emotion that can quickly become sinful. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of W. V. Harris's careful study (2001: 63) of the terminology of anger in classical antiquity:

> I suggest that all or most of what was thought of in the period, say, 450 B.C. to 300 A.D. as *orgē*-anger and *thumos*-anger was by modern standards quite furious and intense, though some of it was long-lived. A corollary might be that a good deal of what we regard as anger was either referred to by milder terms, such as *chalepotēs*, or even considered too trivial to be attended to or mentioned.

If Paul is thinking of what by modern standards would be intense anger, his next statement offers practical advice to keep this emotion from becoming long-lived and reaching the crescendo of verbal abuse described in 4:31. Those who are angry, he says, should not let the sun set on their παροργισμός (*parorgismos*, wrath). This term is rare, appearing prior to its use here only in the LXX, where it most often refers to the provocation of anger (1 Kings 15:30; 2 Kings 23:26; Neh. 9:18, 26 [2 Esd. 19:18, 26 LXX]; Pss. Sol. 8.9), although it can refer to anger itself (2 Kings 19:3; Jer. 21:5). Here the word probably serves as a synonym for ὀργή (*orgē*), perhaps with a hint, supplied by the prefix παρά (*para*), that as time passes, unattended anger is likely to increase. The wisdom here is proverbial, as the frequently cited parallels in both Greek and Hebrew literature show (Plutarch, *Frat. amor.* 488b–c; 1QS 5.26–6.1; CD-A 7.2–3; 9.6–8). "Alas for those who devise wickedness and evil deeds on their beds!" Micah says. "When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in their power" (2:1 NRSV; cf. Ps. 36:4).

The next prohibition (v. 27) provides the reason why it is unwise to let one's anger fester: doing so gives τόπον τῷ διαβόλῳ (*topon tō diabolō*, place to the devil). The expression "to give place to" (διδόναι τόπον τινί, *didonai topon tini*) was a common Greek idiom for giving someone or something an opportunity (e.g., Rom. 12:19; Sir. 4:5; Wis. 12:10; Plutarch, *Cohib. ira* 14; BDAG 1012; Jewett 2007: 775). The later Pauline letters depict the devil as a schemer (Eph. 6:11) who entraps people (1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26), and so here the thought is probably of the devil taking the opportunity offered by long-term anger to

6. Since God expresses anger against those who disobey him (5:6; cf. 2:3), Paul would not view anger as in itself wrong, but this does not decide the issue of whether the anger of people is justified on the basis that it imitates the anger of God. Paul would assume the complete purity of God's motives in showing anger, but as 4:31 shows, he seems to align human anger with bitterness and to believe that it often results in violence.

encourage the kind of mischief listed in Eph. 4:31: "bitterness and rage and anger and yelling and slander . . . with all mean-spiritedness."

4:28 Paul next urges his audience not to steal. As with the first admonition in 4:25, this one follows the pattern of a negative command ("Let the one who steals steal no longer") followed by its positive counterpart ("but rather let him labor by working what is good with his own hands") and a motivating reason for engaging in the behavior ("that he might have something to share with the one who has need").

Ancient Greeks and Romans commonly assumed that stealing (κλέπτειν, *kleptein*) was wrong (e.g., Plato, *Resp.* 1.344; Arius Didymus 10e, 11e [Pomeroy 1999: 62–63, 68–69]; Epictetus [Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 1.9.15, 17]; Deissmann 1978: 316n6), and the exhortation not to steal features prominently in the OT (Exod. 20:15; 22:1; Deut. 5:19; Lev. 19:11; Jer. 7:9; Hos. 4:2) and Judaism (e.g., Ps.-Phoc. 6, 18, 135–36, 153–54 [W. Wilson 2005: 180]; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 4.1–40). It is frequently repeated in early Christian literature in various forms: in summaries of the Decalogue (Rom. 13:9; Mark 10:19; Matt. 19:18; Luke 18:20), in lists of vices (1 Cor. 6:10; 1 Pet. 4:15; cf. Rom. 2:21), and, as here, in general moral exhortation (Did. 3.5; 1 Clem. 36.8).

The verb κλέπτω (*kleptō*) and its corresponding noun κλέπτης (*kleptēs*, thief) refer to stealing secretly rather than to violent robbery (Preisker, *TDNT* 3:754). Paul probably has in mind, then, the working poor whose income would fluctuate with the seasons in the agrarian economy of Roman Asia and who may have supplemented their income in difficult times by secretly stealing from their employers and others (Best 1997a: 182–83). He is not thinking of slaves, since Paul admonishes his readers to stop stealing and earn their income (Best 1997a: 182). He is also not thinking of the wealthy since the recipients of this command are to earn their income by hard manual labor (κοπιάτω ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν, *kopiatō ergazomenos tais idiais chersin*, let him labor by working with his own hands).

Rather than stealing, the thief is to be engaged in "working what is good" (ἐργαζόμενος . . . τὸ ἀγαθόν, *ergazomenos . . . to agathon*), a reference to work that is helpful and beneficial to others (cf. Gal. 6:10). Paul's Christian readers should employ their hands in honest labor that benefits others, presumably their employer. Best (1997a: 181–83) has persuasively argued that this admonition reveals something about the social class of the letter's first audience: it at least included people so poor that they were tempted to steal and could be admonished to earn their own living by hard manual labor.

The purpose clause that concludes the admonition states the reason why honest labor for the benefit of others is important. By working hard, those who labor will "have something to share with the one who has need." To describe the motivation for work in terms of giving to the needy may seem surprisingly sweeping, but this sentiment is not unique within early Christian literature (cf. Acts 20:35; Titus 3:14; Did. 4.6). It is also in step with other similarly emphatic statements in the NT about care for the needy (1 Tim. 5:8;

James 1:27; 1 John 3:17). Meeting the needs of the Christian poor was one of the characteristic features of the early Christian movement.[7]

4:29 Paul next turns to speech, and the now-familiar threefold pattern reappears: Paul's audience should engage in

no rotten speech (negative),
but instead in edifying speech (positive),
that it may give grace to the hearer (motivation).

Paul begins by forbidding all σαπρός (*sapros*) speech. Used literally, this term could refer to "rancid" fish, "rotten" wood, "withered" flowers, "diseased" lungs (LSJ 1583) or the "putrid" smell that accompanied the hideous figure of personified Death (T. Ab. 16.4 and 17.8 [rec. A]; cf. 13.1–14.9 [rec. B]).[8] In the NT, it refers to "bad" trees that produce "bad" fruit (Matt. 7:17–18; 12:33) or to the useless "junk" (τὰ . . . σαπρά, *ta . . . sapra*) that fishermen pull out of the water in their seine nets and separate from "the good stuff" (τὰ καλά, *ta kala*; Matt. 13:48; BDAG 913). Used figuratively, the term could mean "bad, evil, unwholesome" (BDAG 913). It is possible that Paul is thinking of sexually crude speech (cf. 5:4; Col. 3:8; Lincoln 1990: 305; Muddiman 2001: 228), but since the opposite of σαπρός is "something good [ἀγαθός, *agathos*] for building up [οἰκοδομή, *oikodomē*]," he is probably thinking more generally of any speech that works against "the building up [οἰκοδομή] of the body of Christ" (4:12). Σαπρός speech would then be speech that was not merely "ugly" but also "useless." This would cover not only the sexually crude, foolish speech of 5:4 but also the theologically deceptive speech of 4:14.[9]

In contrast to σαπρός speech, Paul exhorts his readers to engage in speech that is genuine, substantive, and actually accomplishes something of benefit to the Christian community. This seems to be the meaning of the phrase "something good [ἀγαθός] for building up [οἰκοδομή]." Paul has just used the term ἀγαθός to contrast the good that honest work accomplishes with the harm that comes from stealing (4:28), and it is likely that ἀγαθός carries the same nuance of what is "beneficial" here. Since Paul has used the language of edification in the letter up to this point to refer to building up the community of believers, the term οἰκοδομή gives the idea of laboring for what is beneficial a decidedly communal tilt (2:20–22; 4:12, 16).

The genitive phrase τῆς χρείας (*tēs chreias*), which qualifies the noun οἰκοδομή, is difficult. What could "the building up of the need" mean? Clearly

7. 1 Cor. 16:1–4; Phil. 1:7; 2:25; 4:15, 18; 2 Cor. 8–9; Rom. 12:13; 15:25–28; Acts 2:44–45; 4:34–35; 1 Tim. 5:3–5, 16; 6:18; Did. 4.5–8; cf. Lucian, *Peregr.* 13, 16. See also Rosner 2007: 121–29.

8. On the "putrid" smell of death in the Testament of Abraham, see Allison 2003: 343.

9. Cf. Marcus Aurelius's coupling of σαπρός with the adjective κίβδηλος ("fraudulent, dishonest"; LSJ 950) when referring to the person who is straightforward and honest in word only (*Med.* 11.15).

it does not mean what it seems to mean when taken literally (encouraging or increasing need) but the opposite of this. An early scribe or translator in the Western tradition could apparently make no sense of the phrase and substituted πίστεως in place of χρείας to yield the more intelligible idea that Christian speech should "build up the faith" (see the additional note). Jerome understood πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας (*pros oikodomēn tēs chreias*) to mean "for the building up of the occasion," which he explained as a reference to speaking what was edifying as the occasion arose (Heine 2002: 198–99). Others have taken τῆς χρείας as a qualitative genitive ("needed upbuilding"; e.g., Barth 1974: 519; Lincoln 1990: 306) or a genitive of reference ("upbuilding with reference to the need"; e.g., De Wette 1843: 144; Ellicott 1859: 108–9).

There is a parallel to this expression in the first-century Testament of Job that both shows the expression to be idiomatic and reveals that here τῆς χρείας is an objective genitive (BDAG 1088; cf., e.g., Abbott 1897: 143; Gnilka 1971: 238; Hoehner 2002: 630). Job is describing how generous he used to be before he was afflicted with his many losses and explains that "when any stranger approached to ask alms, he was required to be fed at my table before he would receive his need [πρὶν λαβεῖν τὴν χρείαν, *prin labein tēn chreian*]" (T. Job 10.3; *OTP* 1:843). The stranger surely was not made needier but had his need met. Paul's meaning here is similar: the goal of the good speech that is to proceed from the believer's mouth is edification where such edification is needed. Paul may be thinking in particular of the sort of verbal edification that happens when apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and the saints they equip exercise their various roles in verbal ways "for the building up of the body of Christ" (4:12; cf. 4:16).

The ultimate purpose for this beneficial speech is that "it might give grace [δῷ χάριν, *dō charin*] to those who hear." In ancient Greek literature generally, the expression χάριν δοῦναί τινι (*charin dounai tini*) could mean simply "to do a favor for someone" (LSJ 1979), and some interpreters have thought that the similar expression here has the same force: good speech is beneficial to the person who hears it—it does them a favor (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 306). In Ephesians, however, the expression "give grace to" has a specific theological meaning: it refers to a gift that enables the recipient to accomplish the task God has given them (3:2, 7, 8; 4:7). Since Paul has just spoken of building up another where the need exists, it seems probable that this purpose clause carries the thought even further and speaks of enabling needy people to function in the way God intended them to function in the body of Christ (cf. 4:16).

4:30 Paul's next admonition begins with καί (*kai*, and), linking it closely with what he has just said and providing an additional motivation for the immediately preceding admonition. Edifying rather than useless and putrid communication should proceed from the mouths of those who are in Christ not only to give the hearer grace but also because otherwise they "grieve the Holy Spirit of God." The way Paul phrases this (μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ, *mē lypeite to pneuma to hagion tou theou*) is close to Isa. 63:9–10. There the prophet says

that God's people, whom he had redeemed, have nevertheless "rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit" (ESV). The LXX has παροξύνω (*paroxynō*, provoke, irritate [LSJ 1343; LEH 473]) at this point, but Paul has λυπέω (*lypeō*, grieve, vex [LSJ 1065]), a word whose semantic range more accurately matches the underlying Hebrew term עָצַב (rebuke, be worried, grieve, hurt someone's feelings [*HALOT* 1:864]). Paul's word choice hints that he had the Isaiah passage in mind, perhaps in Hebrew, as he dictated these words (cf. Moritz 1996a: 92).

This impression receives confirmation from Paul's next clause, "by which you were sealed [ἐσφραγίσθητε, *esphragisthēte*] for the day of redemption [ἀπολυτρώσεως, *apolytrōseōs*]." The "day of redemption" is the future day when those who have rebelled against God will meet with his wrath (5:6; cf. 2:2) and God's own people will both experience deliverance and receive their promised inheritance (1:14; cf. Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:23). There is a clear echo here of the conclusion to the opening benediction, where Paul has praised God that his readers have heard and believed the gospel and so have been sealed for redemption by the Holy Spirit (1:13–14). Paul now implies that they should not grieve the one who has sealed them by speaking unedifying, foul words.

Just as in the context of Isa. 63:10, then, Paul's readers are God's redeemed people, who can make the Holy Spirit sad by engaging in conduct inconsistent with their status as God's people. What in Isaiah was a tragic account of how Israel had behaved toward the God who had redeemed them has for Paul become an admonition not to follow in the path of God's ancient people (Schnackenburg 1991: 209; O'Brien 1999: 347–48; Thielman 2007: 826). Paul does not point this out explicitly to his readers, as he has in 1 Cor. 10:1–13 (Schnackenburg 1991: 209; O'Brien 1999: 347), and so he may not expect them to make the connection to Israel themselves, but it seems likely that this connection at least informs his own thinking at this point (Thielman 2007: 826).

4:31–32 Admonitions about speech are often coupled with admonitions about anger in the exhortatory literature of ancient Judaism (e.g., Prov. 15:1–4; 29:11; Sir. 27:4–28:26; James 1:19–20), and so it is not surprising that Paul moves from a general admonition not to engage in foul speech to a specific admonition about anger. For the fourth time in 4:25–5:2, Paul follows the threefold pattern of (1) a negative exhortation (v. 31) and (2) its positive counterpart (v. 32a) followed by (3) a motivation clause (v. 32b; cf. vv. 25, 28, 29).

Some have thought that his list of five vices in the negative exhortation (v. 31) describes five increasingly intense stages of anger, from the inward emotion of "bitterness" (πικρία, *pikria*) to the first burnings of "wrath" (θυμός, *thymos*) to "resentment" (ὀργή, *orgē*) to "yelling" (κραυγη, *kraugē*) to "slander" (βλασφημία, *blasphēmia*; e.g., Eadie 1883: 357–58; Schnackenburg 1991: 211; cf. Herm. *Mand.* 5.2.4; Origen [Heine 2002: 203]). The early Stoic philosopher Chrysippus made fine distinctions between various types of anger and implied that one form of anger develops into another. He said, for example, that ὀργή was the desire for revenge, θυμός was its first manifestation, and

πικρία its immediate outburst (*SVF* 3:395–97). Much later, the Stoic Seneca (*Ira* 1.4.2) admitted that the Latin vocabulary of anger was poorer than the Greek, but he was still able to produce a list of eight distinct kinds (cf. W. V. Harris 2001: 55). Pseudo-Phocylides (63–64), a Hellenistic Jew of roughly Paul's time, thought that "wrath" (θυμός) and "anger" (ὀργή) could bring about "madness" (μανίη, *maniē*) and "fury" (μῆνις, *mēnis*), and the first- or second-century Christian who produced the Shepherd of Hermas claimed that "from thoughtlessness [ἀφροσύνης, *aphrosynēs*] comes bitterness [πικρία], from bitterness wrath [θυμός], from wrath anger [ὀργή], and from anger fury [μῆνις]" (Herm. *Mand*. 5.2.4, my trans.).

Paul probably does not have such distinctions in mind. All five words in his list, including "bitterness" (πικρία; Rom. 3:14; BDAG 813), can refer to angry verbal abuse, and the admonition to avoid foul communication in the immediate context implies that verbally expressed anger is Paul's primary concern.[10] "Wrath" (θυμός) and "anger" (ὀργή) are probably synonymous here, just as they often are in ancient Jewish literature (e.g., Pss. 2:5 LXX; 6:2 LXX, MT [6:1 Eng.]; 36:8 LXX [37:8 MT, Eng.]; Prov. 27:4 LXX; Pss. Sol. 2.23; Ps.-Phoc. 63–64).[11] Paul's list, then, is an elaborate way of describing angry verbiage, not a taxonomy of anger or an outline of its psychological development.

The concluding phrase "together with all κακία [*kakia*]" describes the inner attitude from which these forms of verbal abuse arise. Κακία is "a mean-spirited or vicious attitude or disposition" (BDAG 500) and is frequently used in contexts where vicious speech is a concern (e.g., Col. 3:8; 1 Pet. 2:1; 1 Clem. 35.8).

Let all this, Paul says, "be removed" (ἀρθήτω, *arthētō*). The command is in the aorist tense, and this sets it apart from the other ten imperatives in 4:25–32, all of which are in the present tense (Hoehner 2002: 636). This change in tense underlines the contrast between the former conduct of Paul's readers as unbelievers and the conduct that should now characterize their lives (cf. BDF §337).

In contrast (δέ, *de*, but) to the malice and angry verbiage of the preceding negative exhortation, Paul's audience should be "kind" (χρηστοί, *chrēstoi*) and "compassionate" (εὔσπλαγχνοι, *eusplanchnoi*) to each other (v. 32a). God has united believers with the risen Christ, according to 2:6–7, so that he might forever show them "the surpassing wealth of his grace by kindness [χρηστότης, *chrēstotēs*]." The term χρηστοί here recalls this overwhelming, undeserved benevolence of God toward his people despite the sin, transgression, and rebellion they had displayed toward him (2:1–3).[12] The adjective

10. The oral connotations of κραυγή and βλασφημία are obvious. For πικρία, see, e.g., Rom. 3:14, and for θυμός and ὀργή, see, e.g., Pss. Sol. 2.23.

11. Cf. Rom. 2:8 and Col. 3:8, where they appear in the reverse of their order in Eph. 4:31 but with no clear distinction in meaning (Best 1998: 461). Pseudo-Phocylides reveals the influence of Stoicism when he defines ὀργή as ὄρεξις (desire) and distinguishes it from the stronger emotion μῆνις (rage).

12. Χρηστός is often used of God in the OT (e.g., LXX: Pss. 24:8 [25:8 MT, Eng.]; 33:9 [34:9 MT; 34:8 Eng.]; 51:11 [52:11 MT; 52:9 Eng.]; 68:17 [69:17 MT; 69:16 Eng.]; 99:5 [100:5 MT,

εὔσπλαγχνοι appears in only one other place in the NT (1 Pet. 3:8), but in the Jewish theology of the time, God could be described as εὔσπλαγχνος since he was willing to show χρηστότης even to one whose sins were "more in number than the sands of the sea" (Pr. Man. 7, 9–11 [Odes 12:7, 9–11 LXX]). By the vocabulary he chose at the beginning of this admonition, then, Paul already hinted that he wanted his audience to imitate the character of the God whose graciousness to sinners he has described in 2:1–10.

He makes the theme of the imitation of God more explicit in the motivation clause of this admonition. His readers are to forgive (χαρίζομαι, *charizomai*) each other just as God in Christ has forgiven (χαρίζομαι) all believers. When Paul spoke of God's forgiveness of transgressions through the death of Christ in 1:7, he used the noun ἄφεσις (*aphesis*). His use of χαρίζομαι here may have been intentionally designed to recall the language of God's lavish grace (χάρις, *charis*) in Christ in 2:5, 7, and 8 (cf. 4:29).[13]

5:1–2 Some commentators believe that the οὖν at the beginning of this new admonition signals the start of a new section, as it did in 4:1 and 17 (e.g., Hoehner 2002: 643–44). Others think that it merely links the present admonition to the previous one since both contain the imperative γίνεσθε (*ginesthe*, be): the imitation of God is a consequence of being kind in the way that God is kind to forgive people in Christ (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 310).

Probably, however, a third, less popular interpretation is correct. The οὖν signals that Paul is now drawing his admonitions in 4:25–32 to a close by stating clearly the principle he has been developing. The previous section has ended with the statement that his readers' re-creation in God's image should motivate their behavior (4:24), and the new section began with a διό (*dio*, therefore) showing that Paul intended to explain what this meant with specific examples (4:25). Now at the close of this section, Paul summarizes his admonitions by returning to the thought that, in their behavior, his readers should be "imitators" (μιμηταί, *mimētai*) of God.[14]

The notion of imitating God was common in Hellenistic ethics, including Hellenistic Jewish ethics, and that tradition may exercise some influence on Paul at this point. As the additional note explains, however, the primary sources of the idea are probably Paul's own concept of the church as a human being created in God's image (2:10, 15; 4:24; cf. Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17) and the frequent OT notion that Israel should pattern its behavior after God's character.

Eng.]; 105:1 [106:1]; 106:1 [107:1]; 108:21 [109:21]; 118:68 [119:68]; 135:1 [136:1]; 144:9 [145:9]; Spicq, *TLNT* 3:512n6), and the Pauline literature uses χρηστότης of God in Rom. 2:4; 11:22; and Titus 3:4.

13. If this is correct, then the use of χαρίζομαι here is not a mere copying of its use in Col. 2:13 and 3:13. To the contrary, the use of the term is so natural in the context of Ephesians' rich vocabulary of grace that Best (1998: 463) comments, "If we had to choose this would favour the priority of Ephesians."

14. Cf. Lincoln 1990: 299; and see the additional note for the cultural background and probable origins of this phrase in Ephesians.

Specifically, Paul's readers should be imitators of the love of God and of Christ for them. This is the first mention of love since the end of the last major section of the letter (4:15–16), and here it has a summarizing quality. Speaking the truth (4:25), working hard to give to the needy (4:28), using edifying speech that equips others to do the work that God has given them to do (4:29), and being kind, compassionate, and forgiving (4:32)—these are all expressions of love.

Paul's reference to his readers as τέκνα ἀγαπητά (*tekna agapēta*, beloved children) probably alludes to their own experience of God's adoption (1:5) and love (2:4; 3:17, 19; 5:2, 25) that forms such an important theme in the letter. God's richly merciful, gracious, and forgiving love for them, so unconditional that he decided before he created the world to show it to them, should provide the pattern for their own relationships with one another (cf. 1 John 4:11).[15]

Similarly, his readers should "walk [περιπατέω, *peripateō*] in love even as [καθὼς καί, *kathōs kai*] Christ loved." Paul's use of the verb περιπατέω for the first time since 4:17 brings this section of his exhortation to a close and forms a positive counterpart to the admonition there that his readers should "no longer walk [περιπατέω] as [καθὼς καί, *kathōs kai*] the Gentiles walk in the futility of their mind" (4:17). In a way similar to the movement from 2:1–3 to 2:10, Paul has taken his audience from the futility, darkness, estrangement, ignorance, hard-heartedness, and despair of Gentile life apart from Christ (4:17–19) to a life of kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and love in Christ (4:32–5:2).

Paul's next clause spells out what Christ's love has entailed.[16] Christ expressed his love for us when παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (*paredōken heauton hyper hēmōn*, he gave himself for us). The idea that Christ's death was "in the place of" others or "for" others goes back to Jesus himself (Mark 10:45; 1 Cor. 11:24). By the time of Paul, the proposition that Christ died "for our sins [ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, *hyper tōn hamartiōn hēmōn*] according to the scriptures" had already become part of the standard theological instruction handed down to new converts (1 Cor. 15:3). "The scriptures" in view are probably various parts of Isa. 53 LXX, where "the verb *paradidonai* appears three times for the surrendering of the servant of God and is twice related to 'our sins' (53.6, 12)" (Hengel 1981: 36). It is not surprising, then, that Paul often used παραδίδωμι (or δίδωμι) in connection with Christ's death "because of our transgressions" or "for us," sometimes emphasizing God's role in giving Jesus over to death for believers (Rom. 4:25; 8:32), and sometimes emphasizing that Jesus gave "himself" over to death (Gal. 1:4; 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:25).[17] Paul could expect his readers, who were familiar with the

15. See also Deut. 10:17–19, where God's love of the stranger provides the pattern for Israel's love of the stranger. Cf. Houston 2007: 11.

16. The καί that introduces the clause "he gave himself for us" is probably used in an "explicative" way, to connect an explanation of something with what is being explained (BDAG 495).

17. Gal. 1:4; 1 Tim. 2:6; and Titus 2:14 all use δίδωμι rather than παραδίδωμι. Cf. Hengel 1981: 35.

catechetical traditions concerning Jesus (4:20–21), to know that this traditional language speaks of the atoning nature of Christ's death.

Here, however, Paul emphasizes Christ's own willingness—a willingness that arose out of his love—to give himself over to death to atone for the sins of God's people (cf. Gal. 2:20). This emphasis is visible not only in Paul's use of the reflexive pronoun ("he gave *himself*") but also in the metaphorical statement that Christ gave himself "as an offering [προσφοράν, *prosphoran*] and sacrifice [θυσίαν, *thysian*] to God, for a fragrant aroma [ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας, *osmēn euōdias*]." The curious phrase "for a fragrant aroma" was an OT idiom for God's acceptance of a sacrifice because of the sincerity and wholeheartedness of the worshiper (Sarna 1989: 59, 356; 1991: 259; cf. Lev. 26:31; Ps. 40:6–8; Amos 5:21–24; Jdt. 16:16). Paul understood this clearly and so could refer to the gifts that the Philippians sent to help him in prison as a "fragrant aroma" (ὀσμὴ εὐωδία; Phil. 4:18)—the motivation behind them was sincere (Phil. 4:14, 17), and so they were an "acceptable sacrifice [θυσία, *thysia*], pleasing to God." Here in Eph. 5:2, then, Paul says that Christ stepped forward willingly, out of his love for God's people, to sacrifice himself and atone for their sins. This, Paul tells his audience, is how they should live in their day-to-day relationships with one another.

Summary

The love of God and the love of Christ provide the models for individuals within the church to follow in their relationships with one another. The specific ethical instructions of 4:25–32 are practical examples of how the church, as God's re-created humanity, can fulfill the mandate implied in its creation in God's image (4:24) and in its status as the body of Christ (4:13–16). The love of believers for one another should imitate the richly gracious and self-sacrificing nature of God's love in Christ for them.

Additional Notes

4:28. The phrase ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν ([working] what is good with his own hands) appears in a range of Alexandrian (א, A, 81), Western (D, F, G), and particularly valuable minuscule manuscripts (e.g., 256, 263), but a number of deviations from this form of the text appear in the manuscript tradition. A few minuscule manuscripts of a primarily Byzantine text type place τὸ ἀγαθόν at the front of the expression and so take the emphasis off the thief's hands and place it on the good that the thief now performs. Some Alexandrian and Western manuscripts, including the early witnesses $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ and B, and perhaps including $\mathfrak{P}^{49}$ (whose text is damaged at this point), do not have ἰδίαις and so speak more concisely of working what is good "with his hands."[18] Some Alexandrian minuscule manuscripts (6, 33, 1739) have no reference at all to the former thief's hands and so speak even more concisely of the former thief simply working τὸ ἀγαθόν (the good). Several other minuscule manuscripts (323, 326, 614, 630, 945) have the reformed thief working τὸ ἀγαθὸν ταῖς χερσίν (what is good with his hands); the relatively late uncials L and Ψ also have this reading. The wordiest variation appears

18. A photograph of the relevant page of the damaged $\mathfrak{P}^{49}$ is easily accessible in Comfort and Barrett 2001: 356.

in 629 and a few other manuscripts as ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀγαθόν ([working] what is good with his hands).

Lincoln considers the possibility that a scribe introduced the wording of 1 Cor. 4:12 (ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν) into the more-concise form of the text, but correctly concludes against that theory. Not only does the reading ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν have early and geographically diverse manuscript support, but also at least four of the variations seem to be attempts at improving the style of the expression by omitting ἰδίαις and so making the text less redundant.

4:29. Already in the late fourth century, Jerome had observed that the Latin translations of Ephesians available to him read *ad aedificationem fidei* (for building up the faith) in 4:29. This rendering deviated widely from πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας (for building up the need), which he found in his Greek text (Westcott 1906: 74; Heine 2002: 199). The reading πίστεως (faith) appears instead of χρείας (need) in the Latin-Greek bilingual manuscripts D, F, and G and stands behind a number of other Western witnesses to the text. Jerome thought that the Latin translators had altered the text to make it sound better, but the problem probably lies with the conceptual difficulty of the expression πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας. At some point a copyist of the Greek (or perhaps a Latin translator) found this expression incomprehensible and changed it to the more intelligible thought of building up the faith.

4:32. The textual tradition of 4:32, like that of 5:2 (see below), oscillates between the first- and the second-person-plural pronouns. The strength of the witnesses on either side is fairly evenly divided, with strong Alexandrian (𝔓$^{49\,(vid)}$, B, Ψ, 33, 1739), Western (D), and Byzantine (most) support for ἡμῖν, and strong Alexandrian (𝔓^{46}, ℵ, A, P, 6, 81, 326) and Western (F, G) support for ὑμῖν. The strengths of the internal considerations are also evenly divided. The second-person plural dominates the discourse in 4:25–5:1, but general expressions of what Christ has done for believers in the NT are typically in the first-person plural (Lincoln 1990: 293; Best 1998: 463). A scribe, therefore, might have either conformed the text to the surrounding context (by changing ἡμῖν to ὑμῖν) or conformed the text to the traditional style of similar sayings (by changing ὑμῖν to ἡμῖν). In the end, the evidence slightly favors ἡμῖν for two reasons: (1) the witness to it has a slightly larger geographical spread (Hoehner 2002: 640n2), and (2) precedent for it appears in 4:25 and 5:1–2, where Paul also oscillates between the second and the first person (*pace* Lincoln 1990: 293; Best 1998: 463; Metzger 1994: 538).

5:1. Elsewhere Paul speaks of the imitation of other churches (1 Thess. 1:7; 2:14), of himself (2 Thess. 3:7, 9; 1 Cor. 4:16; Phil. 3:17; cf. 4:9), of Christ (Phil. 2:4–11; Rom. 15:1–3, 5), and of himself and Christ (1 Thess. 1:6; 1 Cor. 10:32–11:1), but this is the only reference in the Pauline literature to the imitation of God (cf. Michaelis, *TDNT* 4:666–73). Indeed, the express command to "imitate God" or to be "imitators of God" never appears elsewhere in either the OT or NT.

The notion of imitating God was a major theme in Plato, who uses the verb μιμέομαι to explain how human beings, who exist in the real world, can be assimilated to God, who exists in the world of ideas. This was primarily a mental exercise—"no more than reflection on the image of the god retained in the memory," as Michaelis puts it (*TDNT* 4:661)—but occasionally Plato developed the idea of assimilation to God in an ethical direction. People should flee from the earthly realm, he says, where evils hover in the air and should "become like God [ὁμοίωσις θεῷ] as far as possible; and to become like God is to become righteous and holy [δίκαιον καὶ ὅσιον] and wise " (Plato, *Theaet.* 176a–b, trans. Fowler 1921; cf. Eph. 4:24).[19] These ideas reappear in Hellenistic philosophers and moralists in later years (e.g., Epictetus [Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 2.14.12]), including first-century Hellenistic

19. On this text in Plato, see Michaelis, *TDNT* 4:662; on its relevance for understanding Eph. 4:24 and 5:1, see Wild 1985: 130.

Jewish philosophers such as Philo (*Flight* 63; *Moses* 1.158; *Decalogue* 51; *Spec. Laws* 4.73, 188; *Virtues* 168), who was heavily influenced by Plato on this point (*Flight* 63).[20]

This tradition may stand somewhere behind Paul's use of μιμηταί here, but it is far more likely that his use of the imitation of God as a source for ethics is derived from two other concepts: the idea that the church forms a newly created human being and the OT notion of the ethical imitation of God.

First, in this letter Paul has already developed the idea that his readers, as objects of God's mercy and grace, form a new human creation (2:10, 15), and in 4:24 he has explicitly developed the idea of creation in God's image as a motivation for ethical behavior.

Second, in the OT, God's character and behavior are important sources for ethical instruction. God tells his people to "be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44–45; cf. 19:2; 20:26); Israel's release of slaves after six years of servitude is to reflect the generosity of God toward Israel when they were slaves (Deut. 15:12–15; cf. 5:15); and Israel is told to "love the stranger" just as God does (Deut. 10:17–19; cf. Houston 2007: 8–11). It is true that Paul's term here (μιμητής) does not occur in the LXX, but since Paul has been in such close touch with the OT in the letter so far, it seems likely that the OT's own concept of the ethical imitation of God would have informed his thinking at this point.

5:2. Just as with 4:32, the witnesses to the text of 5:2 sometimes use the first-person-plural pronoun and sometimes the second-person-plural pronoun. There is variation in both occurrences of the pronoun in this verse, and the decision about which pronoun to read needs to consider the evidence in both instances together. In the second occurrence, the evidence clearly favors ἡμῶν over ὑμῶν: the only important witnesses that read ὑμῶν are B and 1175, and both are of the same text type (Alexandrian). If ἡμῶν is the correct reading in this second occurrence of the pronoun, however, then it is likely that the first occurrence of the pronoun should also be the first-person ἡμᾶς. Despite the presence of ὑμᾶς in some impressively early manuscripts (א, A, B), it is unlikely that the original text would change pronouns in such close proximity to each other, especially since they are in clauses joined to each other by καί (Metzger 1994: 538).

20. Cf. Wild 1985: 127–43; Michaelis, *TDNT* 4:664–66. If Aelian is accurate, however, the use of the concept of imitating God in ethical discussion predates Plato: "Pythagoras used to say that these two things the gods had given to human beings are best: speaking the truth and doing good; and he added that each of these was like [ἔοικε] the deeds of the gods" (Aelian, *Var. hist*. 12.59, my trans.; cf. Colson 1939: 431).

IX. A Reminder of How to Live as New Human Beings (4:17–5:2)
➤ X. Avoiding and Transforming the Deeds of Darkness (5:3–14)
XI. Wise Conduct within the Household (5:15–6:9)
XII. Standing against the Strategies of the Devil (6:10–20)

X. Avoiding and Transforming the Deeds of Darkness (5:3–14)

Paul continues his concrete ethical instruction but does so in a new form in this section. Whereas the previous section (4:17–5:2) is bound together by the themes of changing the clothing of one's behavior (4:22, 24–25) and imitating God or Christ (4:20, 24, 32; 5:1–2), here in 5:3–14 those themes fall into the background. Instead, the ethical landscape is dominated by consideration of what is shameful and what is fitting (5:3–4), what is hidden in darkness and what is light (5:8–14). The style of the new passage is also different (Lincoln 1990: 317). In 4:25–5:2 Paul telegraphs his ethical concerns in seven brief statements with few connecting conjunctions. Here the concern throughout is with two vices—sexual immorality and greed—and Paul's admonitions concerning these vices are organized in threes. Three terms describe the two vices of sexual immorality and greed, three words describe immoral speech, and three words describe the people who engage in sexual immorality and greed (5:3–5). This trio of sinful trios is counterbalanced first by "thanksgiving" (5:4) and then by a trio of virtues: "goodness," "righteousness," and "truth" (5:9).

Despite these differences from the previous section, this new section also continues the concerns of the previous exhortation (4:17–5:2). Just as that section contrasted the old way of life of the letter's readers with their new way of life and did so by reminding them of their conversion (4:17–25), so here Paul sets up a sharp contrast between the existence of his readers as "holy people" (5:3) and both the world outside their group (5:7, 11) and their own former existence as unbelievers (5:8). They are to have no partnership with the sexually immoral and greedy (5:7), he says, and are not to share in their behavior (5:11). Paul's readers were once darkness, but now they are light since they are "in the Lord" (5:8).

The passage has two sections (Schnackenburg 1991: 216; O'Brien 1999: 358). The first section (5:3–7) focuses on sexual immorality and greed as vices to avoid at all costs (5:3–5); it concludes with a warning both against anyone who might teach otherwise and against associating closely with the disobedient who engage in these sins (5:6–7). The second section (5:8–14) supplies the reason why such close alliances are wrong and develops its explanation by using the metaphor of light. Light and darkness are incompatible with each other (5:8).[1] Light bears the virtues of goodness, righteousness, and truth and tries

1. Some interpreters think that Col. 3:5–8 was the primary source for Eph. 5:3–8 (e.g., De Wette 1843: 145; Lincoln 1990: 319; Schnackenburg 1991: 216; Pokorný 1992: 1998; van Kooten 2003: 190n74). There are certainly similarities in thought and expression: sexual immorality, impurity, and greed show up in both passages and in the same order; shameful speech appears in

to find out what pleases the Lord (5:9–10). It exposes the darkness, making visible what the darkness tries to hide (5:11b–13). This active element in the light also transforms the darkness, making it light (5:14a), just as Jesus shines on those in the sleep of death and awakens them (5:14b).

The precise target of Paul's warnings here is not clear. Some interpreters believe that the deceivers in 5:6 are false teachers in the Christian community advocating a lenient approach to ethics (Best 1998: 473–74, 483–85), and some think the language of "exposing" hidden and shameful deeds refers to church discipline (Hoehner 2002: 679–80; cf. Best 1998: 492). The quotation of an early Christian hymn in 5:14, then, is intended to urge believers to live in a way that is consistent with their conversion (Hoehner 2002: 687–88).

As the exegesis below spells out, however, it is more likely that Paul's warnings in this passage are a complex mixture of admonitions both to avoid sexual immorality and greed wherever they occur and to work for the transformation of unbelievers who are mired in these sins. In 5:6, Paul warns against anyone claiming that God will not judge wrongdoing, whether they are believers or not (so correctly, Hoehner 2002: 663), and then in 5:7 he warns against participating with "the sons of disobedience" in their sins. "The sons of disobedience" are probably unbelieving Gentiles, since Paul uses the phrase this way in 2:2. When Paul tells his readers to "expose" the unfruitful works of darkness, moreover, he probably does not refer to erring Christians and their deeds since in the next phrase he says that the things done "by them" in secret are shameful. The pronoun "them" in this phrase refers back to "the sons of disobedience" and so, once again, must refer to unbelievers. This way of reading the passage seems to be confirmed by the quotation from the piece of early Christian liturgy in 5:14b. There a preacher of the gospel calls on people to rise from the dead, and this is most likely a reference to unbelievers whom Paul considers, according to 2:1, to be dead in their trespasses and sins.

In summary, 5:3–14 accomplishes two goals. First, it warns believers not to become ensnared in the sexual immorality and greed that characterize the unbelieving Gentile world (cf. 4:17–19). Second, it calls on believers to shine the transforming light of the gospel on unbelievers and urge them to rise from the dead.

both; greed is identified with idolatry in both (the only places in the NT where the identification is this explicit); the wrath of God "is coming" (ἔρχεται); and the readers are reminded of what they "once" (ποτέ) were and what they "now" (νῦν) are (Lincoln 1990: 319). It is difficult to account for the many differences between the two passages, however, on the theory that Colossians was the source for Ephesians (Best 1998: 473). A common traditional vice list is possible (Best 1998: 473), and it is easy to imagine Paul using such a traditional vice list in slightly different ways in two letters written at roughly the same time.

A. Avoiding Sexual Immorality and Greed (5:3–7)

Paul wastes no time before identifying his primary concerns in this paragraph and the next: he wants his readers to avoid sexual immorality and greed, the same sins he identified in 4:19 as especially characteristic of unbelieving Gentile culture. There, however, the sins were connected. Greed characterized the utterly debauched and unclean behavior that marked the desperate lives of unbelievers. Here the two sins are separate, as the "or" standing between the two terms for sexual immorality and the single term for greed indicates (5:3). Sexual immorality is Paul's primary focus, as the multiplication of terms related to it throughout the paragraph shows.[1]

The paragraph falls into two sections. In the first section (5:3–5) Paul uses three vice lists, each with three terms, to describe the sins his readers should avoid. The first list describes behaviors: "sexual immorality . . . and any uncleanness or greed" (5:3). The second list is devoted primarily to sins of speech, probably speech with inappropriate sexual connotations: "obscenity and nonsensical talk or suggestive witticism" (5:4). The third list describes people who do not merely talk about but also practice these sins: "[every] sexually immoral or unclean or greedy person" (5:5).

Paul offers two motivations for avoiding such sinful activity in this first section of the paragraph. Such conduct is not fitting for those whom God has set apart as his people (5:3–4), and those whose conduct is characterized by these sins have no inheritance in the kingdom of the Messiah and of God (5:5).

In the paragraph's second section (5:6–7), Paul warns his readers against anyone who might deceive them with "empty words" (5:6a). Although he is not explicit, he is probably talking about anyone, whether an erring believer or an unbeliever, who claims that no harm will come to those who are sexually active outside of marriage or who accumulate wealth for themselves. To the contrary, Paul says, the wrath of God is coming on the disobedient (5:6b), and to participate with them in their sin will mean sharing their doom (5:7).

Exegesis and Exposition

[3]Now do not let sexual immorality and any uncleanness or greed even be named among you, as is proper for holy people, [4]and obscenity and nonsensical talk or

1. Πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία (v. 3); αἰσχρότης, εὐτραπελία (v. 4); πόρνος, ἀκάθαρτος (v. 5); τὰ . . . κρυφῇ γινόμενα ὑπ' αὐτῶν αἰσχρόν ἐστιν (v. 12).

suggestive witticism, which are not fitting, but rather thanksgiving. [5]For be sure to understand this, that no sexually immoral or unclean or greedy person (who is an idolater) has any inheritance in the kingdom of the Messiah and of God.

[6]Let no one deceive you with empty talk: because of these things the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience. [7]So do not become sharers together with them.

5:3 Paul begins a new section of his letter with δέ (*de*, and/but), just as he does in 3:20 and 6:21, but here δέ also retains some of its force as an adversative conjunction ("but"). In his summary of the previous section, Paul has just explained that his readers should "walk in love" in imitation of God and of Christ (5:1–2). Now, he says, they should also avoid the contrasting way of life. He describes this way of life with three lists, each containing three vices (vv. 3–5): the first list describes activities (v. 3), the second list describes mainly speech (v. 4), and the third list describes people who engage in the activities in the first list (v. 5).

The first list of three vices introduces the subjects that will dominate the three lists: πορνεία (*porneia*, sexual immorality) and ἀκαθαρσία πᾶσα (*akatharsia pasa*, any uncleanness) on one hand and πλεονεξία (*pleonexia*, greed) on the other hand. A venerable interpretation of these three vices, going back at least to Origen and Jerome, connects them with one another and claims that the "greed" Paul has in mind is sexual greed.[2] Perhaps, the argument goes, Paul was thinking of coveting another's wife, a form of greed forbidden in the tenth commandment (Exod. 20:17; Deut. 5:21). Paul's use of ἀκαθαρσία alongside πλεονεξία in 4:19 to describe the greediness with which unbelieving Gentiles engage in bizarre sexual behavior makes this an attractive interpretation of the three vices. His use of the conjunction ἤ (*ē*, or), however, to separate the two sexual vices from greed make the connection improbable.[3] Here he is viewing sexual immorality and greed separately, as two distinct vices (cf. 1 Cor. 5:10; De Wette 1843: 145).

Πορνεία could refer specifically to prostitution (e.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 4.24.4; Gen. 38:24 LXX) or to sexual intercourse with a prostitute (e.g., 1 Cor. 6:13–18; Rev. 17:1–2; 19:2), but also more generally to any sexual intercourse outside marriage (e.g., Sir. 23:22–23; 26:9; T. Reu. 4; 1 Cor. 7:2; John 8:41).[4] In both Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity it was considered a characteristically Gentile vice (e.g., Wis. 14:12; 1 Thess.

2. Origen and Jerome (Heine 2002: 209–10). Cf. Abbott 1897: 148; Westcott 1906: 76; Lincoln 1990: 322; O'Brien 1999: 360.

3. Cf. Ellicott 1859: 113; Robinson 1904: 107; Best 1998: 476; Rosner 2007: 103–11.

4. *Pace* Osiek and Macdonald (2006: 109–11), who believe that πορνεία in the NT may not have included sexual relations between a married man and his female slave (cf. Glancy 2006: 57–70). This view is very difficult to square with 1 Cor. 7:1–9, where marriage provides the one legitimate context for sexual activity, or with 1 Cor. 6:19 (cf. Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:21), where it is assumed that sexual relations establish a marriage bond. As T. Reu. 4 shows, moreover, Paul's view was not unique among Hellenistic Jews. In the Testament of Reuben, πορνεία (1.6; 3.3;

4:3–5; 1 Cor. 5:1; Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; cf. Eph. 4:17, 19) and was often connected with idolatry (e.g., Wis. 14:12; T. Reu. 4.6; 1 Cor. 10:7–8).

Ἀκαθαρσία, used in a literal sense, means "any substance that is filthy or dirty" (BDAG 34), but sometimes it takes on metaphorical connotations (e.g., 1 Thess. 2:3) that become sexual in contexts such as the present one (e.g., Gal. 5:19; 2 Cor. 12:21; Rom. 1:24). As its use in these other passages shows, the term is broad, referring generally to sexually deviant behavior. Here Paul makes this broad reference even broader with the adjective πᾶς (*pas*, all), which here carries the connotation "any kind of" (4:19; BDAG 784): his readers are to avoid sexual activity outside marriage and all forms of sexual deviance.

Πλεονεξία refers to "greed" or "avarice," and although it could be used metaphorically (4:19), it generally refers to acquiring and holding wealth. Jewish and early Christian moralists such as Paul were particularly concerned that wealth not replace God in the lives of believers. At the end of his comprehensive study of greed as idolatry in early Christianity, Rosner (2007: 129) defines the greedy as "those with a strong desire to acquire and keep for themselves more and more money and possessions, because they love, trust, and obey wealth rather than God" (the whole quotation is in italics in the original). Rosner makes a persuasive case that, in practical terms, greed among the earliest Christians amounted to an unwillingness to share one's possessions with the needy (cf., e.g., Luke 12:13–21; Acts 20:33–35). If this is correct, then here Paul may be saying to the wealthy among his readers what he has already said to the working poor in 4:28: the sort of acquisitiveness that leads the working poor to steal and the wealthy to refuse to give has no place among believers.

With particularly emphatic language Paul underlines how pervasive their avoidance of these vices should be. Sexual immorality and greed, he says, should not even be named (ὀνομαζέσθω, *onomazesthō*) among his readers. He is not being so pedantic in this comment that he has set up an odd contradiction by mentioning vices he says should not be mentioned.[5] This is instead simply an emphatic way of saying that within the people of God a culture should prevail that is utterly different (ἅγιος, *hagios*, holy) from the culture described in 4:17–19, where these vices are so common. The expression, then, is not far from other similar expressions in Greco-Roman antiquity of about the same period. "And civil strife does not deserve even to be named [ὀνομάζειν, *onomazein*] among us," says Dio Chrysostom after a lengthy discussion of civil strife, "and let no one mention it" (*In cont.* [*Or.* 48] 16, trans. Cohoon and Crosby 1971–93; cf. Isocrates, *Demon.* 15; Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.2.8).[6]

Perhaps his statement that sexual immorality, impurity, and greed should not even be "named" among the holy prompts Paul next to list three vices, **5:4**

4.6–7; 5.5; 6.1) is defined with reasonable clarity as a matter of occupying oneself sexually with anyone but a spouse (4.1).

5. So correctly, e.g., Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 89; Best 1998: 477; *pace*, e.g., Barth 1974: 561; Lincoln 1990: 322.

6. Cf. Alford 1857: 124; Ellicott 1859: 114; *pace* Hultin 2008: 179.

primarily of speech, and all of them with sexual connotations (Lincoln 1990: 322; Best 1998: 477).[7] The three terms are relatively rare, appearing only here in the Greek Bible.

Αἰσχρότης (*aischrotēs*) generally refers to "ugliness" as opposed to beauty (Philodemus, *De poematis* 1.84.12–13; Artemidorus Daldianus, *Oneir*. 4.2.40; Athenaeus, *Deipn*. 14.7.23), sometimes to an ugliness so intense that it seems to be disordered and unnatural (Pseudo-Aristotle, *Divisiones* [Mutschmann 1906: 55, line 2]; *Vita Aesopi* [Eberhard 1872: 228, line 4]). In contexts where sexual behavior is under discussion, words beginning with the syllable αἰσχρ- (*aischr-*) refer to unnatural, or disordered, sexual behavior (LSJ 43), and αἰσχρότης probably has those connotations here. The term does not necessarily refer to speech, but since the context is concerned with speech (ὀνομάζω, *onomazō*, to name; μωρολογία, *mōrologia*, foolish speech; εὐτραπελία, *eutrapelia*, clever humor), Paul probably had in mind not only obscene behavior but also discussing or singing about "ugly" sexual behavior as a form of entertainment. Both the behavior itself and verbal descriptions of it were often present at the banquets of the wealthy in ancient Greco-Roman society (see, e.g., Quintilian, *Inst*. 1.2.8).[8]

Μωρολογία (*mōrologia*) is sometimes associated simply with "chatter" or "talkativeness" (ἀδολεσχία, *adoleschia*) in ancient Greek literature (e.g., Aristotle, *Hist. an*. 492b), but it can also take on very negative connotations. Josephus (*Ag. Ap*. 2.115) uses it to describe the nonsensical inaccuracies and lies of the anti-Jewish writer Apion; Plutarch, in his treatise *On Talkativeness* (Περὶ ἀδολεσχίας), associates it with drunkenness (*Garr.* 504b). Μωρολογία, Plutarch says, is characteristic not simply of light drunkenness (οἴνωσις, *oinōsis*), in which people are in some possession of their judgment, but also of heavy drunkenness (μέθη, *methē*). The context in which Plutarch sets these remarks is that of lavish banqueting. In its context here in Ephesians, where talk of sexual immorality and debauchery is in the air, μωρολογία may also carry connotations of the kind of nonsensical talk that emerges from people in attendance at banquets where drunkenness and sexual immorality were common (P. Schmitt-Pantel and G. Binder, *BNP* 2:490–98; cf. 5:18).[9]

Εὐτραπελία (*eutrapelia*) "described a clever wit that was consistently recognized as an admirable talent, and that endeared one to others" (Hultin 2008:

7. Syntactically, the construction is loose: there is no main verb for 5:4, which means that the main verb of 5:3 (ὀνομαζέσθω) carries the thought forward (Best 1998: 477).

8. Cf. the description of banquet singing in Gosnell 1993: 336 and the general description of Roman banquets in Slater 1991 and D'Ambra 2007: 55.

9. This common cultural background is a more likely context for Paul's language in 5:4 than Kreitzer's suggestion (1998a: 51–77) that this text refers specifically to the practices of the Demeter/Cybele cult in Hierapolis. The general nature of the three terms αἰσχρότης, μωρολογία, and εὐτραπελία allows them to refer to a far broader range of behaviors than the specifically religious practices that Kreitzer's evidence reveals. Kreitzer's article usefully demonstrates, however, that words beginning with αἰσχρ- frequently refer to obscene speech or behavior. It also provides helpful illustrations of the type of behavior that 5:12 refers to when it speaks of secret behavior that is shameful even to describe.

194).[10] Banquets and drinking parties were more lively and fun when people with εὐτραπελία were present (Josephus, *Ant*. 12.173; Diodorus Siculus, *Biblio*. *hist*. 20.63.6). Like most positive qualities, however, εὐτραπελία could be abused. Plutarch says that Cicero took the otherwise "pleasant characteristic" of εὐτραπελία too far "and so annoyed many and got the reputation of being malicious" (Plutarch, *Cic*. 5.4, trans. Perrin 1914–26; quoted in Hultin 2008: 192–93). The adjectival form of the word, εὐτράπελος (*eutrapelos*), could describe a profane (σαπρός, *sapros*) "wise guy," such as the slave Aesop, whose talkativeness often involved sexually vulgar speech (*Vita Aesopi* 32; Hultin 2008: 191n173). In the context of Eph. 5:3–4, where the concern is with inappropriate sexual behavior and speech, the term probably refers to the misuse of an otherwise attractive quality: quick-witted, clever humor employed in malicious or sexually vulgar ways.

The terms μωρολογία and εὐτραπελία are separated from each other by ἤ, indicating that they are different from each other (Best 1998: 478). One term is associated with dullness of mind, a dullness sometimes induced by drunkenness, whereas the other term is associated with a quick wit, able to pinpoint precisely the weakness in an opponent that can be mocked and elicit laughter or able to turn an otherwise innocent phrase into a sexual allusion. Whether its source is wits dulled by wine or sharpened by rhetorical training, rude speech of a sexual nature or at another's expense has, Paul says, no place among God's people.

Obscenity, nonsensical babbling, and coarse or mean-spirited humor, Paul continues, "are not fitting" (ἀνῆκεν, *anēken*).[11] The term ἀνῆκεν was sometimes used to refer to a legal obligation, for example, to pay taxes (1 Macc. 11:35) or to honor the king (2 Macc. 14:8), and here it refers to conduct that is proper or fitting in light of the society of "the holy" to which believers belong (cf. v. 3; Col. 3:18; Philem. 8; Schlier, *TDNT* 1:360; BDAG 79).

Instead of unfitting speech, holy people should engage in "thanksgiving" (εὐχαριστία, *eucharistia*). Within the NT εὐχαριστία is a distinctively Pauline word: out of its fifteen appearances, twelve are in the Pauline corpus. Wherever the term appears in Paul, the thanksgiving is always directed to God (Best 1998: 479–80; Hoehner 2002: 658). Here Paul may have in mind an attitude of thanksgiving in one's private prayers (1 Thess. 3:9; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2; cf. Eph. 1:16) or the expressions of thanksgiving that characterize Christian worship (cf. 1 Cor. 14:16; 1 Tim. 2:1) and that in 5:18–20 he contrasts with drunkenness. In either case, speech oriented toward God should replace the self-indulgent, self-promoting speech that Paul has described in the first part of the verse.

10. E.g., Aristotle, *Eth*. *Nic*. 8.3 [8.1156a.13–14]; 8.4 [8.1157a.3–6]; *Eth*. *eud*. 3.7 [3.1234a.4–23]; Plutarch, *Ant*. 43.3 (van der Horst 1978: 167–68, 171; Hultin 2008: 190–96). Hultin disputes van der Horst's claim that the term is often used with negative connotations.

11. The verb is in the imperfect tense, which, according to BDF §358.2, is sometimes used "in expressions of necessity, obligation, duty, possibility, etc." Cf. the use of καθῆκεν in Acts 22:22.

5:5 Paul now gives the reason why (γάρ, *gar*, for) it is so important to avoid sexual immorality, and speech about it, as well as greed. He underlines the importance of the reason he is about to give with the phrase ἴστε γινώσκοντες (*iste ginōskontes*). Interpreters sometimes take this phrase as an indicative ("Of this you are well aware"; Bruce 1984: 369, 371n23), and sometimes as an imperative ("For certainly know this"; Best 1998: 472, 480). In the two other places where Paul warns his readers that those who engage in certain kinds of behavior "will not inherit the kingdom of God," he begins his warning with a reference either to what he has taught them before or to what they should already know (Gal. 5:21; 1 Cor. 6:9). If he follows the same pattern here, we should understand the phrase as an indicative (Bruce 1984: 371n23). The imperative mood predominates in the surrounding context (Best 1998: 480), however, and in the few other places in ancient Greek literature where the phrase appears, it seems to mean something like "Be sure you understand this."[12] That is probably also its meaning here.

The warning that comes next provides an emphatic conclusion to the two lists of vices in verses 3 and 4. Paul now gives a list of three types of people who are defined by the behaviors he has described in the first two lists: the sexually immoral person (πόρνος, *pornos*), the unclean person (ἀκάθαρτος, *akathartos*), and the greedy person (πλεονέκτης, *pleonektēs*). Such people, he says, have no "inheritance [κληρονομία, *klēronomia*] in the kingdom of the Messiah and of God."

The statement is similar to Gal. 5:19–21 and 1 Cor. 6:9–10, where those engaged in various vices—including those who practice πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, and εἰδωλολατρία (*eidōlolatria*; Gal. 5:19–21) and those who are πόρνοι, εἰδωλολάτραι, and πλεονέκται (1 Cor. 6:9–10)—also will not "inherit [κληρονομέω, *klēronomeō*] the kingdom of God." Three differences between those statements and the one here, however, are important.

First, Paul adds to his mention of the πλεονέκτης (*pleonektēs*, greedy person) the explanatory comment that the greedy person is an εἰδωλολάτρης (*eidōlolatrēs*, idolater).[13] Paul also makes this equation in Col. 3:5, where he speaks only slightly differently of "greed" (πλεονεξία, *pleonexia*) as "idolatry"

12. Symmachus (late second cent. AD) apparently used it to render יָדֹעַ תֵּדָעוּ in Jer. 49:22 (42:22 MT: "Be well aware," NRSV; Robinson 1904: 199). Much later, Mark the Hermit (fifth cent. AD) also used the phrase in his *Disputatio cum quodam causidico* (16 lines 48–51): Τοῦτο οὖν ἀκριβῶς ἴστε γινώσκοντες, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ τὰς ἐπιφορὰς μετὰ πίστεως καὶ εὐχαριστίας ὑπομείνωμεν, τὴν ἐγκεκρυμμένην κακίαν εὑρεῖν οὐ δυνάμεθα. ("Be sure you understand this clearly, brothers, that unless we patiently endure calamities with faith and thanksgiving, we are not able to discover the evil concealed within" [my trans.].)

13. Paul used the neuter relative pronoun ὅ to begin his explanatory comment, a seeming anomaly since πλεονέκτης, its apparent antecedent (cf. Col. 3:5), is masculine. This lack of concord has led to confusion from ancient times to the present. The manuscript tradition represented by A, D, K, L, P, 0278, and 𝔐 "corrected" the grammar by changing ὅ to ὅς. Modern commentators are sometimes led by the problem to suggest that the neuter encompasses all three vices, which are together called "idolatry" (e.g., Schnackenburg 1991: 219n10). The phrase ὅ ἐστιν, however, was a common formula in Koine Greek for identifying one thing with another

(εἰδωλολατρία). As Rosner (2007: 159–64; cf. 129) has shown, "idolater" (or "idolatry") is being used metaphorically in this expression to describe the vice of giving to money the love, devotion, confidence, trust, service, and obedience that in the Jewish and early Christian tradition should belong to God alone. The idea is not simply that "love of money leads to idolatry," as T. Jud. 19.1 puts it, but that it *is*, metaphorically speaking, idolatry (Rosner 2007: 16–18).

This sentiment frequently appears in ancient Jewish and early Christian literature. Job says, "If I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, 'You are my security,' . . . then these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high" (Job 31:24–28, as quoted in Rosner 2007: 76), and Eliphaz tells Job to make "the Almighty . . . your gold and your precious silver" (Job 22:25 NRSV; Rosner 2007: 79). Philo believed that the first and second commandments of the Decalogue prohibited not only literal idolatry but also the love of gold and silver money, which can be treasured "like a divine image in a sanctuary, believing it to be a source of blessing and happiness of every kind" (Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.23; quoted in Rosner 2007: 85; cf. Philo, *Dreams* 1.179; *Drunkenness* 75; *Abraham* 208–24; Rosner 2007: 86). Jesus claimed that it was impossible to serve both God and money as masters (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13; Rosner 2007: 166–67). Polycarp (*Phil.* 11.2) taught, "If a man does not avoid love of money, he will be polluted by idolatry, and will be judged as one of the Gentiles, who are ignorant of the Lord's judgment" (quoted in Rosner 2007: 155; trans. Holmes 2007).

The greedy person is an idolator, then, because wealth rather than God is the greedy person's security, and the object of his or her love and devotion. Although Eadie (1883: 375) wrote long before the kind of careful research on this phrase that Rosner provides, he nevertheless pinpoints the metaphor's meaning precisely: "The covetous man makes a god of his possessions, and offers to them the entire homage of his heart. That world of which the love and worship fill his nature, is his god, for whose sake he rises up early and sits up late."

The second major difference between Eph. 5:5 and the two earlier passages (Gal. 5:19–21 and 1 Cor. 6:9–10) is the use in Ephesians of the present rather than the future tense to speak of the inheritance from which the sexually immoral and greedy are excluded.[14] Elsewhere Ephesians clearly affirms the future element of the inheritance—the Holy Spirit's presence is its down payment (1:13–14)—but here the focus is on an inheritance that in some sense presently exists and from which the sexually immoral and greedy are presently excluded (οὐκ ἔχει, *ouk echei*, does not have).

The reason for this emphasis on a presently existing inheritance becomes clear when we examine the third main difference between Eph. 5:5 and the

thing and was used without regard to the gender of the words that it links (BDF §132.2; BDAG 727; Metzger 1994: 539; cf. Mark 15:16).

14. Cf. also 1 Cor. 15:50, where inheriting the kingdom lies in the future.

other two passages. Here we find the expression "the kingdom of the Messiah and of God" (ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ, *hē basileia tou christou kai theou*) rather than simply "the kingdom of God." In the NT, talk of Christ's kingdom is infrequent (2 Tim. 4:1, 18; 2 Pet. 1:11; cf. 1 Clem. 50.3; Mart. Pol. 22.1, 3), and the phrase "the kingdom of *the* Christ and *of God*," with the article and the added reference to God, is unique. This unique expression, then, emphasizes the present reign of the Messiah together with God himself. Paul has already said that after God raised Christ from the dead, he seated him at his "right hand, in the heavenly places" (1:20). Mention of God's right hand is a clear allusion to Ps. 110:1 MT, Eng. (109:1 LXX), where the Lord seats the king at his right hand and promises him victory over his enemies.[15] In Ephesians, God not only has seated the Messiah at his right hand (1:20), but his enemies are also already beneath his feet (1:22; cf. Ps. 8:7 LXX, MT [8:6 Eng.]): both God and the Messiah, then, reign victorious over their enemies. Although the full benefit of this victory lies in the future (1:14; cf. 1 Cor. 15:24–27, 50–55), there is a sense in which believers presently share in Christ's victory over his enemies (1:23) and are even seated together with him in the heavenly places (2:6; Best 1998: 482).

Here, then, Paul is saying that because of their present position of victory—seated with the anointed king at God's right hand—believers should be careful how they live. Those who have an inheritance in the kingdom of the Messiah and of God should not engage in the kind of conduct characteristic of unbelievers, who have no share in the Messiah's reign (cf. Pss. Sol. 17.26–27, 32, 41; 18.5–9).

5:6–7 Paul does not want his readers to be deceived into thinking that sexually immoral or greedy conduct will have no consequences for those who engage in it. He has already alluded in 4:14, and probably also in 4:20, to false teaching circulating among believers, and if this false teaching is in the background of 4:20, then it must have supplied some theoretical basis for neglecting the Christian tradition about how believers should behave, a tradition Paul reasserts in 4:21–24 as a corrective. During the period in which Ephesians was written, there were certainly people abroad who called themselves believers but who scoffed at the notion of a future judgment in which the wicked would be punished (2 Pet. 3:3–4; cf. Jude 14–15, 18–19) and taught that believers could behave in any outlandish way they pleased: God was, after all, gracious (Jude 4, 16; cf. 2 Pet. 2:2–3, 10, 13–14, 18–21; 3:3–4).[16] The language of deceit was sometimes used to describe this sort of error (Rom. 16:17–18; Jude 16; 2 Pet. 2:3; cf. Col. 2:4, 8), and Paul may be referring to the same kind of problem here. If so, he was warning his readers against those who called themselves

15. See 2 Bar. 39.7; Pss. Sol. 17.21–46; 18.5–9; 1 Cor. 15:24; Matt. 16:28; Luke 1:33; 22:29–30; 23:42; John 18:36, where the Messiah or Jesus rules over God's people as king. Cf. Eadie 1883: 375; Hoehner 2002: 661; Lincoln 1990: 325.

16. See Thielman 2005: 512–35 and the scholarship cited there; and cf. Calvin 1965: 198; Abbott 1897: 152; Schlier 1957: 236; Bruce 1961: 104–5; Barth 1974: 565–66; Best 1998: 484–85.

believers but laughed at the idea that sexual immorality, greed, and a little "fun" around the banquet table would fall under God's judgment (cf. Rev. 2:14, 20; 3:4; cf. 2:2).[17]

God's wrath, Paul insists, "is coming" (ἔρχεται, *erchetai*) on those who do "these things." Most commentators believe that the present tense is used here to refer either to the present outpouring of God's wrath (e.g., Calvin 1965: 198–99; Best 1998: 486; cf., e.g., Rom. 1:18; John 3:36) or to both its present and its future outpouring (e.g., Eadie 1883: 378–79; Abbott 1897: 152; Gnilka 1971: 250; Barth 1974: 566; Schnackenburg 1991: 221). The idea that there is at least some reference to the present here gains plausibility from the present-tense reference to the inheritance of believers in 5:5 (Hoehner 2002: 664), which, as we have just seen, has both present and future connotations.

The present tense of ἔρχομαι (*erchomai*, I come) is often used in the NT, however, to refer to a future event (Matt. 17:11; Luke 12:54; 19:13; BDAG 395), and frequently that future event is either the outpouring of God's wrath (1 Thess. 1:10; Col. 3:6) or the coming of Jesus (John 14:3; 21:22–23; 1 Tim. 4:13).[18] Since Paul has already referred to the Holy Spirit as a seal on those who have heard and believed the gospel, and since we should probably think of that seal as a protection against God's coming wrath (see the comments on 1:13), it seems likely that here too Paul refers to the coming of God's wrath as a future event (cf. Rom. 2:5, 8; 3:3–7; 5:9; 9:18, 22; Lincoln [1990: 325–26] comes close to this position).

God's wrath, Paul says, is coming "because of these things [ταῦτα, *tauta*]." He is not referring to the "empty words" of the previous phrase but to the sexually immoral and greedy behavior described in 5:3–5. Paul is probably opposing the claim of the "empty words" that God will not pour out his wrath on Christians who are involved in such sins. The "sons of disobedience" who do these things, then, are not believers who struggle against such sins and sometimes fail but, as the use of this phrase in 2:2 shows, are people dead in their transgressions and sins and under the sway of the world, the devil, and the flesh (2:1–3). Their existence is defined by their disobedience to God.

Because God's wrath will come upon the disobedient, Paul continues, his readers must not become "sharers together with [συμμέτοχοι, *symmetochoi*] them." The adjective συμμέτοχος consists of the word μέτοχος (*metochos*), meaning "sharing in, partner" (BDAG 643), and the prepositional prefix σύν (*syn*), meaning "with." It is, then, an emphatic word and indicates the fullest possible participation in something. Its only other use in the NT is in 3:6, where it describes the full participation of Gentile Christians with Jewish Christians in the people of God (see the comments on that verse). Paul's point here is that

17. *Pace*, e.g., Lincoln (1990: 325) and Schnackenburg (1991: 220), who believe that the "empty words" come from unbelievers, and, e.g., Hoehner (2002: 663), who believes that they come from both believers and unbelievers.

18. On the phrase ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ in Col. 3:6 as a reference to God's future wrath, see, e.g., Dunn 1996: 216–17 and R. Wilson 2005: 247.

fully participating in the worldview and conduct of unbelievers in matters of sex and money is incompatible with membership in the people of God.

Summary

In 5:3–7 Paul continues the concrete ethical instruction he has been giving since 4:25, and here he focuses on sexual immorality and greed. His readers should avoid not only inappropriate sexual behavior but also entertaining themselves with talk about such behavior. Paul may have been thinking specifically about the kind of conduct that seems to have regularly occurred at the banquets of the wealthy in ancient Greco-Roman society. His readers should also avoid greed, which gives to wealth the sort of trust and devotion that should go to God alone. These behaviors, Paul says, are not fitting for God's people. Those who treat such conduct lightly, whether by the way they live or by what they teach, reveal that they are not really united with Christ the king, who reigns at God's right hand.

B. From Avoidance to Transformation (5:8–14)

Paul now supplies another reason why (γάρ, *gar*, for) his readers should not participate in the sins of the sexually immoral and greedy (5:8; cf. 5:5). The whole paragraph is governed by the metaphor of light, and again it falls into two parts, although less obviously than the previous paragraph. The shift from one part to the next occurs with a move from a passive to an active role for the light in 5:11b. In the first part of the paragraph (5:8–11a), the light is passive, simply defining the new existence of Paul's readers. In the second part (5:11b–14), it is active, exposing, illuminating, and transforming the darkness.

Paul begins the first part by telling his readers that to participate in the activities of the sexually immoral and greedy would be out of step with the basic orientation of their existence. Their existence is as incompatible with this kind of conduct as light is with darkness (5:8). Instead, their way of life should be characterized by goodness, righteousness, and truth (5:9)—a trio of virtues that contrasts with the three trios of vices in 5:3–7. To put it another way, their lives should be marked by trying to find out what is pleasing to the Lord in any situation and refusing to participate in deeds that are wicked and sterile (5:10–11a).

The second part of the paragraph begins in 5:11b, where the metaphor of light takes a different and more aggressive turn. Paul urges his readers to "expose" evil. Although it is shameful even to describe (much less participate in) evil, the light can reveal it for the futile activity that it is (5:11b–12; cf. 4:17–19; 5:11a) and this, in turn, can transform those who engage in evil deeds into light themselves (5:13–14a). Paul supports his argument with a quotation from an early Christian liturgy that speaks of Christ shining on and transforming one who is asleep and dead so that he or she awakens to life and light (5:14b).

Exegesis and Exposition

[8]For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light [9](for ⌜the fruit of the light⌝ is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), [10]trying to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. [11]And do not participate in the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. [12]For the things done by them in secret are shameful even to talk about, [13]but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, [14a]for everything visible is light. [14b]Therefore it says,

> Get up, O sleeper,
> And rise from the dead,
> And ⌜Christ will shine on you⌝.

5:8 In addition to the reason Paul has just given for avoiding sexual immorality and greed (God's wrath comes on those who do these things), his readers should avoid them because (γάρ, *gar*, for) participating in these sins would be inconsistent with the basic orientation of their new existence. Paul's readers "were once [ποτέ, *pote*] darkness, but now [νῦν δέ, *nyn de*] are light in the Lord." They were not merely *in* darkness but *were* darkness, and so their entire existence was defined by it. Now, however, they "are light in the Lord." Their existence is defined by the light because the boundaries of their existence are defined by the Lord.

This is the language of both conversion and ethical instruction. The use of ποτέ and νῦν δέ to set up a contrast between preconversion and postconversion existence was common in early Christian literature (e.g., Rom. 11:30; 1 Pet. 2:10; cf. Gal. 1:23) and is characteristic of Ephesians (2:11, 13; cf. 2:2–4). The contrast between light and darkness as a metaphor for conversion is also characteristic of early Christian literature (2 Cor. 4:6; Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Clem. 59.2) and appears naturally in Ephesians, where unbelievers are described as "darkened in understanding" (4:18), their activities as the "unfruitful works of darkness" (5:11), and the world in which they live as "this darkness" (6:12; cf. Luke 22:53; John 3:19).

The contrast between light and darkness was also used in early Christian ethical instruction. Paul used the metaphor in 1 Thess. 5:4–11 and in Rom. 13:11–14 to make a link between eschatology and ethics. Both passages have verbal and conceptual connections to the ethical teaching in Eph. 4–6:

1 Thessalonians 5:4–11	**Romans 13:11–14**
[4]You, brothers [and sisters], are not in darkness that the day, like a thief, should catch you. [5]For you are all sons of the light [υἱοὶ φωτός, *huioi phōtos*] and sons of the day. We are not of the night, nor of the darkness. [6]So then let us not sleep as the rest but let us stay awake and be sober. [7]For those who sleep sleep at night and those who get drunk are drunk at night. [8]But since we are of the day, let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation, [9]because God did not appoint us for wrath but for the preservation which is salvation [εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας, *eis peripoiēsin sōtērias*] through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10]who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live together with him. [11]Therefore encourage one another, and build one another up, one on one, just as you are also doing.	[11]The hour to be raised from sleep is already present, for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. [12]The night has advanced, and the day is near. Let us therefore put off the works of darkness and put on the weapons of light. [13]As in the day, let us walk with decorum, not in debauched feasting and drinking binges, not in sexual liaisons and excesses, not in division and envy, [14]but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and do not make provision for the flesh, for the purpose of evil desires.

In these passages the darkness-light metaphor mingles with the metaphor of "putting off" certain behaviors and "putting on" other attitudes or behaviors (cf. Eph. 4:22–24), and the "putting on" side of the image is articulated in terms of donning weaponry for battle (cf. Eph. 6:10–17). In 1 Thessalonians, the theme of rescue from God's wrath on that day is present (1 Thess. 5:9),

and both passages articulate the idea that believers, as people of the light, will be kept safe on the final day (1 Thess. 5:4–5, 9; Rom. 13:11). The eschatological tone of the light-dark imagery in Ephesians is certainly more "realized" than in 1 Thessalonians and Romans—the ethical admonitions are based on one's existence as light rather than darkness, not on identification with the light of the soon-coming day—but as we have just seen in the comments on God's coming wrath in Eph. 5:6, eschatology is not absent from the Ephesians context; the difference is one of emphasis rather than contradiction.

The difference in emphasis, however, is important. In 1 Thessalonians and Romans the light metaphor moves from the final "day" to believers as people of the "light." Their behavior as people of the "light" is motivated in part by their reckoning with the events of that "day." In Ephesians the final day disappears from view after mention of God's wrath in 5:6, and the metaphor develops in the direction of believers' existence as light, whether as light itself (v. 8a) or as children of the light (τέκνα φωτός, *tekna phōtos*, v. 8b). Because they are light and children of the light, they should "walk" (περιπατεῖτε, *peripateite*) in a way that reveals what and who they are.

Later, in verses 11–14, Paul will use this metaphor to describe the influence his readers should have on the culture surrounding them: since they are light, they should shine on unbelievers, both exposing their hidden and shameful existence and transforming them into light also. The imagery of military armor and weaponry (1 Thess. 5:8; Rom. 13:12) falls away to be used later for a different purpose (6:10–17), and instead of emphasizing the battle to keep oneself free from societal evils, Paul in verses 11–14 will underline the transforming effect that illuminated believers can have on the darkness around them.[1]

5:9 Paul now inserts a parenthetical comment expanding on the idea that "children of the light" should "walk" in a way appropriate to the basic orientation of their existence. Just as children share their parent's nature, so the fruit of a plant shares the nature of the plant that produced it (cf., e.g., Sir. 23:25; 27:6; Matt. 7:16–20; Luke 6:43–44; John 15:2–17; James 3:12; Ign. *Eph*. 14.2; Davies and Allison 1988: 706). If Paul's readers are light and are children of the light, then they should produce "fruit" appropriate to the light. The step from "children" to "fruit" is natural for someone familiar with the LXX, where children are sometimes metaphorically described as "the fruit of the womb" (Gen. 30:2; Ps. 131:11 [132:11 MT, Eng.]; Mic. 6:7; Lam. 2:20; cf. Luke 1:42; Acts 2:30; BDAG 510). The use of the term "fruit" in an ethical sense is also characteristic of Paul. He has previously contrasted the "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19–21) with "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22–23), has spoken of "the fruit of righteousness" (Phil. 1:11), and has described sanctification

1. *Pace* Best 1998: 488 and Muddiman 2001: 237; the thought here is close to that of Matt. 5:13–16.

as the "fruit" that enslavement to God yields (Rom. 6:21–22; cf. Rom. 7:4; Col. 1:6, 10).[2]

Here the ethical fruit produced by a life oriented to the light is "all goodness and righteousness and truth." Just as the lists of vices in 5:3–5 came in sets of three, so this contrasting list of virtues comes in a set of three.

Ἀγαθωσύνη (*agathōsynē*, goodness) is an unusual term: it appears in extant Greek literature prior to the Pauline Epistles only in the LXX (Spicq, *TLNT* 1:3), where it means "goodness, kindness" (LEH 2) and is often used of showing benevolence to others (Judg. 9:16 Vat.; 2 Chron. 24:16; Ps. 51:5 [52:5 MT; 52:3 Eng.]; cf. 2 Thess. 1:11; Gal. 5:22; Rom. 15:14; T. Jud. 18.4; T. Ab. 1.5; Acts Paul 1, line 4). In the LXX the term typically has practical, material connotations. Nehemiah, for example, describes God's "great goodness [ἀγαθωσύνη]" as his gift to Israel of Canaan with its "lofty cities . . . homes filled with all sorts of goods, hewn cisterns, vineyards and olive orchards, and every sort of fruit tree in abundance." There, he says, "they ate and were filled and became fat and were nourished" (2 Esd. 19:25 NETS [Neh. 9:25 MT, Eng.]; cf. Eccles. 4:8; 5:10, 17; 6:3, 6; 7:14; 9:18). This practical, active side of ἀγαθωσύνη is probably also behind Paul's use of it in 2 Thess. 1:11, where he prays that God might fill the Thessalonian believers with "every resolve of goodness [ἀγαθωσύνης] and work of faith in power." Coupled in this context with resolve, work, and power, the term seems to mean doing what is good.[3]

Here in Ephesians, then, the term supplies the opposite of the greed that features so prominently in the vice lists of 5:3–5. Those who are in the Lord shine as light when they are benevolent toward others, demonstrating their goodness to them in practical ways.

Δικαιοσύνη (*dikaiosynē*, righteousness) and ἀλήθεια (*alētheia*, truth) also appear together in 4:24 and 6:14. Although δικαιοσύνη in the Pauline corpus can refer to God's saving power (e.g., Rom. 1:17) and to the status of acquittal that God gives to the ungodly (e.g., Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9), its close association here with the active term "goodness" shows that it refers to "upright behavior" (BDAG 248; cf. Phil. 1:11; 2 Cor. 6:14; 11:15; Rom. 6:13, 16, 18–20; 1 Tim. 6:11; Titus 3:5; 2 Tim. 2:22). Elsewhere in Ephesians, ἀλήθεια seems to refer to specifically Christian truth (1:13; 4:21; cf. 4:24–25; 6:14). Since "goodness" and "righteousness" are ethical qualities here, however, "truth" is probably also used in this way. Paul was probably thinking of behavior that is forthright and honest, just as David conducted himself before God "in truth [ἀληθείᾳ] and in righteousness [δικαιοσύνῃ] and in uprightness [εὐθύτητι, *euthytēti*] of heart" (1 Kings 3:6 NETS; cf. Ps. 14:2 LXX [15:2 MT, Eng.]).

2. Cf. also the use of "fruit" in an ethical sense by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:8–10 [Luke 3:8–9]) and Jesus (Matt. 7:16–20 [Luke 6:43–44]; 12:33; 21:33–44 [cf. Mark 12:1–12; Luke 13:6–9; 20:9–18]; John 15:2, 4–5, 8, 16]). The metaphor was not uncommon in Jewish religious and Greek philosophical literature (e.g., Odes Sol. 8.2; 11.1, 23; Epictetus [Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 2.1.21]). On this, see Schnackenburg 1991: 224n27; Best 1998: 489; BDAG 510.

3. Cf. Acts Paul 1, line 4, where Christ's ἀγαθωσύνη inspires Paul to refrain from doing harm and instead to show affection toward his enemies.

Jewish and Christian literature from antiquity frequently describes the character of God in terms of these three virtues. God displays "goodness" to his people and to those in need (Judg. 8:35 Alex.; Neh. 9:25, 35; 13:31 [2 Esd. 19:25, 35; 23:31 LXX]; Pr. Man. 14 [Odes 12.14 LXX]; cf. Barn. 2.9), and the twin characteristics "righteousness and truth" are a persistent feature of his character both in Judaism and in early Christianity (e.g., Neh. 9:33 [2 Esd. 19:33 LXX]; Pss. 84:11 LXX [85:12 MT; 85:11 Eng.]; 95:13 LXX [96:13 MT, Eng.]; 118:75 [119:75 MT, Eng.]; Tob. 1:3; Rom. 3:4; Rev. 16:7; 19:2). Behind Paul's choice of these three terms, then, is probably the theme of the imitation of God that has surfaced more explicitly in 4:24 and 5:1.[4]

5:10 Paul now picks up his main thought again after the explanatory digression of verse 9. His readers should conduct themselves as children of the light, bearing the fruit of all goodness, righteousness, and truth, "by finding out [δοκιμάζοντες, *dokimazontes*] what is pleasing to the Lord" (cf. NRSV). Acting in goodness, righteousness, and truth is clearly pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ, but these are general terms that offer only a broad form of ethical guidance. Deciding what is benevolent, right, honest, and therefore pleasing to the Lord in any given situation is often complicated, and Paul recognizes this by qualifying his imperative to "walk" as children of the light with the participle δοκιμάζοντες.[5] The verb δοκιμάζω (*dokimazō*) could refer to trying out a new yoke of oxen to see whether they would perform as the purchaser expected (Luke 14:19), to examining religious utterances and claims to determine their authenticity and truth (1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 4:1; Did. 12.1), and to examining candidates for positions of leadership in the church to see whether they are qualified for service (1 Tim. 3:10; 1 Clem. 42.4). It referred, then, to the "exercise of critical judgment."[6] Here it refers to the believer's use of critical judgment to "find out" (NRSV) in any given situation what he or she should do.

This approach to ethics seems to have been a studied aspect of Paul's theological convictions.[7] Although he certainly handed on to those under his pastoral care a set body of ethical teaching (4:21–24; cf. 1 Thess. 4:1; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:17; Rom. 6:17), he also intentionally left room for believers to make decisions by using their own renewed thinking. "Do not be conformed to this age," he told the Romans, "but be transformed by the renewal of the mind that you might exercise critical judgment to find out [δοκιμάζειν, *dokimazein*] what is the will of God, what is good [τὸ ἀγαθόν, *to agathon*] and acceptable [εὐάρεστον, *euareston*] and perfect" (Rom. 12:2). Later he encourages the Roman Christians not to "judge" or "despise" one another over peripheral matters of religious observance. "Let each person be fully convinced in his

4. Cf. 1 John 1:5–7, where the imitation of God is developed specifically in terms of God's character as light.

5. This is how most commentators take the syntax, although Barth (1974: 569) and Schnackenburg (1991: 215, 217) give δοκιμάζοντες an imperatival nuance.

6. This translation comes from the rendering of Did. 12.1 in Ehrman 2003: 437.

7. I have argued this case more fully in Thielman 1995.

own mind," he advises (14:5; cf. Gal. 6:4; 1 Cor. 11:28; Phil. 1:10), and "Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves [δοκιμάζει, *dokimazei*]" (Rom. 14:22). Later still, Paul is somewhat apologetic about the ethical instruction he has felt compelled to give the Romans and assures them that he knows they are competent to decide for themselves how to behave: "But I myself am persuaded, my brothers [and sisters], that you are full of goodness [ἀγαθωσύνης, *agathōsynēs*], full of all knowledge, and able to instruct one another" (Rom. 15:14). At roughly the same time that Paul wrote Ephesians, he shows the same reticence to command Philemon to treat the slave Onesimus with love (v. 16) and send him back to Paul (vv. 13–14, 20–21). He tells Philemon that he is bold enough to order him to do this but that he prefers instead to appeal to Philemon to do "what is fitting" (τὸ ἀνῆκον, *to anēkon*; cf. Eph. 5:4) on the basis of his own loving disposition (vv. 7–9, 14; Thielman 2005: 390). In the same way, here in Ephesians Paul urges his readers to use discernment in deciding what is pleasing to the Lord—what counts as benevolent, righteous, and true—in any given situation.

5:11 Paul now turns to the negative counterpart of the positive command to walk as children of the light. His readers are not to "participate" (συγκοινωνεῖτε, *synkoinōneite*) in the "unfruitful [ἀκάρποις, *akarpois*] works of darkness." This admonition repeats the sentiment of 5:7, where Paul urged his readers not to be "sharers together with" (συμμέτοχοι, *symmetochoi*) "the sons of disobedience," whose behavior is marked by greed and sexual immorality (5:3–6). The terms συγκοινωνεῖτε and συμμέτοχοι both begin with the preposition σύν, and this suggests the incompatibility of participating both in the community of God's people, which Paul has also described with συν- compounds (2:5, 6, 19, 21–22; 3:6; 4:3, 16), and participating in the activities of those who practice the "works of darkness" (cf. Robinson 1904: 200).[8] The basic orientation of the two communities are as incompatible as light and darkness (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14).

The works of darkness, Paul says, are "unfruitful" (ἄκαρπος, *akarpos*). Like the light, darkness gives rise to activity, but unlike the light, whose activity bears fruit (v. 9), the activity of the darkness is not fruitful (cf. Rom. 6:21). In other words, it yields no profit and has no point (cf. Wis. 15:4; 4 Macc. 16:7; 1 Cor. 14:14; Titus 3:14; 2 Pet. 1:8). The thought is similar to that of Jude 12, where the futility of debauched behavior is also described as "unfruitful": "These stains on your love feasts [the false teachers] are those who banquet luxuriously together without fear, shepherding themselves. They are clouds without water, driven along by the winds, late autumn trees without fruit [ἄκαρπα]." The description of the works of darkness as unfruitful, then, is part of the theme of the futility of existence in the unbelieving world that Paul

8. Paul uses the noun συγκοινωνός to refer to those with a deep, spiritual involvement in God's people (Rom. 11:17), the gospel (1 Cor. 9:23), or the work of the gospel (Phil. 1:7). He uses the verb with this positive sense in Phil. 4:14. Cf. the use of both the noun and the verb first in a positive then in a negative sense in Rev. 1:9 and 18:4.

has already developed in 2:1–3 and 4:17–19. It stands in utter contrast to the purposeful, goal-oriented existence that characterizes the believing community because of its union with Christ (1:9–12; 2:19–22; 4:11–16).

Rather than participating in such futile activity, the believer's existence as light in the Lord leads him or her to ἐλέγχειν (*elenchein*) the unfruitful works of darkness. This term can mean simply to "uncover" something, such as the source of the Jordan River (Josephus, *J.W.* 3.512), but it was most commonly used to refer to the exposure of something evil (Josephus, *Life* 339), deceptive (Aristophanes, *Eccl.* 485), ugly (Philo, *Names* 198), or illegal (Josephus, *Ant.* 4.219, 281) that the perpetrator wanted to remain hidden, but that either through his or her own mistake (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.4, 253, 303) or through the evidence provided by another (P.Hib. 55; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.4) was nevertheless revealed.[9]

If darkness serves as a cloak for the deception, then light can expose it (John 3:20; Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 3.2.6). If fabricated evidence or specious argumentation hides the truth, these can be exposed by good counterevidence (Josephus, *Life* 360) or a solidly grounded argument (Philo, *Prelim. Studies* 18). Philo frequently uses this legal sense as a metaphor for the effect of the conscience on those who intentionally do wrong (*Confusion* 121; *Joseph* 262; *Spec. Laws* 1.235; *Virtues* 206; *Unchangeable* 128). In a way that is consistent with these more-complex negative meanings, the term can also mean simply "rebuke" or "reprove" and can carry this simple meaning both in the LXX (Gen. 31:42; 2 Chron. 26:20; Ps. 6:1 [6:2 LXX, MT]) and in the NT (Luke 3:19; 1 Tim. 5:20).

The term can also take on positive connotations, however, by referring to the action of pointing out error in order to correct it and put someone back on the right path. The LXX and the NT use the term this way to refer to God's fatherly discipline (2 Sam. 7:14; Prov. 3:11–12; Wis. 12:2; Sir. 18:13; Heb. 12:5–6; Rev. 3:19; cf. Philo, *Prelim. Studies* 177), to describe the helpful correction that the wise person could offer to others (Prov. 9:7–8), to depict the correction that one believer could offer others on the basis of authoritative tradition (2 Tim. 4:2 [cf. 3:16]; Titus 1:9; 2:15; cf. Titus 1:13), and to express the reconciling correction that those who were wronged could provide for those who wronged them (Lev. 19:17; Sir. 19:13–17; Matt. 18:5; Lutkemeyer 1946: 221–23). Paul can use the term this way of an unbeliever or inquirer who might enter an assembly of believers at worship and, because of prophecies uttered there, is "exposed [ἐλέγχεται, *elenchetai*] by all, called to account by all," has the "hidden things of his [or her] heart revealed," and is led to worship God (1 Cor. 14:24–25). Here exposure has the positive result of conversion.

Which of these many nuances of the term applies to Paul's use of it in Eph. 5:11? Since the implied object of ἐλέγχετε is "the unfruitful works of darkness" and not the people who do these deeds, and since he uses the term

9. It is difficult, then, to agree with Engberg-Pedersen (1989: 97–100) that the "single root idea" (1989: 97) of ἐλέγχω is to reveal a fault by means of confrontation.

in connection with the imagery of "light" and "darkness," Paul probably has in mind the exposure of the deeds themselves as the evil practices they are. He may be thinking of a counterresponse to the "empty words" of verse 6 that are used to justify sexual immorality and greed, or he may be referring to the perspective on unbelieving Gentile behavior that he has articulated in 4:17–19—that its origin lies in thinking that is futile, darkened, and ignorant. In either case, his emphasis falls on exposure: stripping sexual immorality and greed of the attractive veneer placed over these activities by those who practice them and revealing their true colors.

If this is correct, the debate among some interpreters over whether the deeds exposed belong to believers or unbelievers is misdirected.[10] The exposed deeds are simply activities that originate in and are cloaked by the "darkness" (σκότος, *skotos*) and therefore are characteristic of the unbelieving Gentiles of 4:17–19, who are "darkened [ἐσκοτωμένοι, *eskotōmenoi*] in their understanding" (4:18; cf. 6:12). That believers can fall into these deeds, perhaps as a result of deceptive teaching (5:6), is assumed by the admonition not to participate in them. It is the deeds, however, that are exposed as evil, not the people who practice them.

5:12 In 5:12–13 Paul expands on the two contrasting parts of 5:11. He gives the reason why (γάρ, *gar*, for) his readers should not participate in these deeds in 5:12, and in 5:13 he explains why they should be exposed.

First, then, Paul gives the reason why his readers should not participate in the unfruitful works of darkness. They are so evil, Paul says, that they are shameful even to mention. Does this imply that when believers expose the sins of others, they must not use words but only the contrast of their own good behavior? A number of commentators over the centuries have thought so (e.g., John of Damascus [*PG* 95:848]; Barth 1974: 570–72; Lincoln 1990: 330), but it is unlikely that Paul's language has this connotation. Just as with his admonition that sexual sins and greed must not even "be named" among God's people (v. 3), so here, Paul is exaggerating for the sake of emphasis: he is simply underlining how far out of bounds the behavior of some unbelievers lies (cf. 4:17–19; Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.2.8). The verb ἐλέγχω, moreover, has a verbal nuance (Hoehner 2002: 680). People are "exposed" when verbal evidence, whether written or oral, is presented against them. The activities that Paul describes here, then, are shameful even to mention for the same reason that those who do them seek to keep them secret: they are especially evil.

The way Paul expresses this draws his readers' attention not only to the unmentionable deeds themselves but also to those who do them. He says not merely, "It is shameful even to speak of the things done in secret" but also, "It is shameful even to speak of the things done by them [ὑπ' αὐτῶν, *hyp' autōn*] in secret." Actions rather than people have been the focal point since 5:8, and so the sudden introduction of those who do the actions with a pronoun whose

10. Believers: e.g., Gnilka 1971: 255–56; Best 1998: 492–94; Hoehner 2002: 679–80. Unbelievers: e.g., Schlier 1957: 239; Lincoln 1990: 329–30; Kreitzer 1998a: 54–55; O'Brien 1999: 371.

antecedent is not immediately obvious is somewhat obscure. To whom does the αὐτῶν of this verse refer? "The sons of disobedience" in 5:6–7 offers the only viable option, since they are the only outsiders mentioned in the context and Paul has admonished his readers not to participate in their conduct, just as he does here.[11] Those engaged in the unmentionable deeds of this verse, then, are unbelievers (*pace*, e.g., Best 1998: 495; Hoehner 2002: 679–82), people who have no inheritance in the kingdom of God and Christ (v. 5) and to whom the wrath of God is coming (v. 6).

In keeping with the imagery of exposing wrongdoing that would otherwise remain hidden, Paul describes the deeds of these unbelievers as done "in secret" (κρυφῇ, *kryphē*). Some interpreters have wondered why, if Paul is referring to unbelievers, he speaks of their conduct as done secretly. For example, Best (1998: 495) says that in 4:17–19, 22 the author of Ephesians hints that the conduct of unbelieving Gentiles was "unrestricted and blatant," so here it would make little sense to speak of unbelieving Gentiles engaging in secret misconduct. Instead, he thinks that errant believers are in view. They are trying to hide their conduct in order to escape notice and "loyal members of the community" must openly expose their misconduct (Best 1998: 495; cf. Hoehner 2002: 681).

Paul is not, however, describing the conduct of every Gentile unbeliever in 4:17–19, 22, and "the things done by them in secret" were probably done in secret either because those who did them were themselves ashamed or because the acts were viewed with such disgust in the wider society that public knowledge of them could damage one's reputation or position. Paul knew that, although many unbelieving Gentiles behaved shamelessly and with no qualms (4:17–19; Rom. 1:32), others had sensitive consciences that accused them of wrongdoing (Rom. 2:15–16; Engberg-Pedersen 1989: 108) and held to sexual boundaries that they considered disgraceful to cross (1 Cor. 5:1).

The writings of Greco-Roman moralists and philosophers confirm this. Quintilian could criticize Roman elites for holding banquets at which children were exposed to behavior "of which we should blush to speak [*pudenda dictu*]" (*Inst*. 1.2.8, trans. Butler 1966–69). Epictetus (Arrian, *Epict*. *diss*. 4.9) considered "disgraceful [αἰσχροί, *aischroi*] words, disgraceful [αἰσχρά, *aischra*] thoughts, and unseemly [ἀσχήμονα, *aschēmona*] deeds" to be a burden one should avoid (trans. W. Oldfather 1925–28). The context hints that he is talking about sexual matters.

This moral sensibility of unbelieving Gentiles seems to be the context of Paul's description of conversion in 1 Cor. 14:24–25. There the prophetic exposure of "the hidden things of the heart" (τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς καρδίας, *ta krypta tēs kardias*) in the worshiping community leads to conversion (Engberg-Pedersen 1989: 106–7). That these things are hidden because those who do them

11. Kreitzer (1998a: 55) astutely observes that "the use of personal pronouns 'we' and 'you' elsewhere in the letter is almost always inclusive language," making it that much more likely that the αὐτῶν in 5:12 is "a group *outside* the bounds of the church" (italics in original).

consider them to be shameful is clear from the judicial language Paul uses of their exposure: the unbeliever or inquirer who has hidden them "is exposed [ἐλέγχεται, *elenchetai*] by all, called to account [ἀνακρίνεται, *anakrinetai*] by all." The person is convicted and called to account because he or she is aware of violating a particular standard of conduct.

In Eph. 5:11–12, Paul's attention has not yet turned fully to conversion—it is still focused on exhorting believers not to participate in "the unfruitful works of darkness"—but the similar language of 1 Cor. 14:24–25 shows that he can easily speak of unbelievers as engaged in thoughts or activities that they consider to be shameful and try to hide.[12] Here in Eph. 5:12 the focus is on activity (τὰ . . . γινόμενα, *ta . . . ginomena*, the things done) rather than thoughts, and this, together with the reference to not even speaking about it, heightens the sense of its offensiveness. Paul, then, has narrowed his focus from a general reference to "the unfruitful works of darkness" (v. 11) to an especially evil class of those deeds, which, as Ellicott (1859: 120) put it long ago, "from their nature and infamy, shunned the light of day and of judgment" (cf. Eadie 1883: 384; Haupt 1902a: 199).

5:13 The δέ (*de*, but) signals a contrast that matches the second half of verse 11. Paul now explains further his admonition to his readers to "expose" (ἐλέγχω, *elenchō*) the unfruitful works of darkness, and—although this is not explicit—he seems to be providing a reason for that admonition. The reason lies in this principle: everything the light exposes becomes visible. A number of commentators attach the prepositional phrase ὑπὸ τοῦ φωτός (*hypo tou phōtos*, by the light) to φανεροῦται (*phaneroutai*, becomes visible), which would then yield the slightly more intelligible statement that everything exposed is made visible by the light. This is slightly more intelligible because, "on this construction," as Lincoln (1990: 331) puts it, "a move is more easily made from light as a reference to believers, which it has been up to this point in the passage, to light as a reference to Christ, which it becomes in v. 14b." Believers are engaged in the task of "exposing" the deeds of unbelievers (vv. 11, 13a), but now verse 13b opens the possibility that "the light" that makes visible is something other than Christians. The evil that Christians expose is made visible by the light, which, as we will discover in verse 14b, is Christ.

On this reading, the statement is certainly less redundant, and something like this is close to Paul's meaning, but it is improbable that the phrase ὑπὸ τοῦ φωτός goes with what comes after it (φανεροῦται) rather than what comes before it (ἐλεγχόμενα, *elenchomena*, being exposed). The preposition ὑπό (*hypo*, by) with the genitive appears three times in Ephesians, and in its other two occurrences (2:11; 5:12) it introduces a phrase that qualifies the preceding verb. Moreover, the term φῶς (*phōs*, light) appears again in verse 14a without referring to Christ, so the smooth transition from Christians as light (v. 8),

12. There is no need to become more specific and identify the activity with secret, sexually oriented religious rites (*pace* many earlier commentators and, more recently, Schlier 1957: 239 and Kreitzer 1998a).

to the possibility that someone else might be light (v. 13), to Christ as light (v. 14b) experiences a fatal detour before reaching its destination.

Paul, then, means that all the hidden and shameful deeds done by the disobedient are exposed by the light, that is, by believers, and so these deeds become visible. In what sense, and to whom, do they become visible? If we continue to interpret this text by means of 1 Cor. 14:24–25, then what becomes visible is apparently the inconsistency between the conduct and the convictions of the unbelievers whose unfruitful deeds are exposed.[13]

5:14a

Paul next explains why (γάρ, *gar*) it is important for the hidden sin of unbelievers to become visible: all that becomes visible is light. Some interpreters have found this statement disturbing. Abbott (1897: 156) insists, "A dark object shone upon does not become *lux* (the English word is ambiguous)" (cf. Eadie 1883: 386–87). These interpreters are then compelled to take φανερούμενον (*phaneroumenon*) as a middle-voice participle and translate, "Whatever makes manifest is light" (Abbott 1897: 156; cf. Eadie 1883: 387). Now we have the simple idea that light, by definition, is that which exposes darkness. As many others have observed, however, in the forty-eight other uses of φανερόω (*phaneroō*) in the NT (and one in the LXX), the term never appears in the middle voice, and Paul has just used the term in the preceding phrase in the passive voice. A middle sense here, then, is unlikely in the extreme.

Once again, however, 1 Cor. 14:24–25 comes to the rescue, this time combined with 2 Cor. 4:6 and the reference to believers as people who have moved from darkness to light in Eph. 5:8 (cf. Barth 1974: 574; O'Brien 1999: 372). Paul is speaking here of conversion—of the same transformation that his readers have experienced, according to verse 8. Just as they became light in the Lord, so now the people who stand behind the pronoun αὐτῶν (*autōn*, them) in verse 12 also move from darkness to light. Just as in 1 Cor. 14:24–25, the exposure of unbelievers by the discourse of believers has the salutary effect of exposing the truth about sin, and just as in 2 Cor. 4:6 God shines in hearts to produce knowledge about himself, and just as in verse 8 Paul has described the conversion of his readers as the movement from darkness to light, so here all that is made visible by the light is itself transformed into light. The term "light," then, is a metaphor for the believer here as it was in 5:8.

It is true that this understanding of 5:14a would be much clearer if Paul had said πᾶς . . . ὁ φανερούμενος (*pas . . . ho phaneroumenos*)—"every*one* who becomes visible is light," since by using the neuter expression πᾶν . . . τὸ φανερούμενον (*pan . . . to phaneroumenon*)—"every*thing* visible"—he seems still to be talking about the "things done" rather than those who do them. The movement between deeds and doers has been fluid from 5:8

13. If we accept Rom. 7:14–25 as an account, from a believer's perspective, of a moral unbeliever's struggle with the power of sin, then in that passage we can find a more extensive analysis of what it means for hidden and shameful deeds to be exposed (cf. Engberg-Pedersen 1989: 107–9).

to this point, however, and Paul will make clear immediately that he has people in mind when he reverts in his quotation to the language of personal address.

5:14b Paul supports his statement "everything visible is light" with a quotation that instructs an individual to wake up from sleep and rise from the dead, and then promises that Christ will shine on him or her.[14] It seems to be a piece of poetry, at least if we measure it by Hebrew rather than Greek standards: a Greek poet would not have started each line with a verb (Norden 1923: 257), and the lines cannot be scanned according to Greek poetical meter (Noack 1952: 52). In Jewish and early Christian liturgy, however, verbs regularly appear at the beginning of a clause, just as they do here (Norden 1923: 257–58),[15] and the parallelism of the first two clauses ("Get up, O sleeper, and rise from the dead") is reminiscent of the parallelism found in Hebrew poetry (Noack 1952: 52).[16]

Two questions have dominated discussion of this "very unusual formula," as Norden (1923: 257) calls it. The first is where it originated, and the second is why Paul introduced it with a phrase (διὸ λέγει, *dio legei*) that seems to indicate he thought it carried the authority of Scripture.

Both problems are solved if the quotation is a paraphrase of some passage of Scripture, and a number of interpreters from ancient times to the present have held various forms of this view. Most of these interpreters think that the passage involved was Isa. 60:1, although some have appealed to Isa. 26:19, a combination of Isa. 26:19 and Isa. 9:2, or even Jon. 1:6.[17]

The very variety in suggestions for the text that Paul was supposedly paraphrasing, however, shows the weakness in the theory. The verbal parallels, moreover, are not close, and, although Isa. 60:1 LXX does urge Jerusalem to "be enlightened" in the second-person singular, all three passages describe the transformation of a corporate entity—the people of God—rather than the transformation of an individual, as Eph. 5:14b seems to do with its second-person-singular imperatives.[18] Finally, as Abbott (1897: 156–57) said long ago, mention of Christ "is fatal to the idea of a quotation" from the OT.

14. That Paul is quoting is clear from the introductory quotation formula διὸ λέγει and the sudden switch from singular to plural verbs (Noack 1952: 52). On the unusual quotation formula διὸ λέγει, see both the remarks below and the comments on 4:8 above.

15. See, e.g., Isa. 37:17 LXX; 1 Tim. 3:16; Matt. 6:9; Did. 10.2–6 (Norden 1923: 254–58).

16. See, e.g., Ps. 43:24 LXX [44:24 MT; 44:23 Eng.]. Cf. Noack 1952: 53–54.

17. See, e.g., Hippolytus, who in *Comm. Dan.* 4.56.4 simply attributes the quotation to Isaiah (although in *Antichr.* 65 he seems to assume that it comes from an unidentified "prophet" distinct from Isaiah; cf. Origen [Heine 2002: 222]); Alford 1857: 128; Ellicott 1859: 121; and Eadie 1883: 389–90 (who assign it to Isa. 60:1). For Isa. 9:2 and 26:19, see the accounts of Eadie (1883: 389) and Jacobus (1897: 13–14) of the history of interpretation to their own day. Jacobus (1897: 21–29) himself proposes Jon. 1:6.

18. This consideration also weighs against the theory that the quotation is from a Christian hymn, which, in turn, derived its language from Isa. 26 and 60 (Moritz 1996: 97–116; cf. Abbott 1897: 158).

Other ancient interpreters proposed that the quotation came from a previously unknown prophecy, perhaps from Elijah, Jeremiah, or Enoch.[19] Jerome entertained this possibility but, in the end, wisely rejected it (Heine 2002: 223). The variety of names attached to the quotation once again counts against the idea: these early interpreters were probably casting around for an authoritative name to attach to unfamiliar material that they correctly sensed Paul was quoting in an authoritative manner.

In more recent times scholars have tried to locate the origin of the quotation in various ancient religious movements. Reitzenstein (1978: 61–62, cf. 398) suspected that it came from "a very early alchemistic writing" (cf. Fischer 1973: 143–44); Bultmann (1951: 175) thought it was "cast in quite Gnostic terms"; and Strecker (2000: 572) proposed that it was formed "under the influence of both similar Gnostic texts and traditions from the mystery cults" (cf. Conzelmann, *TDNT* 9:348).

Metaphorical talk of waking from sleep, resurrection from the dead, and enlightenment was, however, part of the religious atmosphere of the Middle East in antiquity and appears in a wide variety of contexts. It shows up in the sort of Jewish contexts where Christianity first flourished to describe, for example, the change that comes over the individual who joins the community of God's covenant people (1QH^a 11.19–22; 12.5–6, 23; Kuhn 1968: 129–30), the one who turns from idolatry to the worship of God (Jos. Asen. 8.10–11; cf. Berger 1995: 303), or the person who repents of long-standing sin (Pss. Sol. 16.1–4; Kuhn 1968: 127). This Jewish context probably accounts for Paul's use of light/darkness and death/life imagery to describe conversion (Gal. 2:19–20; 2 Cor. 4:4–6; Rom. 6:3–11), and it is probably also the context out of which Eph. 5:14b arose, with its talk of sleep, rising, death, resurrection, and light.

Although the quotation is not directly from the OT, then, it was probably composed within early Jewish Christianity. Its poetic structure, its use of metaphor, its reference to "Christ" (ὁ Χριστός, *ho Christos*, literally, the Messiah), and its occurrence within Ephesians, a text deeply indebted to the OT—all point in this direction.

If the quotation is not from what we know as the OT, however, why does Paul introduce it as if it carries the authority of Scripture? Paul's introductory formula makes clear that he thinks the quotation is as authoritative as any text of Scripture. Διὸ λέγει (*dio legei*, therefore it says) occurs three times in the NT: here, in 4:8, and in James 4:6 (cf. Heb. 3:7, 10; 10:5), and in all these uses it introduces a quotation or paraphrase of Scripture. Philo also frequently used the phrase this way (although most often in the passive voice; see the comments on 4:8 above). In addition, the present tense verb λέγει (*legei*, [he, she, or it] says) occurs thirty-five times in the Pauline corpus, and in all but three of these instances (1 Cor. 1:12; 12:3; 1 Tim. 4:1) it is connected with the

19. Elijah: Epiphanius, *Panarion* (F. Williams 1987: 333); Jeremiah: Euthalius (Dahl 2000: 248; cf. Schlier 1957: 240); Enoch: Codex Boernerianus (G; ninth cent.), marginal note (*ex secreto Henochi*, "from secret Enoch"; Schlier 1957: 240).

speech of Scripture. The reason for this is not far to seek: unlike most people or texts, Scripture continues to "speak" in the present because it remains authoritative despite its origins in the distant past (1 Cor. 9:9–10; Rom. 4:23–24; 15:4; cf. I. Marshall 1999: 537). Like Scripture, then, this quotation "speaks" (λέγει) to the present.

This should not come as a surprise. Already in Paul's time Christians were beginning to give scriptural authority to the words of Jesus and some elements of Christian teaching with no direct connection to "the Law and the Prophets and the others that followed them" (Sir. prologue 1–2 NRSV).[20] In 1 Cor. 2:9, for example, Paul signals an authoritative quotation with the words, "even as it is written," but then cites a text that, despite its echoes of several passages from the prophets, remains otherwise unknown (cf. Best 1998: 76, 497). In 1 Tim. 5:18 he couples a citation of Deut. 25:4 ("for the scripture says [λέγει]") with a word of Jesus as if the Jesus saying is also Scripture (cf. 1 Cor. 9:14; Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7; Did. 13.1–2). Perhaps most significantly for understanding Eph. 5:14b, in 1 Tim. 4:1 Paul introduces an utterance about the emergence of false teaching in the last times with the rubric, "The Spirit explicitly says [λέγει]. . . ." There is no obvious link here to the OT, but as λέγει indicates, this Spirit-inspired teaching carries the same authority as Scripture.

What is the origin of this new, authoritative voice? A Spirit-inspired psalm (cf. 1 Cor. 14:26)?[21] A fragment of a baptismal liturgy?[22] A hymn anticipating the imminent return of Christ and the final resurrection of the dead?[23] None of this is clear. Since Paul seems to assume that many in his wide audience will recognize the citation, he is probably not citing the kind of unwritten Spirit-inspired speech that 1 Cor. 14:26 describes. His quotation is a carefully crafted piece of early Jewish-Christian liturgy that was probably widely used in the first century but, like so much from that era, was later detached from its original context (John 7:53–8:11; Acts 20:35; Bruce 1974: 82–83) or completely lost (cf. Luke 1:1; John 21:25).[24]

The quotation appears to envision a preacher of the gospel calling the unbeliever, who is imagined as asleep and dead, to a resurrected life in which the light of Christ "will shine" (ἐπιφαύσει, *epiphausei*) on him or her.[25] The first

20. Barth 1974: 575; see also Sir. prol.8–10, 24–25; Luke 24:44.

21. Theodoret knew of interpreters who took this view (R. Hill 2001: 2.51). Was Severian of Gabala (Staab 1933: 311) one of them? Cf. John of Damascus (*PG* 95:848).

22. E.g., Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 90–91; Gnilka 1971: 260; Fischer 1973: 140–44; Schnackenburg 1991: 229; Best 1998: 499; Aletti 2001: 257.

23. Noack 1952: 61–62; Wedderburn 1987: 81–82; cf. Muddiman 2001: 242–43.

24. Clement of Alexandria (*Protr.* 9.84.2) may reproduce the continuation of the fragment when he adds to his own quotation of it the lines, "the sun of resurrection, the one begotten before the morning star, the one who grants life by his own light beams" (my trans.).

25. Ἐπιφαύσκω is a rare word that in biblical Greek appears only here and three times in Job (25:5; 31:26; 41:10 LXX [41:18 Eng.]). It seems to refer primarily to the shining of objects in the sky either directly (Job 25:5; 31:26) or by analogy (Job 41:10). For the metaphor of Christ as a shining astral body who gives inward illumination, cf. 2 Pet. 1:19.

two lines ("Get up, O sleeper, and rise from the dead") recall the language of 2:1, 5–6, where Paul describes his readers as formerly dead in their trespasses and sins and then made alive, raised, and seated together with Christ in the heavenly places. The third line ("and Christ will shine on you") recalls 5:8, where the light-dark imagery of the passage began, and which describes his readers' movement from their former existence, defined by darkness, to an existence defined by light.

Paul understands his quotation, then, as a description of conversion, and in this role, it explains the statement that everything illuminated is light. His logic runs like this: The lines from a well-known liturgy tell us that unbelievers should awake to the truth of the gospel and rise from their former lives of sin, and if they do this, Christ will shine his powerful light on them. This is how we know that every unbeliever illuminated by the gospel is transformed into light.

The quotation clarifies that from 5:11b onward Paul has been shifting his admonition from a passive to an active focus. He began by urging his readers not to participate in the works of darkness (5:3–11a), but then in 11b–14a he turned to the exposure of the deeds done by the sons of disobedience. Since the quotation is a call for the conversion of the individual, we now understand that Paul has been speaking of more than simply shaming people by revealing their hidden sins. The exposure of their unfruitful deeds of darkness can lead to their conversion, just as it does in 1 Cor. 14:24–25. They can be transformed from death to life and from darkness to light.

If this is correct, then the quotation makes a rather different point than 1 Thess. 5:4–11 and Rom. 13:11–14, despite the closeness of the language. Whereas in those texts Paul uses the imagery of sleep and wakefulness, light and darkness, day and night in order to admonish believers to be ready for the day of the Lord (cf. Mark 13:33–37; Matt. 24:42; 25:13), here the imagery urges the unbeliever to recognize that the day of the Lord has, in a sense, already come. It is a time for wakefulness, resurrection, and transformation through the blazing light of the Lord's Anointed.[26]

Summary

Ephesians 5:8–14 accomplishes two purposes in Paul's argument. First, it supplies a second reason (beyond experiencing the wrath of God) for

26. Wedderburn (1987: 81–82) argues that the quotation originally referred to the general resurrection of the dead on the last day but that the realized eschatology of the author of Ephesians has prompted him to shift its setting into the present. As others have observed, however, if the original quotation had referred to the general resurrection on the last day, we would expect its first two verbs to be plural and future (Fischer 1973: 141; Lincoln 1990: 319; Best 1998: 499–500). Muddiman's reply (2001: 242–43)—that perhaps the singular present-tense verbs are analogous to Rev. 1:17—does not solve the problem, since the metaphorical use of death there differs from its use here. Ephesians 5:14b must stand as an interesting piece of evidence that early Palestinian Christianity could speak in terms of a realized eschatology not unlike what we find in passages such as Col. 3:1–3; Eph. 2:5–6; and John 5:24–25.

avoiding sexual immorality and greed. This sort of conduct, Paul tells his readers, is as incompatible with their new existence as light is with darkness. The transformation they have experienced enables them to discern what is pleasing to God in the affairs of everyday life, and so their conduct ought to be marked by generosity, fairness, and honesty.

Second, Paul urges his readers to become agents of transformation for those whose lives are dominated by the darkness and the sterile and shameful behavior that comes from it. They should expose this behavior for what it is by training the light of the gospel on those who engage in it. When the gospel awakens people to the reality of their sinful condition, then Christ shines on them and they too become "light in the Lord."

Additional Notes

5:9. Some ancient witnesses read ὁ γὰρ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος instead of ὁ γὰρ καρπὸς τοῦ φωτός. Although this reading has the support of $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ and Ψ (whose text is Alexandrian) and 1912 and 104 (whose text is Western), it appears mainly in late Byzantine manuscripts. Φωτός has much broader support from the Alexandrian ($\mathfrak{P}^{49}$, ℵ, A, B, 33, 81), Western (D, F, G), and Byzantine (256, 1881, 1962, 2127, 2464) traditions. It is easy to see, moreover, how a scribe familiar with the expression ὁ . . . καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος from Gal. 5:22 could have accidentally substituted πνεύματος for φωτός (Metzger 1994: 540), especially since both here and in Gal. 5:22–23 ἀγαθωσύνη is identified as a fruit.

5:14. Perhaps the strangest textual variant in Ephesians occurs in the third line of the liturgical piece Paul quotes here. Instead of ἐπιφαύσει σοι ὁ Χριστός, some Western witnesses (e.g., D, two manuscripts of the Old Latin, Marius, Victorinus of Rome, Ambrosiaster) have ἐπιψαύσεις τοῦ Χριστοῦ (you will touch Christ). Chrysostom was aware of texts that had this reading, but rejected it (*Hom. Eph.*, hom. 18; *NPNF* 13:133; *PG* 62:122). Jerome describes attending a sermon where the preacher assumed the text read "ἐπιψαύσει, that is, 'Christ will touch you'" (Heine 2002: 224; cf. Robinson 1904: 119n1, 300), and Theodoret's text had this reading (ἐπιψαύσει σου ὁ Χριστός), although he preferred "Christ will shine on you" (*PG* 82:544; R. Hill 2001: 2.51). There is no doubt that ἐπιφαύσει σοι ὁ Χριστός is correct, as even these ancient interpreters realized, but how did the odd alternatives to this reading arise?

Several scholars comment that the reading arose from the legend that Adam's skull lay buried at Golgotha (e.g., Abbott 1897: 159; Haupt 1902a: 202–3n3; Metzger 1994: 540), and this is probably correct. Jerome's preacher, in an effort to entertain his audience with "a theatrical marvel" (Heine 2002: 224), claimed that when Christ was crucified, his blood and body "touched" the buried Adam. According to the preacher, this fulfilled the prophecy that says, "Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ *will touch* [ἐπιψαύσει] you." The audience was so delighted with this clever display that they applauded.[27] The same link between the legend and the quotation appears in Jerome's contemporary Epiphanius, but this time with the text of Ephesians quoted accurately (*Pan.* 46.5.8–9). Perhaps the association between the legend and the text began as we find it in Epiphanius, and then as the legend became more popular in the fourth and fifth centuries (with the help of some creative preaching), the text was actually changed to conform to the legend.

27. For Jerome's account of the legend, see the translations in Robinson 1904: 119n1 and Heine 2002: 224.

X. Avoiding and Transforming the Deeds of Darkness (5:3–14)
➤ XI. Wise Conduct within the Household (5:15–6:9)
XII. Standing against the Strategies of the Devil (6:10–20)
XIII. A Concluding Commendation and a Final Prayer-Wish (6:21–24)

XI. Wise Conduct within the Household (5:15–6:9)

Paul now provides a sustained description of the wise life of the believer, who lives in the realm of the Spirit. Up to this point, he has admonished his readers mainly through contrast: here is how you once lived (or here is how unbelieving Gentiles have always lived), Paul has told his readers, but your new way of life should look, in contrast, like this (4:17–5:14). Much of the emphasis, however, has fallen on describing the debauched way of life that pagans lead (4:17–19, 22, 25a, 28a, 29a, 31; 5:3–8a, 11–12). After a brief transitional section that continues this antithetical style (5:15–18), Paul moves into an entirely positive description of worship in the Christian community (5:19–20) and life in the Christian household (5:21–6:9). This is the life of wisdom lived within the sphere of the Spirit.

There is perhaps an implied sustained contrast here between the life of debauchery, particularly in sexual matters, that marks the lives of unbelieving pagans and the practices of corporate Christian worship and domestic life. Corporate Christian worship stands in contrast to corporate pagan activities such as banqueting, and the Christian home stands in contrast to the sexual immorality of the surrounding culture.

There was no neat separation between these activities, however, on either the pagan side or the Christian side. As we have seen in the comments on 5:3–14, ancient banqueting was well known for its sexual immorality, both in the bawdy songs and jokes that were uttered and in the activities that were pursued. Christian worship, like ancient banquets, took place in the households of the relatively wealthy and often included a meal (1 Cor. 11:17–34; Jude 12; 2 Pet. 2:13). Both in Corinth and elsewhere, Christian banqueting, from an early date, sometimes assumed a form that looked little different from the banquets of unbelievers, and some "Christians" even supported immoral behavior at such banquets with specious theological arguments (Jude 4, 8, 16, 19; 2 Pet. 2:1–3, 12–13, 18–19; 3:16–17; cf. Rev. 2:14, 20). If any of this lies in the background of the wise behavior in corporate worship and in the home that Paul describes in 5:15–6:9, then he was interested in the clear separation of the practices of the believers to whom he wrote from the symposia, convivia, and drinking parties of the wealthy, which had gained notoriety in the surrounding culture.

Paul's description of the wise life lived within the sphere controlled by the Spirit can be divided into four sections. The first section (5:15–20) stands apart from the other three sections. It briefly introduces the theme of walking in wisdom and in the sphere of the Spirit (5:15–18). This leads to an equally brief

treatment of the kind of corporate worship that results from being filled in the Spirit (5:19–20). In turn, this leads to the main concern of the entire passage: the submission of believers to one another in the household (5:21–6:9). Paul's treatment of this concern unfolds in the remaining three sections, the organization of which corresponds to an ancient division of the household into three primary relationships: wife and husband (5:21–33), children and parents (6:1–4), and slaves and masters (6:5–9).

The theme of wise conduct within the household binds the entire passage together. In light of the evil times in which believers live, Paul seems to say, they should center their households on the worship of God and on loving, heartfelt submission to one another.

A. Introduction: Wisdom and the Life Filled in the Spirit (5:15–20)

Paul begins his new body of positive advice by sounding a cautionary note. "The days are evil" (5:16; cf. 2:2), and therefore it is easy even for believers to be "wave-tossed and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human trickery, by cunning, in the service of the system of error" (4:14; cf. 6:11, 16). It is necessary, therefore, for believers to walk carefully (5:15), with wisdom (5:15), with understanding (5:17), and with lives that are fulfilled because they are lived in the sphere marked out by God's Spirit (5:18). As a result of living this way, the corporate worship of believers will include instructional singing to one another and to the Lord (5:19) and thanksgiving to God for all that he has done for believers through the Lord Jesus Christ (5:20).

The section can be divided into two parts. The first part (5:15–18) continues the contrast between the unbelieving and believing way of life that has characterized 5:3–14 but quickly gives way, in the second part (5:19–20), to a positive description of Christian worship. This second section lays the groundwork for the household code that follows in two ways: it shifts the readers' attention to the household since early Christian worship took place in houses, and it introduces a sustained positive tone that will continue, with only brief negative interruptions (5:29; 6:4, 6, 9), to the end of the household code.

Exegesis and Exposition

[15]Watch carefully therefore how you walk, not as unwise but as wise people, [16]by redeeming the time, because the days are evil. [17]Because of this, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. [18]Do not get drunk with wine, in which is debauchery, but be filled in the Spirit, [19]speaking among yourselves ⌜with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs⌝, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, [20]giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, ⌜who is also Father⌝.

5:15–16

Paul now issues a warning to his readers to walk carefully and wisely, and this warning arises out of what he has said in the previous section (οὖν, *oun*, therefore). Paul's readers should not participate in the activities of "the sons of disobedience" (5:6, 11) and should not be deceived by false teachers claiming otherwise (5:6).

"Therefore," he says, "watch carefully how you walk."[1] The emphasis may fall on the special care with which Paul's readers should walk because he is aware of the efforts of some people to deceive believers with the idea that those engaged in sexual immorality and greed will come to no harm (5:6). He is aware that his readers are engaged in a battle of the mind in which "human trickery" and "cunning" make false teaching look attractive (4:14), and the futile and darkened understanding of unbelieving Gentiles, which his readers once shared, can still pose a threat (4:17–19). His readers must walk through a mental minefield of ideas that, if they are not careful, will lead them to despair, shame, and the wrath of God (4:19; 5:6, 12). Therefore they should carefully watch their step.

Paul describes the care they should exercise in their behavior with two phrases. First, they should walk "not as unwise [ἄσοφοι, *asophoi*] but as wise [σοφοί, *sophoi*] people." So far in the letter the noun "wisdom" (σοφία, *sophia*) has referred either to God's wisdom (1:8; 3:10) or to the wisdom that God gives about his purposes for his people and for the universe (1:17). Here, however, the adjective "wise" describes the person who is skilled in "finding what is pleasing to the Lord" (5:10; cf. Rom. 16:19; James 3:13), just as the artisan is skilled in the practice of a particular craft.[2] Paul will repeat this thought in different terms in 5:17.

Second, they should also walk carefully "by redeeming the time" (ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρόν, *exagorazomenoi ton kairon*). The verb ἐξαγοράζω (*exagorazō*) can mean simply "buy" or "buy up," as when Nebuchadnezzar tells the dream interpreters of Babylon that, by asking him to tell them the content of the dream before they tell him its meaning, they are simply trying to "buy time" (Dan. 2:8 NETS). The verb can also mean to "buy" something "out" or "away" from some condition or situation, such as the law or its curse (Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Robinson 1904: 202; MHT 2:309). In the middle voice, it can refer to buying a slave's freedom with a dash of self-interest thrown in (Diodorus Siculus, *Biblio. hist.* 36.2a).[3] Here, then, Paul instructs his readers to "buy the time" away from (ἐκ, *ek*) something that has a grip on it.

What has a grip on the present time? He explains in the phrase "the days are evil." By this expression Paul means what he has already said in 2:2, that "the Course [αἰών, *aiōn*] of this world" is aligned with the devil (2:2; cf. 6:12–13). His readers are to buy the present time out of its slavery to evil and to use it instead in ways that are "pleasing to the Lord" (5:10).[4] Since Paul

1. For the idiom βλέπετε ἀκριβῶς (watch carefully), cf., e.g., Thucydides, *Pel. War* 1.134.1, where the historian describes how the magistrates of Sparta departed from their place of hiding "after listening carefully" (ἀκούσαντες . . . ἀκριβῶς) to an incriminating conversation.

2. See the LXX rendering of Exod. 28:3; 35:10, 25; 36:1; 1 Chron. 22:15 (LEH 561); and cf. Prov. 1:5.

3. "Wishing because of his affection for her to purchase the girl's freedom [ἐξαγοράσαι τὴν παιδίσκην]" (trans. C. Oldfather 1933–67). Cf. Origen's interpretation of the phrase ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρόν as buying "'the time' for ourselves" (Heine 2002: 225).

4. Severian of Gabala, who shared Paul's fluency in ancient Greek, explained the text this way: "The present time is enslaved to evil people; 'redeem' it to make full use of it for piety" (Severian of Gabala [Staab 1933: 311], my trans.).

will later speak of the present time in the singular as "the evil day" (6:13), the plural "days" is probably thoughtfully chosen here, and it fits well with the use of καιρός (*kairos*), which here means "a moment or period as especially appropriate" (BDAG 497). The business of buying time out of its slavery to evil takes place day by day, moment by moment, in the practical decisions of everyday life.

5:17 Because the days are evil, Paul says, his readers should not be foolish but understand the Lord's will. The phrase διὰ τοῦτο (*dia touto*, because of this) refers to the last clause of 5:16: the days are evil. Just as evil times supply the reason for redeeming the time (ὅτι, *hoti*, because), so they supply the reason (διὰ τοῦτο) for not being foolish but understanding the Lord's will. This means that redeeming the time and understanding the Lord's will stand parallel to and define each other. To understand (συνίημι, *syniēmi*) the Lord's will, and presumably to act on it, is to buy the present "time" out of its slavery to evil. The concept of understanding "what the will of the Lord is" is similar to the idea in 5:10 of "trying to find out what is pleasing to the Lord," and the whole thought is similar to the famous statement at the beginning of Proverbs, "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and good understanding [σύνεσις, *synesis*] belongs to all who practice it" (1:7 LXX, my trans.). Paul probably considers this a matter both of following the guidelines he has supplied in 4:25–5:14 and 5:21–6:20 and of using the renewed mind (4:23; cf. 1:17–18a) that has come through the Spirit at conversion (1:13) to discern how one should act in various complex ethical situations.

Paul believed that his readers lived in a world over which the devil and other evil spiritual powers had considerable influence (2:2; 6:12–13). He also believed that human beings were by nature "children of wrath" and only too willing to devote their thoughts to doing the desires of the flesh (2:3). In a world of such exterior and interior evil forces, it was especially critical to know the Lord's will and to make wise decisions about what it involved in one's day-to-day existence.

5:18 The prohibition μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ (*mē methyskesthe oinō*, do not get drunk with wine), together with its contrasting command to be filled with the Spirit, has seemed jarring and off-topic to a number of interpreters. Paul has been speaking in general terms of acting wisely or unwisely, and so a specific admonition to avoid drunkenness seems out of place. What can account for this?

Some interpreters have proposed that this specific admonition was prompted by a correspondingly specific problem among the letter's readers. One group of interpreters believes that the cult of Dionysus, which involved ritual drunkenness and frenzied behavior, has influenced the readers' behavior. In response, the letter's author urges his readers to understand the incompatibility of Christian worship, with its Spirit-filled utterances (5:19), and the wine-induced behavior of Bacchic rites (e.g., Preisker, *TDNT* 4:548). Other interpreters suggest that the Christian "agape feast" (Jude 12; 2 Pet. 2:13) has for the letter's readers become debauched by pagan practices of feasting (De Wette 1843: 149; Gnilka

1971: 269). Still others wonder whether the stress of living in "evil days" (5:16), or a libertine morality prompted by an overrealized eschatology, has led to drunkenness (Barth 1974: 581).

It is much more likely, however, that the author is simply reflecting a common concern with drunkenness in the ancient literature of moral exhortation. In his ethical instruction to Demonicus, for example, Isocrates warns Demonicus about becoming intoxicated at drinking parties: "For when the mind is impaired by wine, it is like chariots which have lost their drivers. . . . The soul stumbles again and again when the intellect is impaired" (Isocrates, *Demon*. 32, trans. Norlin 1928–29; cf. W. Wilson 2005: 114). In a Hellenistic Jewish context, the Greek translation of Proverbs 20:1 (cf. 23:19–21) warns that whoever gets mixed up with intemperate wine and outrageous drunkenness is not wise (σοφός, *sophos*), and later uses precisely the phrase that appears here in Ephesians to warn μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ (Prov. 23:31 LXX). The same phrase resurfaces in T. Jud. 14.1, again with a reference to the impact of wine on the mind's ability to make good ethical decisions: "Do not be drunk with wine, because wine perverts the mind from truth, arouses the impulses of desire, and leads the eyes into the path of error" (*OTP* 1:799). It thus seems to have been natural in literature that counseled people to use good ethical judgment also to counsel them to avoid heavy drinking, since drunkenness could seriously damage one's ability to make wise decisions about how to behave (cf. Darko 2008: 61–62).

If a specific cultural occasion where this might occur was in Paul's mind when he wrote this admonition, it may well have been the sort of lavish banqueting that sometimes gave rise to obscene speech, nonsensical babbling, and sexually suggestive humor (see the comments on 5:4 above; cf. Eadie 1883: 396–97; Gosnell 1993). This context would at least fit well with Paul's further comment that connects drunkenness with ἀσωτία (*asōtia*, debauchery), a term that "is very often associated with drinking binges during festivals" (Spicq, *TLNT* 1:220, citing 2 Macc. 6:4; Athenaeus, *Deipn*. 4.59–67; cf. 1 Pet. 4:4; Rom. 13:13).

Instead, Paul urges his readers, πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι (*plērousthe en pneumati*, be filled in the Spirit). As the five adverbial participles that qualify this phrase show, this positive command, and not the prohibition of drunkenness, is where Paul's emphasis lies (Fee 1994: 720). Since so much in the rest of the paragraph is built upon it syntactically, the phrase merits close scrutiny. Two questions are particularly important.

First, what does the verb's present tense signify? Does Paul want to say that his readers should be continually filled (Fee 1994: 720; Hoehner 2002: 704), or does the tense carry no special significance here (Best 1998: 508)? Best (1998: 508) is probably correct that the present-tense imperatives in the verse (μὴ μεθύσκεσθε, πληροῦσθε) carry no more of a continuous nuance than the present imperatives that appear from 4:25 up to this point. When Paul says, for example, that his readers should speak the truth, not let the sun set on their anger, steal no longer, and let no rotten speech come from their mouth, he is not especially emphasizing the ongoing nature of these actions,

and similarly there is probably no special stress on ceasing drunkenness or continuous filling here.

Second, what does the preposition ἐν mean in this phrase? Does Paul want his readers to be filled "with" the Spirit, meaning that the Spirit is the content that fills them (e.g., Best 1998: 508)? Does he want them to be filled "by" the Spirit, in the sense that the Spirit is the means by which their filling takes place (e.g., Robinson 1904: 204; Wallace 1996: 375; O'Brien 1999: 391–92; Hoehner 2002: 704)? Does he want them to be filled "in" either the human spirit (e.g., Origen [Heine 2002: 227]; Abbott 1897: 162; Westcott 1906: 81) or the Holy Spirit (Heil 2007b: 506–16), referring to the sphere in which their filling should take place? Some interpreters believe that a combination of these ideas is present: the Spirit is both the sphere in which one is filled and the content with which one is filled (Alford 1857: 130), or the Spirit is both the sphere in which one is filled and the means by which the filling takes place (Ellicott 1859: 124), or the Spirit is both the means and the content of the filling (Lincoln 1990: 344; Schnackenburg 1991: 237).

We can quickly rule out several of these options. As most interpreters now recognize, Paul probably does not refer to the human spirit here since every other time he uses the phrase ἐν πνεύματι in Ephesians, it refers to God's Spirit (2:22; 3:5; 6:18). In addition, the explanations that find a combination of meanings in the preposition should come into play only if a single meaning makes no sense, yet "with," "by," and "in" each provides a perfectly intelligible rendering of the phrase (cf. Hoehner 2002: 703–4).

If we seek help in the analogy that Paul seems to imply between the controlling influence of wine and the controlling influence of the Spirit, then "with" seems to be the most likely reading. Just as the drunken person is full of, and controlled by, wine, so the believer should be full of, and directed by, the Spirit.

Normally, however, the verb πληρόω (*plēroō*, fill) expresses the content of the filling with a genitive-case noun, just as the verb "fill" does in English: "The whole earth will be full [πληρωθήσεται, *plērōthēsetai*] of his glory [δόξης, *doxēs*]!" (Ps. 71:19 LXX, my trans. [72:19 MT, Eng.]).[5] Moreover, Paul seems to distinguish between the relationship of wine to drunkenness and the relationship of the Spirit to fullness by inserting the preposition ἐν into the qualifying phrase: "do not be drunk οἴνῳ," he says, but "be filled ἐν πνεύματι."

This leaves either "by the Spirit" or "in the Spirit" as the most likely options. If "by the Spirit" is correct, then the language would match fairly neatly Paul's talk elsewhere of walking "by the Spirit" (πνεύματι, *pneumati*; Gal. 5:16; cf. 5:25b) or "according to the Spirit" (κατὰ πνεῦμα, *kata pneuma*; Rom. 8:4; Fee 1994: 721). In these passages, the Spirit dwells in believers (Rom. 8:9; cf. Gal. 5:25a; Eph. 1:13; 2:22), but believers must cooperate with the Spirit's indwelling if they are to live in ways that are pleasing to the Lord and

5. The content of the filling can be expressed with an ἐν clause (Ign. *Smyrn.* prol.), but this is rare.

consistent with his will (Rom. 8:8; cf. Gal. 5:17–25; Eph. 5:10, 17). So here, Paul would be saying that believers should cooperate with the Spirit in their own filling, with the content of that filling left undefined. This explanation is not entirely satisfying, however, since Paul speaks here not of "living" or "walking" but of "being filled," and this takes place not πνεύματι or κατὰ πνεῦμα but ἐν πνεύματι.

For this reason, Heil's argument (2007b: 507) is probably correct that "the preposition 'in' (ἐν) refers to being within the dynamic realm or sphere established and characterized by having been given the Spirit." Three elements of Heil's case are particularly compelling. First, he argues that everywhere else Paul uses the verb πληρόω in Ephesians (1:23; 3:19; 4:10), Christ is the one who fills or the one by whom the filling takes place (Heil 2007b: 506–7). It is possible to quibble with Heil over whether God or Christ stands behind the passive forms of πληρόω in 1:23 and 3:19,[6] but he is correct that in none of the other three instances does the Spirit give fullness. This, as he says, makes it unlikely that the Spirit is the source or agent of the fullness here.

Second, he observes that when Paul qualifies drunkenness with the phrase ἐν ᾧ ἐστιν ἀσωτία (*en hō estin asōtia*, in which is debauchery), Paul is explaining the sphere in which drunkenness takes place. Since this phrase stands parallel to the phrase ἐν πνεύματι, it is likely that ἐν πνεύματι also describes the realm or sphere of its verb. Wine and the Spirit do not parallel each other as the instruments of drunkenness and filling. Instead, drunkenness takes place in the realm of debauchery, and the believer's filling takes place in the realm of the Spirit (Heil 2007b: 514–15).

Third, this understanding of the phrase is consistent with, and may be another aspect of, Paul's understanding of existence "in Christ" in Ephesians (e.g., 1:1, 3, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15; 2:6, 10, 13; 3:6; 4:32). Just as believers live in "the dynamic realm or sphere" of Christ, so they live in "the dynamic realm or sphere" whose boundaries are defined by the Spirit (Heil 2007b: 507, 516).

If this is correct, however, Paul has still left the agent and the content of the filling undefined. Who fills believers, and with what are they to be filled? In 3:19 Paul prays that his readers might "be filled up to all the fullness of God" and in 4:13 he describes the growth of the church until it becomes "a mature man" and reaches "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." God seems to be the source of the filling in 3:19, just as he is probably the source of Christ's fullness in 1:23, and the content of the fullness in 3:19 is probably the maturity that God wants the church to attain as it grows up to his fullness, or as 4:13 puts it, to the "fullness" of Christ's stature. Here in 5:18, Paul says similarly that his readers should cooperate with the growth that God supplies toward the maturity he created them to attain (cf. 2:10, 15).

6. Similarly, it is not clear that the expression ἐν πνεύματι or its equivalent elsewhere in the letter (2:18, 22; 3:5; 4:30; 6:18) *always* means "in the Spirit" (Heil 2007b: 5:11–514). It surely means this in 2:18, but the other references are more ambiguous.

5:19

Paul next says that as a result of their growth toward maturity in the realm of the Spirit (5:18; cf. 3:19; 4:13), his readers will meet together for praise of God and instruction. Paul expresses this in a series of participial constructions. The first of these, λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς (*lalountes heautois*, speaking among yourselves), is dependent on the phrase πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι (*plērousthe en pneumati*, be filled in the Spirit) in 5:18. One result of being filled in the Spirit is speaking to one another in the form of ψαλμοί (*psalmoi*, psalms), ὕμνοι (*hymnoi*, hymns), and ᾠδὰ πνευματικαί (*ōda pneumatikai*, spiritual songs).[7] Paul may have intended to contrast the crude singing typical of Greco-Roman feasting (e.g., Propertius, *Elegies* 4.6.85–86; Quintilian, *Inst*. 1.2.8; cf. D'Ambra 2007: 55) with the Spirit-inspired singing of corporate Christian worship (e.g., Eadie 1883: 399; Swete 1909: 241).

These three terms were used by Greek-speaking Jewish authors of roughly Paul's time to refer to songs of praise to God, including the songs in the canonical book of Psalms. In a fairly clear reference to the psalms of David, 2 Sam. 23:1 LXX says, "The psalms [ψαλμοί] of Israel are beautiful" (my trans.). Josephus tells us that David "composed songs [ᾠδάς] and hymns [ὕμνους] to God in varied meters" (*Ant*. 7.305, trans. Thackeray and Marcus 1926–81) and that when Judas Maccabaeus celebrated the rededication of the temple, he delighted the people and honored God "with hymns [ὕμνοις] and psalms [ψαλμοῖς]" (*Ant*. 12.323, my trans.).[8] Luke regularly uses the term ψαλμός for the material in the canonical book of Psalms (Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33), although Paul uses the same term to refer to a Spirit-inspired song that someone utters in a Christian assembly (1 Cor. 14:26; cf. 1 Cor. 14:15; James 5:13). Since the three terms seem almost interchangeable, and since Ephesians has a tendency to be redundant, it is probably a mistake to distinguish the terms sharply from one another (so correctly Gnilka 1971: 270; Lincoln 1990: 345; Schnackenburg 1991: 237). The adjective "spiritual," however, which is attached to the last term, "songs," probably does have special reference to the kind of spontaneous, Spirit-inspired singing to which 1 Cor. 14:15, 26 refer (Fee 1994: 653).[9]

All three kinds of singing are forms of "speaking" to one another within the worshiping community. Hymns in antiquity were sometimes in prose rather than poetic form and involved instruction as well as praise (Gordley 2007: 30–39), so the term "speaking" covers more than the singing of poetic compositions or utterances of praise to God. It also includes the kind of instruction that Paul assumes his readers have received, according to 4:20–21 (cf. Col. 3:16).

7. On λαλοῦντες as a participle of result (since it is present tense and follows the verb it modifies), see Wallace 1996: 639 and Hoehner 2002: 706.

8. Begg (2005: 288) restricts the reference in Josephus (*Ant*. 7.305) to 2 Sam. 22:2–51 and 23:1–7.

9. *Pace*, e.g., Lincoln (1990: 346), Schnackenburg (1991: 238), and Best (1998: 511), who think that the adjective πνευματικαῖς applies to all three nouns.

This musical speech is to be heartfelt and directed to the Lord. The two participles ᾄδοντες (*adontes*, singing) and ψάλλοντες (*psallontes*, making melody) are the verbal forms of the nouns ᾠδή (*ōdē*, song) and ψαλμός (*psalmos*, psalm). They stand parallel to λαλοῦντες and, like it, are subordinate to the main verb πληροῦσθε in 5:18 (Schnackenburg 1991: 238). They do not describe a separate action from "speaking" but give more detail about what this "speaking" involves. It involves singing and making melody "with the heart." This is the inner human being, where Christ dwells (3:17). It is the aspect of his readers' existence that Paul prays the Spirit would strengthen so that they might comprehend the vastness of Christ's love (3:16–19). This is also the faculty that Paul prays for God to enlighten, by means of his Spirit, so that they might understand the vastness of the blessings he has given them in Christ (1:17–23). It is "with the heart," then, that songs of praise for Christ's love and God's blessing through Christ are directed "to the Lord," that is, to Christ (cf. 5:20).

5:20 The participle εὐχαριστοῦντες (*eucharistountes*, giving thanks), like the three participles in the previous verse, is also subordinate to πληροῦσθε in 5:18. Thanks could certainly be given to God through singing (3 Macc. 7:16), but Paul may intend to shift the thought slightly to encourage corporate prayer. The only other use of the verb εὐχαριστέω (*eucharisteō*) in the letter refers to his own thanksgiving to God in prayer for his readers (1:16), and normally when people give thanks in the NT, they do so to God in prayer for some gift that he has given to them, such as food.[10] Paul views giving thanks to God as an obligation of all human beings (Rom. 1:21; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2:13), and thus, not surprisingly, giving thanks to God was part of corporate Christian worship (1 Cor. 14:16–17). It was an especially prominent part of the repeated observance of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:24), which, as early as the Didache (ca. AD 100), was called "the Eucharist" (ἡ εὐχαριστία, *hē eucharistia*; 9.1, 5; cf. Ign. *Phld*. 4; *Smyrn*. 8.1; Schnackenburg 1991: 238n27).

Paul frequently spoke in expansive terms of giving thanks to God, just as he does here: he can say that he "always" (πάντοτε) thanks God for the congregations to whom he writes (1 Thess. 1:2; 1 Cor. 1:4; Philem. 4; Col. 1:3; cf. 1 Thess. 2:13) and can urge his readers to be thankful "in everything" (ἐν παντί, *en panti*; 1 Thess. 5:18; cf. Col. 3:17). Here, then, he is probably thinking of thanksgiving prayers offered during corporate worship, and the reference to doing this "always for all things" (πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων, *pantote hyper pantōn*) is a typically Pauline way of saying that thanksgiving should be a constant theme. Those who are filled in the realm of the Spirit should generously and frequently express their thanks to God when they gather with others for worship. Perhaps Paul has in mind the context of Christian worship when he tells his readers in 5:4 to replace "obscenity," "nonsensical talk," and "suggestive witticism" with "thanksgiving" (εὐχαριστία).

10. See 1 Cor. 10:30; 2 Cor. 1:11; Rom. 1:8; 14:6; Col. 1:12; Mark 8:6 (Matt. 15:36; John 6:11, 23); Mark 14:23 (Matt. 26:27; Luke 22:17; 1 Cor. 11:24); Luke 18:11; 22:19; John 11:41; Acts 27:35; 28:15; Rev. 11:17.

Thanksgiving is given "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," a phrase that recalls the use of "the name of the LORD" to bless people in the OT (Deut. 21:5; 2 Sam. 6:18; 1 Chron. 16:2; Ps. 129:8). Paul, then, has used language to describe Jesus that in the OT is reserved for Yahweh, a move that is typical of the Christology of his other letters (cf. 2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Cor. 1:10; 5:3–4; Phil. 2:9–10; Fee 2007: 67–68, 135, 362). Jesus Christ is not identical with Yahweh, however, since thanksgiving is given in his name to "God, who is also Father" (τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί, *tō theō kai patri*). As the rest of the letter makes clear, God is the one who created the universe and who is now restoring it to its original unity in Christ (Eph. 1:10; 2:15; 3:9; 4:6). He is also the one whose fatherhood extends through his beloved Son Jesus to his chosen people (1:3–5). Blessings such as these, expressed so fully in the letter's opening benediction, were probably among the subjects that Paul had in mind when he spoke of those filled in the realm of the Spirit giving corporate thanks to God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Best 1998: 513).

Summary

In 5:15–20 Paul begins the transition to a body of positive, practical advice about how his readers should live within a culture dominated by evil. They cannot simply relax and hope for the best, but instead need to be alert to how they are living, perceptive about the condition of the world around them, and sensitive to the Lord's will. They should have nothing to do with the drunken debauchery that characterizes the prevailing culture but should live in the realm of the Spirit and grow in their maturity in Christ. As a result, they will gather with other Christians for instructional singing and for thanksgiving to God—the Father who has so richly blessed them through their union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Additional Notes

5:19. The phrase [ἐν] ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς comes with two primary textual problems. First, the preposition ἐν stands before the phrase in the two early Alexandrian manuscripts $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ and B and the later Alexandrian manuscripts P, 6, 33, and 1739. The evidence for including the preposition, then, is primarily Alexandrian. It is omitted in a range of manuscripts from the Alexandrian (א, A, Ψ), Western (D, F, G), and Byzantine (most) traditions. The diversity of witnesses to the text without the preposition probably means that a copyist added it, although this must have happened at a very early date (cf. Hoehner 2002: 707).

Second, $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ and B, two manuscripts of the Old Latin, and Ambrosiaster omit the adjective πνευματικαῖς at the end of the phrase. A wide geographical spread of witnesses, however, includes it. For example, א, Ψ, 33, 1739 (Alexandrian); D, F, G (Western); and the majority of Byzantine manuscripts have πνευματικαῖς. The internal evidence is evenly balanced. On one hand, it is easy to see how the wording of Col. 3:16 might have led a scribe to include the adjective, but on the other hand it is equally easy to see how a scribe's eye might have accidentally skipped over πνευματικαῖς since its final syllable (ΑΙΣ) is identical to the final syllable of the previous word (ᾠδαῖς; Metzger 1994: 540–41). The geographical diversity of the witnesses to the inclusion of the adjective should probably prevail, tipping the scale in favor of keeping πνευματικαῖς in the text. In addition, πνευματικαῖς

fits the context since Paul is explaining what happens in corporate worship when believers are filled in the realm of the Spirit (5:18).

5:20. Many English translations render the phrase τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί with "to God the Father," as if Paul had written τῷ θεῷ πατρί (cf. 6:23; Col. 3:17). By inserting καί into the phrase, however, Paul has placed special emphasis on God's identity not only as God but also as Father, and the translation "to God, who is also Father" tries to capture this emphasis.

The "Granville-Sharp" rule does apply to the phrase, but the rule is irrelevant to this particular problem (*pace* Hoehner 2002: 715).[11] The issue is not whether "God" and "Father" refer to the same person, something that is not in dispute, but how the καί should be interpreted (cf. Best 1998: 514).

11. The rule states that two personal, singular nouns linked by καί, neither of which is a proper name, refer to the same person even though the first noun has the article and the second noun does not (Wallace 1996: 271–72).

B. Submission in the Believing Household (5:21–6:9)

To begin a new major section of the epistle at this point may seem odd, since from a strictly grammatical perspective 5:21 sits in the middle of a sentence that runs from 5:18 to 5:22. The first term in this new section is the participle ὑποτασσόμενοι (*hypotassomenoi*, submitting), and grammatically speaking, it is simply the last of four participial elements that modify the phrase πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι (*plērousthe en pneumati*, be filled in the Spirit) in 5:18b. The grammatical structure of 5:18b–21 might be diagrammed this way:

Be filled in the Spirit,
speaking among yourselves with psalms, 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 God, who is also Father,
submitting [ὑποτασσόμενοι] to each other in the fear of Christ.

This final participial element, however, stands apart from the other three elements conceptually and begins a lengthy section of its own. The other three elements all cluster around the theme of corporate worship. As the plural reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοῖς (*heautois*, among yourselves; v. 19) shows, the setting envisioned in 5:18b–20 is of believers gathering together for instruction, singing, and grateful prayer. The admonition to submit to one another, however, takes the ethical instruction in the new direction of household conduct, and soon even the grammar will reveal that a new major section has begun: in 5:24 the verb ὑποτάσσω (*hypotassō*, submit) is repeated, but this time in the indicative mood as the main verb in a new sentence. The phrase "submitting to one another in the fear of Christ," then, functions at the same time as a transition from the previous section on corporate worship to the new section on submission and as a heading over the new section, indicating its primary concern—submission to one another in the household.

The transitional nature of the participle is important since in the ancient context of Ephesians the idea of Christians assembling together for worship and the idea of the household were closely connected. From Christianity's beginnings through the end of the second century, Christians met for corporate worship in houses, and it seems likely that those in charge of these households, as the hosts of the meetings within them, had a strong influence over what took place there (Balla 2003: 174; Osiek and MacDonald 2006). Because of this, the movement from a description of corporate worship among believers filled "in

the Spirit" to the subject of conduct within the household was natural. Since Paul addresses wives and husbands, children and fathers, slaves and masters directly, he probably envisions members of each group gathered within a house for worship and listening to this letter as it is read aloud.

The proper ordering of the household was a common topic in the philosophical and exhortatory literature of the Greco-Roman world. It was an important element in Plato's political philosophy, and his own discussion of the household shows that he was taking up a topic that was already part of philosophical tradition (Balch 1981: 25). Aristotle also discussed household management under the heading of how to govern the city-state. His views were adopted and published in the mid-first century BC by Arius Didymus, the court philosopher of Augustus, and they reappear in Stoic, Jewish, Neo-Pythagorean, and early Christian texts (Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 48–50; Balch 1981: 22–59; 1988: 25–47). Since the topic is so common in extant Greco-Roman literature, it is not surprising that the early Christian discussions of household management resemble those of the prevailing culture (Col. 3:18–4:1; 1 Pet. 2:13–3:7; cf. 1 Tim. 2:1–3:13; 6:1–2; Titus 1:5–9; 2:2–10; 3:1; Did. 4.9–11; Ign. *Pol.* 4–5; Pol. *Phil.* 4.2–6.3; Barn. 19.5, 7; 1 Clem. 1.3; 21.6–8).[1]

Among NT scholars, sections of early Christian literature that cover domestic conduct are often labeled "household code" material.[2] This body of ethical instruction has been the object of intense scholarly scrutiny since the early twentieth century, much of it focused on the ultimate sources of the early Christian household codes (Balch 1981: 1–10; 1988: 25–50; Wagener 1994: 15–65). Did they derive from the world of ancient political philosophy, where the family was considered to be an essential component of the city-state (e.g., Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.3 [1.1253b.1–14]; 1.12 [1.1259a.37–1259b.17]; e.g., Balch 1981)? Or from the concern of Stoic philosophers with one's "duty towards the gods, towards parents, towards brothers, towards my country, towards strangers" (Epictetus [Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 2.17.31], trans. W. Oldfather 1925–28; e.g., Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 48–50)? Or from a hypothetical set of traditions connected with the missionary work of Hellenistic Jews (cf., e.g., Philo, *Hypoth.* 7.1–9; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.190–219; Crouch 1972: 84–119)? Or from Greek collections of wise sayings, some of them having to do with the home (e.g., Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lib. ed.* 7e; Berger 1984: 135–41)?

One of the most influential explanations of the NT household codes sees them as primarily apologetic in character, a thesis that was argued by Balch (1981; 1988) with respect to 1 Peter. On this theory, the codes are best understood within the context of ancient political philosophy, where relationships within the household were sometimes linked in various ways with the government of the city-state. Plato (*Resp.* 4.433a–d), for example, claimed that justice

1. See especially Darko 2008, who, however, seems to exaggerate the extent to which the Ephesian household code fits comfortably into the world of Greco-Roman moral discourse.

2. The term goes back to Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*, which contains a section on "Die Haus Tafel" (Luz 1998: 233).

was essential to governing the state, that justice, by definition, involved each person performing his or her assigned task, and that the city-state worked best when this sense of justice was internalized. This internalization of one's assigned place was particularly helpful when it occurred within "child, woman, slave, free, artisan, ruler, and ruled" (trans. Shorey 1930–35; cf. Balch 1981: 24). Plato's ideas on the justice of a household arrangement—where parents rank above their children and masters above their slaves, and the connection of this household structure to the government of the city—was already traditional by Plato's time, argues Balch (Plato, *Leg.* 627; Balch 1981: 24–25).

Aristotle (*Pol.* 1.3 [1.1253b.1–3]) also discussed "the management of the household" (οἰκονομία, *oikonomia*) as part of political philosophy, "for every state," he said, "is composed of households [οἰκιῶν, *oikiōn*]" (trans. Rackham 1990). He organized the household in a way that is reminiscent of the household codes in Col. 3:18–4:1 and Eph. 5:22–6:9: "The investigation of everything should begin with its smallest parts, and the primary and smallest parts of the household are master and slave, husband and wife, father and children; we ought therefore to examine the proper constitution and character of each of these three relationships" (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.3 [1.1253b.1–9], trans. Rackham 1990; Balch 1981: 33).

This link between the state and the household—with the household defined in terms of a man's relationship to wife, children, and slaves—continued to be important in discussions of domestic ethics for centuries after Plato and Aristotle. It was well known to Arius Didymus, the friend and court philosopher of Caesar Augustus in the first century BC, and reappears in Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. rom.* 2.25.4–5; 2.26.1, 3–4), Philo (*Joseph* 38–39; *Spec. Laws* 2.225–27; 3.169–71; *Decalogue* 165–67), and Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 2.199), among others (Balch 1981: 40–43, 52–55).

Balch claims that Philo, Josephus, and the author of 1 Peter all used the Aristotelian household pattern in the first century to refute claims that their religious convictions were socially and politically subversive. Against opponents who said that Judaism undermined Roman marriage customs, Philo and Josephus argued that the Mosaic law supported the subordination of wives to husbands (Balch 1981: 74–76). Against the slanders of unbelievers (1 Pet. 2:11–12; 3:15–16), the author of 1 Peter urges the wives and slaves among his readers to fulfill societal expectations that they should be subordinate to their husbands and masters (2:13–3:7; Balch 1981: 81–116).

This understanding of the origin and late first-century use of the household codes has also influenced the interpretation of Ephesians. M. Y. MacDonald (2000), for example, acknowledges that there is no explicit indication of an apologetic purpose for the household code in Eph. 5:21–6:9. Nevertheless, she believes that Ephesians was written in a time and place where Christians were thought to be a social threat, and that the household code was part of a strategy to deal with this threat. It articulates a vision of the Christian home that outwardly looks no different from the highest societal expectations of the day but internally is radically different. Outwardly, Ephesians pictures the

Christian paterfamilias as ruling benevolently over wife, children, and slaves according to prevailing cultural expectations, but inwardly the submission of the wife to the husband becomes a metaphor for the submission of the church to Christ. By identifying the wife with the church body, of which Christ is the head, moreover, the author of Ephesians detaches both the Christian home, and the church that meets there, from society and gives it a glorious place alongside the ascended Christ (5:23; cf. 1:19–23; 2:6). This strategy makes the church less visible within its hostile environment at the same time that it retains for the church a sense of separation from pagan society, with its futile way of life and darkened understanding (4:17–5:20; MacDonald 2000: 159–69; 337–38; Osiek and MacDonald 2006: 118–43; cf. Merz 2000: 132, 146).

There is certainly historical precedent for this way of understanding the household code in Ephesians. Hellenized Jews, such as Josephus and Philo, used the prevailing Greco-Roman household ideology to ease tensions between Jews and the societies in which they had to live (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.199–214; Philo, *Decalogue* 165–67; Barclay 2007: lii). Pseudo-Phocylides (175–227) probably used a "household code" in a similar but less defensive way to show Jewish readers that their traditional customs were compatible with the best ethical teaching of the Hellenistic world (W. Wilson 2005: 3–8). A good case can be made for viewing the household material in 1 Peter as part of an apologetic strategy for marginalized Christians.

The household code in Ephesians, however, is probably not part of a strategy to ease tensions between the church and society. Unlike 1 Peter (2:15; 3:1), Ephesians makes no attempt to link domestic ethics to either defending or promoting the faith among unbelievers (cf. Darko 2008: 99–100). How, then, does the household code function in Ephesians?

First, it continues the practical ethical instruction that has been the theme since 4:17. Paul needed no special reasons for including instruction on the household within this material. Household instruction following the three-pair pattern of husband-wife, parents-children, master-slave was commonly known for centuries on either side of the New Testament (Balch 1981: 21–62; 1988: 27). It was considered to be a normal topic for paraenetic or preceptorial advice in the first century (Seneca, *Ep.* 94.1), and it was natural—even expected—that Paul should include it in the letter at this point (cf. Col. 3:18–4:1).

Second, Paul wanted to use the first topic of the household code, marriage, to illustrate the close relationship between Christ and the church, a major theme in the first part of the letter. The ideas that Christ is the head of the church, that the church is Christ's body, and that Christ works sacrificially for the benefit of the church—all these were important in 1:3–4:16. Paul now weaves these themes back into his moral instruction, and carries them further, by means of the household code (Osiek and MacDonald 2006: 126–31).

Scholars have often seen the use of the household code in Ephesians as a problem for the view that Ephesians is a genuine letter from Paul. Some believe that the code represents a post-Pauline stage in the effort to tame an early-Christian, Spirit-prompted emphasis on complete social equality within the

church, an impulse visible in such texts as Gal. 3:28 (e.g., Crouch 1972: 120–45). Many see it as part of a more general trend in postapostolic Christianity to accommodate Christian ethics to prevailing societal structures (e.g., Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 48; Lincoln 1990: 360, 398; MacDonald 2000: 338).

Best believes that it betrays a level of idealism inconsistent with the genuine Paul's pastoral sensitivity to conditions in the real world. The household code in Ephesians, he argues, pictures its readers living in entirely Christian households, whereas the authentic Paul understood the complex pastoral problems that come with the often-mixed households in which believers lived (Best 1997a: 193–94).

In the end, however, none of these arguments is compelling. It is difficult to see much development between the tone of the advice in 1 Thess. 4:11, "to aspire to live quietly and be busy with your own affairs and to work with your own hands," and the tone of the household code here. The Paul of the undisputed letters, moreover, is as happy as the author of Ephesians to provide an ideal picture of those in authority in the course of an argument that his readers should submit to them (Rom. 13:1–7).

In Ephesians, then, the household code continues the kind of basic moral instruction that Paul believes is necessary for a wide audience of Gentile believers, at least some of whom badly need moral instruction. Prior to hearing and believing the gospel, they lived by "the cravings of" their "flesh" (2:3), were "without God in the world" (2:12), and blindly groped their way through a debauched existence (4:17–19). In the household code, he fashions advice on how those who have left that path should live now that they have been radically changed by the gospel. The framework for this advice arises from the first-century Greco-Roman environment in which Paul and his readers live, but he infuses that framework with the theology of the letter's first three chapters.

1. Wives and Husbands (5:21–33)

Paul organizes his household instruction under three headings: wives and husbands, children and fathers, slaves and masters (cf. Col. 3:18–4:1). Unlike much household instruction from antiquity, Paul addresses the subordinate member of each pair directly. The subordinate members of each pair are not people who need to be managed for the benefit of the male household head, but members of the people of God, gifted for service (cf. 4:11–16) and in need of instruction on how to live in a way that is pleasing to God within the societal categories they occupy. Paul probably imagines both wives and husbands gathered with other believers within a house for worship and listening to his instruction as it is read aloud (cf. 5:19–20).

Paul's instructions to wives and husbands is much longer than his advice to the other two pairs. The reason for this is probably twofold.

First, sexual ethics have figured prominently in the admonitions given so far and have taken a negative tone (4:19, 22, 29; 5:3–14). Here Paul provides a positive counterpart to those warnings against sexual perversion. The answer to sexual debauchery is not asceticism (cf. 1 Tim. 4:3) but keeping sexual relations within marriage, as God intended from the beginning when he created human beings in two genders.[1]

Second, unlike the other two pairs of relationships, the relationship between wife and husband portrays the relationship between the church and Christ. This theme of Christ's benevolent authority over the church was richly developed in the first part of the letter by using the extended metaphor of a body and its head. In 1:22–23 Paul has said that Christ is the head over all things for the benefit of the church, which is his body. Then in 4:7–16 Christ becomes the head especially of his church body. In this role Christ supplies all that the body needs in order to grow to maturity and function smoothly. Now we learn that God has instituted marriage at creation "on account of" this relationship between the church and Christ (5:31). When the wife submits to the husband as her head (5:21–24), and when the husband loves, gives his life for, cherishes, and cares for his wife (5:25–29a), then their union with each other depicts the union between Christ and the church

1. Cf. Merz (2000), who thinks, however, that Ephesians is a pseudonymous, post-Pauline response to ascetic tendencies arising from contradictions in the authentic Pauline tradition (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:3–6, 11–12). As 1 Corinthians shows, both sexual debauchery (5:1–13; 6:12–20) and sexual asceticism (7:5) could occur within Christian congregations well within Paul's lifetime, and Paul's supposedly contradictory statements on the relationship between men and women reflect the complexity of the situation he addresses in Corinth rather than confusion in his own thinking.

(5:29b–31). That human marriage has this significance, Paul concludes, is a "great mystery" (5:32)—something that would have been unknown if God had not revealed it. It is probably because of the unusual significance of this particular relationship that Paul treats it first among the household pairs, and at greatest length.

Paul weaves this complex theology with straightforward ethical instruction throughout the section. His instruction to wives begins (5:21–22) and ends (5:24b) with practical encouragement to submit to their husbands, but sandwiched between these two admonitions is the comparison between Christ's saving authority over the church and the husband's authority over the wife (5:22–23a). Similarly, his instruction to husbands begins (5:25a) and ends (5:33a–b) with the practical admonition to them to love their wives and is punctuated in the middle (5:28–29a) with a relatively lengthy description of what this means in practical terms. Again, however, the comparison between Christ's self-giving love for the church and the husband's love for his wife appears between these layers of practical advice.

Paul's main concern throughout the section, both in practical and theological terms, is with the husband's love for his wife and Christ's love for the church. This is clear not only from the relative length of the material devoted to wives and husbands, but also from the summary of Paul's practical advice to both in 5:33. Both the rhetorical forcefulness and the number of words in that concluding statement devoted to the husband's love for his wife (5:33a–b) outweigh the delicately phrased and brief admonition to the wife to fear her husband (5:33c). Paul places the burden of this section on the husband, whose headship must be expressed not in managing his wife but in meeting her physical and emotional needs (5:29), in short, in giving his own life for hers (5:25).

Exegesis and Exposition

[21]Submitting to one another in the fear of Christ, [22]wives ⌜ ⌝ to your own husbands as to the Lord [23]because the husband is the head of the wife in the same way that Christ is head of the church—he himself is Savior of the body. [24]But as the church submits to Christ, so also wives to husbands in everything.

[25]Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her [26]that he might sanctify her by means of cleansing [her] with the water bath in the word [27]⌜that he might present⌝ the church to himself as brilliant, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she might be holy and blameless. [28]So husbands are obligated to love their own wives as their own bodies. The one who loves his own wife loves himself. [29]For no one ever hated his own flesh, but he cares for and cherishes it just as Christ also did for the church [30]because we are parts of his body ⌜ ⌝. [31]On account of this, a man will leave his father and his mother and will cling to his wife, and the two will be one flesh. [32]This mystery is great, but I am talking about

Christ and the church. [33]In any case, you too—every single one of you—must love his own wife in this way: as himself. And the wife should fear her husband.

5:21 Some commentators (e.g., Best 1998: 515–16) attach this verse to the previous section, and the grammatical structure of the passage certainly supports this view. Ὑποτασσόμενοι (*hypotassomenoi*, submitting) is one of a string of five participles in 5:19–21 that qualify πληροῦσθε (*plērousthe*, be filled), and so at one level it makes sense to see "submitting to one another" as a description of yet another result of being filled in the sphere of the Spirit: those who are filled in the Spirit not only speak, sing, make melody, and give thanks in corporate worship; they also submit to one another in the fear of Christ.

The theme of submission, however, dominates the household code that follows, reappearing not only where the term ὑποτάσσω (*hypotassō*, submit) itself is implied (5:22) or used (5:24), but also where the concepts of fear (5:33; 6:5), honor (6:2), and obedience (6:1, 5) show up. The grammatical attachment of the participle to the previous section eases the transition to the new section, but the substance of the verse, with its focus on submission, means that it is best taken with what follows and should be understood as an introduction to it (cf. Dawes 1998: 18–21).

This transitional "messiness" is perhaps another signal of the oral nature of this text. Paul was composing his text as he dictated it, although with a traditional outline of household duties in mind.

The verb ὑποτάσσω refers to the ordering of something underneath something else, and when the passive voice of the verb is used of people (as it is here), it often refers to the voluntary "submission" of one person to another (BDAG 1042). People should place their minds underneath God's authority (but often do not do this; Rom. 8:7; cf. 10:3); people should place themselves under the divinely ordained governmental authorities (Rom. 13:1, 5; Titus 3:1); the Corinthian church should submit to the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. 16:16); wives should, similarly, submit themselves to their husbands (Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5), and slaves should do the same with respect to their masters (Titus 2:9).

How is it possible to submit in this way "to one another" (ἀλλήλοις, *allēlois*)? Certainly it seems impossible for God or governmental authorities to submit to their subjects just as their subjects submit to them, and Paul proceeds in the household code that follows 5:21 to speak of the submission and obedience only of wives, children, and slaves, not of husbands, parents, and masters. Interpreters have tried to explain this problem in basically three ways.

First, some have thought that "submitting to one another" refers to mutual submission and states the author's real view, but that the traditional pattern of subordination in the household code contradicts this view. The author allows an inconsistently authoritarian ethic from the tradition that he uses to slip through his editorial net, but the mutuality expressed in 5:21 "reveals where

the writer's real interest lies" (Muddiman 2001: 254, 257; cf. Schnackenburg 1991: 245).

Second, some have thought that in 5:21 the topic of submission is announced and that in 5:22–6:9 Paul gives illustrations of how this submission "to one another" should work. The pronoun ἀλλήλοις does not mean that all believers are to submit to all other believers but that, among believers, submission should take place as it is described in 5:22–6:9. Theodoret had already taken this position in the fifth century (R. Hill 2001: 2.52), and it has been taken by many others since then (e.g., Ellicott 1859: 126; Robinson 1904: 123; O'Brien 1999: 401–4; Hoehner 2002: 717; Walden 2003: 254).

Third, some have understood Paul to be saying that there is a sense in which even those in authority "submit" to their subordinates. If Paul, who considered himself to be an authoritative apostle, could speak of becoming a slave (δουλόω, *douloō*) to all (1 Cor. 9:19), and could command all the Galatian Christians to "serve as each other's slave [δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις, *douleuete allēlois*] through love" (Gal. 5:13), then he could also speak both of "submitting to one another" and of exercising authority without contradiction (Jerome [Heine 2002]: 231). "Even kings and governors," says Calvin (1965: 204), "rule that they may serve." In the household code that follows 5:21, then, there is a sense in which husbands, fathers, and masters submit to those over whom they have authority, although the terms ὑποτάσσω or ὑπακούω (*hypakouō*) are not used of their responsibilities. Although the head of the household retains his position of authority, his use of that authority is tempered by an attitude of service to those over whom he has been placed (cf. Eadie 1883: 407; Bruce 1984: 382; Lincoln 1990: 366; Best 1998: 516–17; Helton 2005: 33–41).

The first explanation has little to be said for it. The author's own approach to the traditional household code is deeply etched into his version of it (5:25–30; 6:4, 9), and this makes it unlikely that he would have carelessly allowed a contradictory note of authoritarianism to remain unchanged.

The second explanation is much more likely, and it has the great merit of assigning to the term ὑποτάσσω its normal meaning of "accepting the exact place God has assigned, keeping to one's rank in this or that society, accepting a dependent status" (Spicq, *TLNT* 3:425). Advocates of this approach are correct to say that the mere occurrence of the reciprocal pronoun in the phrase "submitting to one another" poses no difficulty for their position: the term ἀλλήλων does not need to refer to an action that everyone does to everyone else (e.g., Gal. 6:2; Rev. 6:4; O'Brien 1999: 403).

Still, the third explanation is best. Paul's use of the notion of reciprocity so far in Ephesians leads the letter's readers to understand the pronoun here in a fully reciprocal sense. The letter has just spoken of bearing with "each other" (4:2), being members of "one another" (4:25), and being kind to "one another" (4:32), using ἀλλήλων in each case to refer to expectations of all believers. To hear now of "submitting to one another" might seem slightly strange, but it does hint that there is a sense in which everyone is involved in serving others.

That this idea would not be unintelligible is clear from 1 Cor. 16:15–16.[2] There Paul says that the members of Stephanas's household in Corinth "placed themselves at the service of the saints" (εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς, *eis diakonian tois hagiois etaxan heautous*). He then urges the Corinthian believers generally to "submit [ὑποτάσσησθε, *hypotassēsthe*] to such people." There may be a difference between placing oneself in the service (εἰς διακονίαν . . . τάσσω, *eis diakonian . . . tassō*) of others and submitting to others (ὑποτάσσω), but it is not large.

The submission of those mentioned in the household code is not the same type in each instance—in the code itself, husbands, fathers, and masters are never told to submit to, obey, or fear their wives, children, and slaves—but the instructions to the head of the household do rein in his power, and the entire code closes with a sober warning that he too is under the authority of God, who is no respecter of persons (Eph. 6:9). The mutuality of the code and the restraint that it places on the one in authority make it likely that the odd expression "submit to one another" means more than simply "obey whom you are supposed to" (trans. Walden 2003: 254). It certainly includes this meaning, but it also prepares the ground for the distinctive approach that the household code takes to the responsibilities of husbands, fathers, and masters.

The concluding phrase urges the letter's readers to submit to one another in the φόβος (*phobos*) that Christ's position of authority demands.[3] Φόβος can be used negatively to mean "intimidation" (e.g., 1 Pet. 3:14), something that produces fear (e.g., Rom. 13:3), or "fear" itself (e.g., 2 Cor. 7:5).[4] It can also have the positive connotation of showing respect to someone who, because of their position of authority or power, deserves obedience or deference (e.g., Rom. 13:7; Eph. 6:5; 1 Pet. 2:18; 3:2, 15). In both the LXX and NT, φόβος is considered an appropriate attitude to have toward God (e.g., Pss. 33:12 LXX [34:11 MT, Eng.]; 35:2 LXX [36:2 MT; 36:1 Eng.]; 2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 3:18).[5] In 2 Cor. 5:10–11 the fear of Christ is linked to the day when "all of us will appear before the judgment seat of Christ," but in Rom. 8:15 Paul says that because God is the father of believers, they do not need to fear him as a slave would fear a master (cf. 1 John 4:18).

The fear of Christ that motivates believers to submit to one another, then, is something more than deference but less than terror (Hoehner 2002: 719).

2. This is also clear from Origen's comments on 5:21. He read the text in his native language and found no apparent difficulty in applying it to everyone (Heine 2002: 231).

3. Χριστοῦ should be understood as an objective genitive.

4. For the meaning of φόβος, I have depended heavily on BDAG 1062.

5. These two kinds of fear were well understood in Greco-Roman moral discourse and would have been fully intelligible to Paul's readers, whatever their level of familiarity with the OT. See, e.g., Pseudo-Aristotle, *Oec.* 3.3 [3.144.25–145.1]:

> For of fear there are two kinds. The fear which virtuous and honourable sons feel towards their fathers, and loyal citizens towards righteous minded rulers, has for its companions reverence and modesty; but the other kind, felt by slaves for masters and by subjects for despots who treat them with injustice and wrong, is associated with hostility and hatred. (trans. Tredennick and Armstrong 1935)

It seems to be a respect for Christ, to whom God has subjected (ὑπέταξεν, *hypetaxen*) all the inimical powers of the universe (1:22; 4:8–10), and as a consequence of his position, a fear of disobeying him. Since Christ's self-sacrificing grace and love (1:7; 5:2, 25) are integral to his position of authority, however, this appropriate fear must be tempered with a knowledge of the incomprehensible vastness of his love (3:18–19).

5:22

Paul begins his version of the household code, just as he does in Colossians (3:18), with instructions to wives, and this initiates a pattern he will follow throughout the code. Paul does not simply issue instructions to the male head of the household about how he should govern his estate (as in Ps.-Phoc. 195–227), nor does he discuss "household management" as an abstract philosophical topic (as in Aristotle, *Pol*. 1.1–13 [1.1252a.1–1260b.24]; Josephus, *Ag. Ap*. 199–206); instead he gives instructions to each member of the three traditional pairs, and in each case he begins with the subordinate member of the pair. Wives are addressed as equal to husbands in the responsibility they bear for their behavior. This approach is certainly not unprecedented in Greco-Roman moral discourse (cf. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Oec*. 3.140–47), but Paul's understanding of the equality of men and women owes more to the OT than to these discussions (cf. 5:31; 6:2; Gen. 2:24; Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16)

The responsibility that Paul emphasizes here is the submissiveness of wives to their husbands. Some form of the verb ὑποτασσόμενοι (*hypotassomenoi*) in 5:21 must be mentally supplied to make sense of the statement (cf. 5:24). The lack of an explicit verb, however, is not unimportant. It tightens the connection between 5:21 and 5:22 and shows that Paul is describing here in 5:22 how wives can live out the instructions on submission that in 5:21 he gave to everyone. Believers should submit to one another, he says, and wives, for their part, should submit to their husbands.

Paul qualifies this admonition in two ways. First, wives are to submit to their "own" (ἴδιος, *idios*) husbands.[6] Later Paul will say that husbands should love "their own" (ἑαυτῶν, *heautōn*) wives (v. 28; cf. v. 33). This has the effect of restricting his comments on men and women in 5:22–24 to the marriage relationship (cf. Pol. *Phil*. 4.2). In contrast to Aristotle and the widely influential tradition he spawned, there is nothing here about the natural inferiority of women to men and the appropriateness, then, of men ruling over women.[7] There is certainly no hint that all women should submit to all men (so correctly Hoehner 2002: 732; Muddiman 2001: 258).[8]

6. At this point Ephesians is closer to 1 Pet. 3:5 (ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν) than to Col. 3:18, a sign that the material in Ephesians and 1 Peter is probably based on preformed tradition and that Ephesians is not a literary revision of Colossians.

7. See Aristotle, writing in the fourth century BC (*Pol*. 1.5 [1.1254b.13–14]; 1.12 [1.1259b.1–2]); Arius Didymus, writing in the first century BC (Stobaeus, *Flor.* 2.7.26, trans. in Balch 1988: 42); and Josephus, writing in the first century AD (*Ag. Ap*. 201).

8. It is true that 1 Cor. 14:34 and 1 Tim. 2:11 require women to be silent and submissive (ὑποτασσέσθωσαν, ὑποταγῇ) in the context of corporate worship, that 1 Tim. 2:13 relates this requirement to the order in which the woman was created relative to the man, and that 1 Cor.

Second, wives are to submit to their husbands "as to the Lord" (ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ, *hōs tō kyriō*). This phrase is ambiguous. A few earlier interpreters thought that the term κύριος here meant "master" and that Paul was telling wives to view their husbands as their masters.[9] That would have required the plural rather than the singular, however, and is not consistent with 6:5, 7, where Paul tells slaves to render obedience to their masters "as to Christ" and "as for the Lord and not for human beings."

It is more difficult to decide the force of the ὡς. Does it mean that wives should submit to their husbands as if their husbands were Christ? This understanding seems consistent with the statements that follow in 5:23–24, where the husband's role as head of the wife is compared to (ὡς) Christ's role as head of the church. Or does it mean that when wives submit to their husbands, they are submitting to Christ because they are doing what Christ wants them to do? This seems consistent both with 6:7, where Paul urges slaves to work with goodwill since they are working for the Lord and not for human beings, and with Col. 3:18, where wives are urged to submit to their husbands "as is fitting in the Lord" (ὡς ἀνῆκεν ἐν κυρίῳ, *hōs anēken en kyriō*).

A decision between these two approaches is difficult, but the phrase "as to the Lord" here should probably be interpreted in light of the closely similar but clearer phrase "as for the Lord and not for human beings" in 6:7. Throughout the household code (5:22; 6:1, 5, 7), those who are asked to submit or to obey are asked to view their submission to others as part of their commitment to the Lord. The person to whom they submit does not have the authority of Christ, except in the case of marriage, and then only by analogy, not in reality. Christ is the submissive party's authority, and when wives, children, and slaves render obedience, they do so out of obedience to Christ, not because of any innate authority in the male head of the household.

5:23 Why should a wife's commitment to the Lord lead her to submit to her husband? The ὅτι (*hoti*, because) clause answers this question by setting up an analogy between a married couple and Christ's relationship to the church.

The term "head" (κεφαλή, *kephalē*) is the critical element in the analogy, but its precise meaning is not self-evident.[10] It was not commonly used in ancient Greek as a metaphor for an authority or leader (Perriman 1994: 602–10), although it does appear in the LXX with these connotations (Judg. 11:11; 2 Sam. 22:44; *pace* Perriman 1994: 603, 605). In each case, however, the person designated as the "head" has authority over groups of people, not over

11:3, 8–10 relates the headship of the husband over his wife to the order and purpose for which the woman was created. All these comments, however, are closely related to specific pastoral problems in the communities to which they were directed, unlike the more sweeping descriptions of women generally in Aristotle and Arius Didymus.

9. See the discussion and rejection of this reading in, e.g., Ellicott 1859: 127; Meyer 1880: 290; Abbott 1897: 165.

10. On the energetic debate over the figurative use of the term in the NT, see the additional note on 1:22.

a single person, as is the case here (Perriman 1994: 619; Osiek 2002: 35).[11] A few interpreters, aware of the ambiguity of the term, have argued that there are no connotations of authority in Paul's use of it in 5:23. Κεφαλή implies that the husband is the resource for the fulfillment of the wife, just as in 4:15–16 Christ, as the head of his church-body, equips and encourages the church's growth (e.g., B. Mickelsen and A. Mickelsen 1986: 108–10).

This understanding of the term, however, is unlikely to be correct for two reasons. First, the context makes it clear that κεφαλή here carries overtones of authority. The instruction to the wife to "fear" her husband in 5:33 (cf. v. 21), advice not repeated to the husband, reveals a hierarchical element in the advice to wives and husbands generally and makes it likely that both Paul and his readers would have understood κεφαλή to have overtones of authority. This conclusion becomes virtually unavoidable when we look at the close verbal relationship between 5:21–23 and 1:20–23. In 1:20–23 Christ's position as head (κεφαλή) over all things is defined in terms of God's subjection (ὑποτάσσω, *hypotassō*) of all things to Christ. This same pairing of the noun κεφαλή with the verb ὑποτάσσω in 5:21–23 indicates that here too κεφαλή carries an authoritative nuance.[12]

Second, the cultural expectations of Paul's readers led them to understand κεφαλή as a metaphor for the husband's authority in the marriage relationship. Plutarch's approach to marriage in the late first century was not everyone's view,[13] but it still expresses the ideal many people in the Eastern Empire envisioned:

> If [women] subordinate [ὑποτάττουσαι, *hypotattousai*] themselves to their husbands, they are commended, but if they want to have control, they cut a sorrier figure than the subjects of their control. And control ought to be exercised [κρατεῖν, *kratein*] by the man over the woman, not as the owner has control of a piece of property, but, as the soul controls the body [σώματος, *sōmatos*], by entering into her feelings and being knit to her through good will. As, therefore, it is possible to exercise care over the body [σώματος] without being a slave to

11. Paul has used κεφαλή of the husband's relationship to the wife already in 1 Cor. 11:3 (κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνήρ), and there too one person is the "head" of another person in the sense that one person has authority over the other person. This is clear from Paul's statement that "the head of Christ is God" (ἡ κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός), which probably refers to Christ's functionally subordinate position with respect to God (cf. 1 Cor. 15:28). The practical problem over head coverings in Corinth may have led Paul to use the metaphor in this unusual way (cf. I. Marshall 2004a). The use of the metaphor in Ephesians is perhaps less unusual since the wife corresponds to the church, which is a group of people.

12. I assume that Perriman (1994: 618) refers to this sort of consideration when he says that connotations may belong to the use of the term in Colossians and Ephesians that are unusual elsewhere because those texts develop a particular "theological conception of Christ as 'head.'"

13. Plutarch's approach to marriage may have been an attempt to reimpose the old standards of classical Greece at a time when upper-class women were flaunting traditional mores (Foxhall 1999). On the "new woman," whose sexual standards flaunted tradition in the first century, see Winter 2003: 17–74. Winter's analysis reveals the continued existence of traditional views alongside those of the "new women."

> its pleasure and desires, so it is possible to govern [ἄρχειν, *archein*] a wife, and at the same time to delight and gratify her. (*Conj. praec.* 142e; cf. 139a, d)[14]

This passage reveals that when Greco-Roman moral discourse on marriage uses "submission" language and "body" language in the same context, the body language typically illustrates the wife's submission to the husband and the husband's authority over the wife (Merz 2000: 132–33n4).

The differences between Plutarch and Paul, however, are also important. Plutarch's advice is motivated by practical considerations (*Conj. praec.* 138b)—but Paul's advice arises from his Christology (vv. 23b–24). Plutarch advises the husband to exercise power or "control" (κρατεῖν, *kratein*) over the wife, however benevolently, but Paul never tells husbands to control their wives, only wives to submit to their husbands. Despite some tender moments of mutuality in Plutarch's essay, moreover, there is nothing to compare with the implications of what Paul does next.[15]

He immediately qualifies the husband's authority by describing his headship as patterned after Christ's headship over the church.[16] In Ephesians, Christ's authority has been used not to control the church but to reconcile it to God at the cost of his own life (2:13, 16; 5:2; cf. 1:7) and to equip the church with what it needs for accomplishing God's purposes (4:7–16).

As if to be sure that no one among his readers should miss this unusual element in Christ's exercise of his position of authority, Paul restates it in terms that are both emphatic and explicit: "He himself [αὐτός, *autos*] is Savior of the body [σώματος, *sōmatos*]." Grammatically and rhetorically, this comment precisely matches the statement that Christ is head of the church, and this parallelism in the two phrases shows where Paul's primary concern lies in using the term "head" to refer to Christ. Although κεφαλή implies authority,

14. The translations of Plutarch in my discussion belong to Babbitt 1927–36. See also Xenophon, *Oec.* 3.10–15; 7.1–10.13; Pseudo-Aristotle, *Oec.* 1.3–4 (1.1343b.7–1344a.23); Musonius Rufus (Lutz 1947: 84–97). Each of these texts holds mutuality and harmony in marriage in high esteem, but underneath each is the assumption that the husband fills the leading role in the relationship. In a lengthy discussion with Xenophon's Socrates about his wife, for example, Ischomachus makes the offhand comment that "a word from me was enough to secure her instant obedience" (ἅπαξ ἀκούσασα ταχὺ ἐπείθετο; Xenophon, *Oec.* 10.1, trans. Marchant and Todd 1923). Cf., e.g., Euripides (Stobaeus, *Flor.* 4.22.2), "Every decent woman is a slave to her husband"; Philemon (Stobaeus, *Flor.* 4.23.20), "A good wife, Nicostrate, should be submissive to her husband, not superior" (both quotations from Goessler 1999: 106n18); and the Neo-Pythagorean "Melissa" to "Clearete," "The modest woman should express her love of the good . . . in . . . pleasing her own husband . . . by fulfilling his wishes. For the husband's will ought to be engraved as law on a decent wife's mind and she must live by it" (P.Haun. II.13; from Winter 2003: 73).

15. *Pace* Darko (2008: 106), who says, "There is no novelty in the substance of the household instruction for the believers." Darko's case is largely persuasive that the household code in Ephesians seeks to promote harmony and unity among believers rather than the integration of believers into society, but I think he has overstated his argument that the substance of the Ephesian household code says nothing untypical of Greek and Roman moral discourse generally.

16. Ὡς καί here means "in the same way that" (cf. 2:3; and 1 Cor. 9:5).

Paul correlates the term with σωτήρ (*sōtēr*). By doing this, he affirms Christ's authority over the church, but his primary emphasis lies in his use of this authority to save the church:

Subject	Predicate	Genitive qualifier
ὁ Χριστός (*ho Christos*, Christ)	κεφαλή (*kephalē*, head)	τῆς ἐκκλησίας (*tēs ekklēsias*, of the church)
αὐτός (*autos*, he himself)	σωτήρ (*sōtēr*, savior)	τοῦ σώματος (*tou sōmatos*, of the body)

This correlation between Christ's role as head and his role as Savior is reminiscent of passages in the first part of the letter in which Christ has used his authority and power for the church's benefit. In 1:22–23 Paul has said that God has placed Christ in authority over all things, including the evil spiritual powers, for the benefit of the church, "which is his body [σῶμα, *sōma*]," and more recently he has said that the victorious Christ is the head of the body and directs its growth from this position of authority (4:15–16).[17]

Paul pictures the wife's submission as the recognition of the authority of a husband who imitates the self-sacrificial, nurturing, and supporting roles that Christ fills with respect to the church. He will explore this theme in greater detail when he turns to the husband in 5:25–33, but this brief statement about the saving role of Christ with respect to the church anticipates that theme and shows how important it is to the whole account of the relationship between wife and husband.

5:24 Paul seems to have caught himself drifting away from the practical to the theoretical in the final clause of 5:23: "He himself is the Savior of the body." With ἀλλά (*alla*, but) he pulls his train of thought quickly back on track just as he will at the end of the passage in 5:33: "In any case, you too—every single one of you—must love his own wife."[18] Both phrases are evidence that Ephesians started life as an oral discourse that, although not unorganized, was also not planned in meticulous detail.

Paul returns, then, to the practical concern of 5:22–23a and summarizes the primary intention of that statement. He again uses the verb ὑποτάσσω in the first clause and expects the reader (or hearer) to supply it in the second clause, and he again draws a comparison between the church's subordinate position with respect to Christ and the subordinate position of wives with respect to their husbands.

Here, however, he adds that wives should submit to their husbands "in everything" (ἐν παντί, *en panti*). The sweeping nature of this phrase has prompted

17. Cf. Yoder Neufeld 2002: 258. The correlation between Christ as "head" and Christ as "Savior" also recalls the claims in 2:5, 10 that God graciously "saved" believers through Christ Jesus.

18. Robinson 1904: 124, 205; cf. Dawes 1998: 86–89.

vigorous discussion among interpreters, and the discussion can be divided into two broad categories.

Some interpreters believe that the author simply made a mistake. Best (1998), in a way that is consistent with his approach to the household code generally, thinks the author had an unrealistic notion of marriage, imagining that husbands would micromanage their households and wives would submit to their management in every detail. Unlike the more-realistic Paul of the undisputed letters, the author imagines that every household where his letter is read is a Christian household and that every Christian husband will manage his household appropriately (Best 1998: 538). Muddiman (2001: 263), more charitably, thinks that the author simply allowed his enthusiasm for the church's all-encompassing submission to Christ to "spill over" into his instructions about the wife's submission to the husband. In one case such submission is appropriate, but in the other it is inappropriate (cf. Aletti 2001: 278).

Other interpreters think that Paul, or the author, would assume that the phrase needs to be qualified. His emphasis lies on complete obedience to the husband, but he would assume either that the comparison of the husband with Christ would qualify the sweeping nature of the phrase (Lincoln 1990: 373; Pokorný 1992: 222; Yoder Neufeld 2002: 256), or that his readers' common sense would prevent them from thinking, for example, that wives should obey husbands who tell them to disobey God (Eadie 1883: 413; O'Brien 1999: 418; Hoehner 2002: 745–46).

This second approach must be correct. The phrase ἐν παντί, particularly in a text as effusive in its language as Ephesians, is not intended to be taken woodenly to mean "in everything no matter how harmful, silly, or sinful." When Paul tells the Corinthians that he was "oppressed in every way [ἐν παντί]" in 2 Cor. 4:8 and 7:5, he does not mean that he bore every known affliction but that he faced much trouble (cf. 2 Cor. 9:8, 11; 11:6). So here he would assume that his readers understood the expansive nature of his language, appreciate the general point, and make exceptions in the hard cases where necessary.

That this interpretation is on the right track is also clear from the assumptions that lie beneath the discussion of a nearly identical problem in Paul's Stoic contemporary Musonius Rufus.[19] When a young man who had been forbidden from studying philosophy by his father asked Musonius whether one must "obey one's parents in all things [πάντα, *panta*]," the philosopher produced a series of examples in which a father instructs his child to do something harmful out of ignorance or to do something wrong out of wickedness. At the end of his list, he comments that "even to ask the question" of whether compliance is required in such cases "is scarcely necessary" (οὐδὲ ἐρωτᾶν τοῦτό γε ἄξιον, *oude erōtan touto ge axion*). He then goes on to apply the principle behind these obvious cases to the study of philosophy, where its application was less obvious.

19. I have used the text and translation in Lutz 1947: 100–107.

This account is instructive because it shows both that the sweeping principle of obedience to parents "in everything" was commonly accepted in Paul's time (cf. Col. 3:20) and that the principle was commonly understood not to apply in cases where ignorance, harm, or wrongdoing came into play. In the same way, Paul probably would have thought that when difficult situations arose, wives should use their discernment in "find[ing] out what is pleasing to the Lord" (5:10) and in doing it, although that might mean noncompliance with their husband's wishes.[20]

This is assumed, however, and is not where the emphasis lies. The rhetorical force of ἐν παντί is focused on the importance of the wife's submission to the husband. When the situation is not complicated by ignorant or immoral behavior, the wife should voluntarily submit to the leadership of her husband.

5:25 Paul now turns to the responsibility that husbands have toward their wives. Once again, the analogy between Christ and the church is critical to his instructions, and once again, Christ's work on behalf of the church is the critical element in the analogy. In 5:23 Paul has said that Christ is the Savior of the church, and here he explains how he has become the church's Savior: he "gave himself for her." This has happened as a demonstration of his love, and this is the kind of love, Paul says, that husbands should have for their wives.[21] The sweeping nature of the demand placed on the wife (ἐν παντί, *en panti*, in everything; v. 23) is therefore matched by an equally sweeping demand on the husband. Like Christ, the husband is to love (ἀγαπάω, *agapaō*) his wife by the sacrifice of his own life on his wife's behalf (cf. 1:7; 2:13–16; 5:2).[22]

Here Paul breaks the boundaries of traditional Greco-Roman advice on marriage. It is not as if there are no expressions of tenderness, complementarity, and love in the traditional handbooks. "Love [στέργε, *sterge*] your wife," advises Pseudo-Phocylides (195–97, trans. W. Wilson 2005), "for what is sweeter and better than when a wife is lovingly disposed [φρονέῃ φίλα, *phroneē phila*] to her husband into old age and husband to his wife and strife does not split them asunder." "The co-operation between woman and man aims not merely at existence," says Pseudo-Aristotle (*Oec.* 1.3.3, Tredennick and Armstrong

20. Cf. the comments of Jerome (Heine 2002: 242) on wives fearing their husbands (Eph. 5:33):

> Wives are frequently found who are much better than their husbands. They rule over them, manage the household, educate the children, and maintain the discipline of the family while the husbands revel and run around with harlots. I leave it to the decision of the readers whether these women ought to rule their husbands or fear them.

21. As Dawes (1998: 92) comments, the καθώς in 5:25 introduces "not a motive, but a comparison," a statement "not so much 'why' husbands should love their wives, but rather 'how' they should love their wives, namely, as Christ loved the Church."

22. Dawes (1998: 94) claims that the only point of comparison between Christ and the husband is the love that each shows to others, not the precise ways in which that love is shown (i.e., by giving oneself, sanctifying, and cleansing; vv. 25–26). This is correct with respect to sanctifying and cleansing, but Paul gives special emphasis to the imitation of Christ's self-giving love in 5:2, and that emphasis carries over to this passage.

1935), "but at a happy existence." According to Musonius Rufus, "In marriage there must be above all perfect companionship and mutual love [κηδεμονία, *kēdemonia*] of husband and wife, both in health and in sickness and under all conditions" (Lutz 1947: 88 lines 17–20; cf. Best 1998: 539).[23] "The marriage of a couple in love with each other," Plutarch says, "is an intimate union," similar to the organic unity of a living creature (*Conj. praec.* 142f, trans. Babbitt 1927–36).[24]

The idea that the husband should expend his life in the care of his wife, however, is unusual. The far more typical approach to marriage was that the wife should manage the household well in order to free the husband from domestic concerns and enhance his social prestige.[25] In contrast, Paul's comparison between the husband's love for his wife and Christ's love for the church implies that the husband's love for his wife should be so broad and long and high and deep (3:18–19) that it includes the sacrifice of his own social prestige and well-being, indeed his life, for the sake of his wife (cf. Phil. 2:5–8).

5:26 The analogy between the love of husbands for their wives and the love of Christ for the church leads to a digression on the relationship between Christ and the church similar to, but much longer than, the digression in 5:22: "He himself is the Savior of the body."[26] This digression stretches from 5:26 to 5:27 and takes the form of two purpose clauses, the second of which is more elaborate and contains a purpose clause of its own (cf. 3:16–19).[27] The first clause states the purpose for which Christ gave himself for the church (that he might sanctify it), and the second clause states the purpose for which Christ sanctified the church (that he might present her to himself in splendor). The second clause is more elaborate than the first clause and clarifies that Paul thinks of the sanctification and splendor of the church in moral terms.

First, Paul states why Christ gave himself for the church. He did this to "sanctify" (ἁγιάζω, *hagiazō*) the church, or to set it apart. The verb ἁγιάζω shows up only here in Ephesians, but the noun form of the adjective ἅγιος (*hagios*, holy) is Paul's preferred term of identity for himself and his readers.

23. See the continuation in lines 20–23. The translation "love" that Lutz (1947) provides for κηδεμονία, however, does not seem entirely accurate. According to LSJ 946, the term means "care, solicitude," and LSJSup 176 adds that it could refer to "the position of a curator or tutor." It seems to have more to do with the care and kindness that a person in authority should show for those who are subordinate to them than with the kind of lavish, self-sacrificing love Paul says that God (Eph. 2:4; 5:1) and Christ (3:17–19; 5:2) have shown for believers and that believers ought to show to one another (1:4, 15; 4:2, 15–16; 6:21, 23) and to the Lord Jesus Christ (6:24).

24. On the whole subject, see Dixon 1992: 61–97.

25. With respect to Xenophon and especially Plutarch, see Foxhall 1999: 145–50. See also Musonius Rufus, who argues that women ought to be allowed to study philosophy, but the purpose of this, to a large extent, is so that they can better serve their husbands (Lutz 1947: 42 lines 9–10, 48 lines 20–26).

26. Cf. the statement in 2:5 ("by grace you are saved") that is then expanded in 2:8–9.

27. On the structure of the clauses, see Dawes 1998: 94–96.

They are "saints" (1:1, 15, 18; 2:19; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18), the people whom God has freely chosen to set apart as his heirs (1:18).

This consecration of the church as the people of God was accomplished "by means of cleansing" (καθαρίσας, *katharisas*) the church.[28] The term καθαρίζω (*katharizō*) was used in antiquity in agricultural and architectural contexts to refer to sifting grain, pruning plants, or clearing a building site (LSJ 850; LSJSup 162; MM 311). In the LXX it frequently refers to ritual cleansing (e.g., 1 Sam. 20:26; Neh. 12:30 [2 Esd. 22:30]; Jdt. 16:18; 1 Macc. 4:36, 41, 43), and sometimes in this context it is coupled with the verb ἁγιάζω (*hagiazō*) just as it is here (Exod. 29:36–37; Lev. 8:15; 16:19; cf. Pss. Sol. 17.30). When the two actions are viewed as separate from each other, cleansing comes first and leads to sanctification: it is the purification of the altar, for example, that sanctifies it (Exod. 29:36–37; Lev. 8:15; 16:18–19; cf. 2 Cor. 7:1). In the LXX, the NT, and nonbiblical Greek, the term could refer metaphorically to cleansing from sin (e.g., Exod. 20:7; 34:7; Num. 14:18; Ps. 50:4 [51:4 MT; 51:2 Eng.]; 2 Cor. 7:1; James 4:8; Heb. 10:2; Titus 2:14; Epictetus [Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 2.16.45]), and that is undoubtedly how Paul intends it here.[29] When the church was cleansed from its sin, it was then set apart as the people of God.

How has this cleansing happened? Viewed from one angle, it happened when Christ gave himself for the church, since the purpose of this giving was to sanctify it, and its sanctification involved its cleansing. Paul adds a phrase to the term καθαρίσας, however, to view the cleansing from another angle. Paul says that the cleansing took place "with the water bath in the word" (τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι, *tō loutrō tou hydatos en rhēmati*).[30]

Through the centuries the vast majority of interpreters have thought that this phrase refers to baptism. Many simply assume this without argument. Those who do offer reasons for this reading explain that the article preceding λουτρῷ (*loutrō*) points to a specific event (*the* bath) and that this event is most likely baptism (Lincoln 1990: 375; Best 1998: 543); that much the same language appears in 1 Cor. 6:11, where Paul probably also refers to baptism (Lincoln 1990: 375; cf. Best 1998: 542); that the mention of water refers to a literal water rite, not to a metaphorical washing (Lincoln 1990: 375; Schnackenburg 1991: 249); and that the text finds a parallel in 1 Cor. 12:13, where the unity of the church originates with the common baptism of its members, a theme that the author of Epheisans has already picked up in 4:2–5 and that he will articulate again in 5:30 (Pokorný 1992: 224n45).

None of these arguments, however, is particularly compelling. The article may point to a particular water bath, but if the reference is metaphorical, it need not refer to the literal water bath of Christian baptism. There were

28. Καθαρίσας is an adverbial participle of means.

29. Cf. Bruce 1984: 387; BDAG 488–89. In 4 Macc. 17:21, the fatherland is "cleansed" by the deaths of the Maccabean martyrs when they die as a recompense for its "sin."

30. Καθαρίσας is an adverbial participle of means (cf. Wallace 1996: 629). For the translation "bath" for λουτρόν, see BDAG 603.

many occasions for ceremonial washing with water in antiquity, and it was a common custom across a number of cultures for the bride to wash in water or touch water either in preparation for the wedding or as part of the ceremony.[31] To refer to "the bath of water," then, would not necessarily have recalled the specific water rite of baptism. The reference to washing and sanctifying in 1 Cor. 6:11, moreover, is as ambiguous as this reference. There too the washing could easily refer to a spiritual rather than a physical washing, just as the expressions that follow it ("You were sanctified, . . . you were justified") refer to spiritual realities. The parallel with 1 Cor. 12:13 actually highlights the most difficult problem for those who think that Eph. 5:26 refers to baptism. In 1 Cor. 12:13 Paul uses the verb βαπτίζω (*baptizō*), the common word for "baptizing" people in the NT, and the word whose noun form (βάπτισμα, *baptisma*) Paul does not hesitate to use in Eph. 4:5. Here, however, the word is λουτρόν (*loutron*), the term commonly used for ceremonial baths in antiquity and frequently occurring in connection with bridal baths (LSJ 1061; Spicq, *TLNT* 2:413n19).[32] In light of all this, the minority of interpreters who argue that the phrase "with the water bath" is a metaphorical reference to the cleansing power of the gospel are probably correct (e.g., O'Brien 1999: 422–24; Hoehner 2002: 752–54).

The final phrase in the clause, ἐν ῥήματι (*en rhēmati*, by the word), is difficult. It could modify one or both of the verbal elements in the clause and express the means by which the sanctifying, the cleansing, or both actions together, take place.[33] Alternatively, it could modify the phrase τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος (*tō loutrō tou hydatos*) and describe something that accompanies "the water bath."[34] In addition to this ambiguity, the meaning of the term ῥῆμα (*rhēma*) here is not clear. In the singular it can refer to an utterance, to a verbally describable event, or in early Christianity, to the teaching of God or the gospel (BDAG 905). It could refer, therefore, to a liturgical phrase uttered at baptism, perhaps the names of the three persons of the Trinity (e.g., Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.*, hom. 11 [*NPNF* 13:105]; Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.52]) or the name of Jesus (Robinson 1904: 207), or it could refer to the gospel, which those who belong to the church have believed (e.g., Ellicott 1859: 130; O'Brien 1999: 423; Hoehner 2002: 575–76).

Although settled pronouncements on such an ambiguous expression would be unwise, it seems simplest to take the phrase ἐν ῥήματι with the phrase τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος, which immediately precedes it (cf. 2:15; 4:19; 6:2). It is true that Paul could easily have placed an article in front of ἐν ῥήματι (whether

31. See Treggiari 1991: 163, 168; Oakley and Sinos 1993: 15–16; G. Williams 2003: 928; Spicq, *TLNT* 2:413n19.

32. Cf. Titus 3:5, where Paul speaks of "the bath [λουτροῦ] of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit."

33. A long parade of commentators opt for this view, including Ellicott 1859: 131; Eadie 1883: 419–20; Abbott 1897: 168; Westcott 1906: 85; Barth 1974: 625; O'Brien 1999: 423; and Hoehner 2002: 757.

34. See, e.g., De Wette 1843: 151; Robinson 1904: 206; and Schlier 1957: 257.

τῷ or τοῦ) to make this attachment explicit (Alford 1857: 133; Hoehner 2002: 757). Yet he does not do this when he uses an ἐν phrase at the end of a clause in 2:15; 4:19; and 6:2 (cf. De Wette 1843: 151; Schlier 1957: 257), and he probably would have placed ἐν ῥήματι closer to the verbal elements if he had intended the phrase to modify one or more of them.[35]

It also seems simplest to take the term ῥῆμα as a reference not to a baptismal formula but to the word of God, and even more specifically to the gospel, whose preaching brings the church into existence as people hear and believe it (cf. 1:13–14). Elsewhere in the NT ῥῆμα never refers to something spoken at baptism (Hoehner 2002: 755); in its only other use in Ephesians (6:17), Paul defines it more closely as "the word of God" (ῥῆμα θεοῦ, *rhēma theou*), and the term appears elsewhere in the NT with reference to the gospel that Paul and others have preached (Rom. 10:8, 16–17; Heb. 6:5; 1 Pet. 1:25; BDAG 905).

How, then, should we understand the phrase ἐν ῥήματι? The use of the idiom λούω ἐν (*louō en*) to refer to washing in a particular substance may offer a clue (cf. the LXX of Exod. 29:4; Lev. 14:8; 1 Kings 20:19; 22:38; Ps. 6:7 LXX, MT [6:6 Eng.]; Song 5:12; Ezek. 16:9).[36] If the phrase τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος is taken as a unit to refer metaphorically to "the water bath," then ἐν ῥήματι probably describes the substance that bathes those who receive this bath: they receive "the water bath in the word," which is the gospel. Christ died, then, to sanctify the church by cleansing it with a water bath in the gospel.

To summarize, in the purpose clause contained in 5:26, Paul begins to digress from his instructions to husbands into a description of why Christ has showed his love for the church by giving his life for it. He did this to cleanse the people who would make up the church from their sin and to set them apart as God's special people. This cleansing, sanctifying action was applied to them when they were washed in the verbal proclamation of the gospel, that is, when they heard the gospel preached, believed it, and were sealed as God's special people by the Holy Spirit (cf. 1:13–14).

5:27 If the imagery of a bridal bath lies somewhere in the background in 5:26, which seems likely (*pace* Robinson 1904: 207), then it continues here in the second purpose clause, where Paul states that Christ has sanctified the church in order to present it to himself as "brilliant" (ἔνδοξος, *endoxos*; BDAG 332). The church is pictured as a young bride of dazzling beauty. Her youth is evident from her unwrinkled skin, and her skin is unblemished as a result both of her youth and of the bridal bath she has just taken.[37] Since the term

35. Muddiman (2001: 264) astutely observes that the syntactical ambiguity of ἐν ῥήματι would be solved by the person who read the passage aloud through "phrasing and intonation." It seems likely that this ambiguity would not only have to be resolved orally but that it also began orally when Paul dictated the letter aloud.

36. See especially Lev. 14:8, where the leper will "wash in water" (λούσεται ἐν ὕδατι) and become "clean" (καθαρός).

37. Plutarch, *Mor.* 789d describes people laughing at the gray hair and wrinkled skin (ῥυτίς) of old men who speak in public (cf. Origen [Heine 2002: 237]). The first-century-AD medical writer Pedanius Dioscorides (e.g., *De materia medica* 1.34.1; 4.181.1; 2.109.1) frequently uses

ἔνδοξος can describe resplendent clothing (Luke 7:25), Paul was probably thinking of the especially beautiful garments that a bride might wear on the day of her wedding.

The whole image is reminiscent of the elaborate toilette for both bride and groom that accompanied ancient weddings in Greek and Roman cultures. In the Greek world, bride and groom were given baths prior to the public parts of the wedding, and these baths were not merely ritual in nature. They also performed the practical function of cleaning the bride and groom so that they might look and smell their best (Oakley and Sinos 1993: 15). Although the ritual elements of the bath are not clear for the Roman world, both bride and groom nevertheless were carefully groomed and dressed (and it is difficult to imagine that they did not bathe). In both cultures, a large entourage of the bride's family and friends helped her arrange her hair and get dressed in special—often colorful—garments, shoes, jewels, a veil, and a crown (Treggiari 1991: 163; Oakley and Sinos 1993: 16–21). In Hellenistic Judaism, the basic customs surrounding the bride's preparation seem to have been the same: a careful toilette with help from the family, beautiful clothing—Aseneth's wedding gown was "like lightning in appearance"—and washing in water (Jos. Asen. 18 [*OTP* 2:231–32]).

The difference here is the unusual picture of the groom bathing the bride (Eph. 5:26) and presenting her in all her splendor to himself (v. 27). The metaphor has taken this turn because the picture of a typical wedding has merged with the imagery of Ezek. 16:8–14. There God imagines Israel as his young bride, whom he has bathed, cleansed, anointed, and clothed in finery and jewels. Here in Ephesians, Christ takes the place of God in that imagery, and the church fills the place of Israel. Again, however, Paul breaks the boundary of a traditional image. In Ezek. 16 the imagery of the bride is part of a prophecy against Israel for its unfaithfulness to God: once made beautiful by God, Israel had become a prostitute through its promiscuous alliances with other nations and their gods. Paul's image runs in the opposite direction: those who comprise the church were once stained, but through the death of Christ and the preaching of the gospel, Christ has cleansed them and set them apart for himself, just as a young and dazzlingly beautiful bride, in all her finery, is presented to the groom.

The final clause shows that Paul thought of this imagery in moral terms. The church is "brilliant" and without "blemish or wrinkle or any such things" in the sense that it is "holy and blameless." Although the holiness and blamelessness of the church is an established reality through the death of Christ and the church's response to the gospel, Paul also thinks of this reality as lived out in the day-to-day conduct of those who comprise the church. The phrase "holy and blameless," therefore, recalls 1:4, where Paul has said that

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the term σπίλος to refer to blemishes on the skin and gives a complex prescription with an almond-oil base for the removal of "facial blemishes [σπίλους], freckles, and wrinkles [ῥυτίδας]" (1.33.1, trans. Beck 2005; again, cf. Origen [Heine 2002: 237]).

God chose his people so that they might be "holy and blameless before him in love" (see the notes on that passage). Implicit in this claim that the church is the resplendent bride of Christ, then, is a call to live in a way that is consistent with this status.

5:28 The practical aspect of the imagery now becomes explicit again as Paul moves out of his reflection on the relationship between Christ and the church and back to the advice on marriage that has prompted it. The οὕτως (*houtōs*, so) points backward to the manner of Christ's love for the church as Paul has just described it in 5:25–27,[38] and Paul restates what he said in 5:25, but more emphatically and with an added motivation.

The greater emphasis comes with the way Paul states the obligation of husbands. In 5:25 he has merely said they are to love their wives, but here he strengthens the element of duty involved in this admonition: they "are obligated" (ὀφείλουσιν, *opheilousin*) to love their wives. The addition of the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτῶν (*heautōn*, their own) corresponds to the use of the adjective ἰδίοις in 5:22: just as wives are to submit to their own husbands, so here husbands are to love their own wives. Both terms highlight the exclusive nature of the relationship between husbands and wives: they are to have a level of commitment to each other that is qualitatively different from their commitments to other men and women.

The addition of ἑαυτῶν also prepares the way for the new thought that comes next. Husbands are to love their own wives as their own bodies. Paul backs up this admonition with a pithy saying that shifts to the singular and contains no formal grammatical connection to the surrounding material: "The one who loves his own wife loves himself." Some interpreters have seen here an allusion to Lev. 19:18, which urges each Israelite to "love your neighbor as yourself [ὡς σεαυτόν, *hōs seauton*]." Paul does seem to recall that command in 5:33, but here the thought is somewhat different. Leviticus 19:18 speaks of loving one's neighbor *in the same way* that one loves oneself, but here Paul speaks of the husband loving his wife because she *is* himself.

To us this may sound odd, but it probably would not have puzzled Paul's readers. Some of them, like Paul, knew that Gen. 2:24 spoke of husband and wife as "one flesh" (Eph. 5:31; cf. 1 Cor. 6:16; Mark 10:7–8; Matt. 19:5–6). In addition, many of them probably accepted the widely dispersed notion in antiquity that husband and wife shared a close, even organic, unity with each other (Xenophon, *Oec.* 10.4; Musonius Rufus XIIIa [Lutz 1947: 88–89,

38. Syntactically, the οὕτως could point forward to the ὡς that follows it, and the sentence could be read as a new thought: "Here is how [οὕτως] husbands ought to love their own wives: as [ὡς] their own bodies" (e.g., Alford 1857: 133; Schlier 1957: 260; Schnackenburg 1991: 252). The use of ὡς, καθώς, and οὕτως in the Christ/church–husband/wife analogy from 5:22 up to this point, however, makes it likely that Paul uses οὕτως in the same way here (cf., e.g., Lincoln 1990: 378; Aletti 2001: 282). Some manuscripts read καί in the text at two different places (and NA[27] and UBS[4] include it in brackets), but the variation in the placement of the word probably reveals that it was added at different times by scribes who wanted to make the backward reference of οὕτως clear (Best 1998: 547).

lines 13–14]; XIV [Lutz 1947: 94–95, lines 8–9]; Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 140f, 142f, 143a).

5:29–30 Paul next explains (γάρ, *gar*, for) the practical implications of this common assumption: husbands are to care for their wives physically and emotionally as well as, or better than, they care for themselves. Hate and love are often contrasted in the NT as polar opposites (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13; John 12:25; Rom. 9:13), and although love is not an explicit member of Paul's contrast here, it is implied by the use of "love" nearby, in Eph. 5:25, 28. The terms ἐκτρέφει (*ektrephei*, care for) and θάλπει (*thalpei*, cherish), then, describe in practical terms what love involves. These two terms were commonly used to describe the physical nurture and emotional warmth that one person gives to another, whether a child (1 Thess. 2:7; Eph. 6:4), a spouse (*CPR* 1.30 frag. 2, line 20), or a lover (Theocritus, *Id.* 14.38). Paul wants the husbands among his readers to understand that loving their wives means taking care of them both physically and emotionally.

In 5:29c–30 Paul moves back to the analogy between the husband's love for his wife and Christ's love for the church that has grounded his admonition to the husband in 5:25 and 28, and he takes that analogy to a deeper level. Believers, he says, are members of Christ's body (cf. 1 Cor. 6:15), so Christ cares for them in the way that anyone would care for his own body. Here he recalls his use of the term "body" earlier in the letter to describe Christ's protection of the church from its enemies (Eph. 1:20–23) and Christ's provision, lovingly given to the church, of everything necessary for its nourishment and support (4:7–16, esp. vv. 15–16). Husband and wife, likewise, are one body, and the husband should provide physical and emotional support to his wife, who is his body, self, and flesh, just as Christ cares for his body, the church.

5:31–32 Paul now uses the language of Gen. 2:24 to support what he has just said in Eph. 5:29–30.[39] He uses no introductory quotation formula (cf. 1:22; 2:17; 4:25–26; 6:2), but Gen. 2:24 was cited frequently enough in early Christian discussions of sex and marriage that he can safely assume that his readers will understand the source of his words (1 Cor. 6:16; Mark 10:7–8; Matt. 19:5–6).

His quotation differs from the LXX in two ways. First, Paul omits αὐτοῦ (*autou*, his) both after πατέρα (*patera*, father) and after μητέρα (*mētera*, mother). This condenses the quotation but does not alter its meaning (cf. Matt. 19:5 with Mark 10:7). Second, he begins the quotation with ἀντὶ τούτου (*anti toutou*, on account of this) instead of ἕνεκεν τούτου (*heneken toutou*, on account of this).[40]

This second change is important, not because it alters the meaning, but because the change shows that Paul was probably aware of the wording of this opening phrase enough to alter it slightly. He did not include the opening phrase unthinkingly simply because it belonged to the first part of the

39. For a more detailed examination of this quotation, see Thielman 2007: 826–28.
40. For this meaning of ἀντὶ τούτου, see, e.g., Ezek. 28:7; 34:9 LXX.

quotation he wanted to use. Rather, he viewed the phrase as a fitting way of connecting the substance of the quotation with his previous argument. In other words, we should think of ἀντὶ τούτου as having true argumentative force: "on account of" something Paul has just said, "a man will leave his father and his mother."

What part of his previous discourse was he trying to support? Was he supporting the idea that Christ and the church are one body? That husband and wife are one body? Both ideas? On one hand, the quotation comes directly after Paul's statement that Christ nourishes and cares for the church as his body (5:29b–30), and Paul concludes the quotation by saying that he is applying it to Christ and the church (5:32b). It might seem reasonable to think, then, that the quotation demonstrates the unity of Christ with the church. On the other hand, the quotation itself concerns the union of a man and a woman in marriage, and the larger context in which Paul uses it argues that a husband should love his wife as he loves himself. In such a context, it would seem strange if the quotation does not refer to the unity of husband and wife in marriage.

The quotation probably refers to both themes, but primarily to the unity of Christ and the church. The primacy of the Christ-church reference is visible in three aspects of the quotation and its context. First, Paul explicitly says that he intends the quotation to apply to Christ and to the church (v. 32).[41] Second, the phrase "because of this" (ἀντὶ τούτου), which opens the quotation, refers most naturally to the preceding statements about Christ's care for his church body (vv. 29c–30). Third, the term πλήν (*plēn*, nevertheless) that begins 5:33 pulls the reader back to the train of thought Paul had been developing before he began to digress about Christ's relationship to the church in 5:29c. This means that the quotation and its explanation in 5:31–32 are part of the digression on the relationship between Christ and the church.

If this is correct, then, as surprising as it may seem, Paul is saying in 5:31 that God has instituted marriage "because" the church is Christ's body. This probably means that the union of husband and wife in "one flesh" was originally intended to prefigure and to illustrate the union that Christ now has with the church. This is something that could become clear only after Christ had died to create the church in its new, multiethnic form (2:14–15; 3:8–11), and this is why it is a μυστήριον (*mystērion*, mystery): a truth that could be known only through God's gracious revelation of it (1:9; 3:3–4, 9; 6:19). It is a μέγα (*mega*, great) mystery because it is unusually mysterious. The adjective μέγας, says I. Marshall (1999: 522n63), "appears to express the greatness of the degree to which the thing or person is what it is; a 'great mystery' is especially mysterious."[42] The application of Gen. 2:24 to the union of Christ

41. For the idiom λέγω εἰς, see, e.g., Acts 2:25, where it is also used in the application of Scripture to Christ.

42. Cf. 3 Bar. 1.6; 2.6; and BDAG 624. Marshall is commenting on the phrase μέγα ἐστὶν τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον in 1 Tim. 3:16, where the adjective is used predicatively, just as it is here. Best (1998: 554) comments that μέγας is used predicatively and not attributively in Eph. 5:32

with the church would be nonsensical apart from a special revelation from God that tells of this application.

This especially mysterious nature of Paul's interpretation probably explains the syntax at the beginning of 5:32. Many commentators think that when Paul uses the phrase ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω (*egō de legō*, but I am speaking) in this verse he is contrasting his own interpretation of Gen. 2:24 with other interpretations (e.g., Ellicott 1859: 136; Lincoln 1990: 382; Merz 2000: 135–36; cf. Schnackenburg 1991: 255; Sampley 1971: 89). If that were correct, however, he would have provided more guidance for his readers about precisely what interpretations of Gen. 2:24 he was reacting against.[43] It is more likely, then, that the conjunction δέ (*de*, but) in this phrase sets up a contrast between Paul's recognition that his interpretation is surprising and his determination, nevertheless, to reveal it to his readers. If this is correct, then the phrase "this mystery" does not point back to Gen. 2:24 but forward to Paul's interpretation of it. He says in effect, "The mystery I am about to describe is especially mysterious, but I am going to say it anyway: when I refer to the well-known establishment of marriage in the book of Genesis, I am talking about Christ and the church."

Paul does not deny that the common reading of Gen. 2:24 is true. He has built his argument in 1 Cor. 6:16 on that common reading, and as his switch from "body" to "flesh" terminology in 5:29a shows, part of his admonition to husbands to love their wives is also built on it. Genesis 2:24 also supports the union of Christ with the church, however, and this unity has not only been an important, independent theme in the letter so far (2:5–6, 20; 4:11–16), but it has also served as an example for husbands to follow in the love they show to their wives (5:23, 25, 28).

5:33 Paul jerks the discussion back on track with the word πλήν (*plēn*), meaning "in any case" and often used, especially in Paul's writings, for "breaking off a discussion and emphasizing what is important" (BDAG 826; cf. 1 Cor. 11:11; Phil. 3:16; 4:14; *pace*, e.g., Eadie 1883: 435). Here he returns to his main concern throughout the section—the practical relationship between husband and wife—and offers a concluding summary of his admonitions to both. The emphatic phrase ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἕνα (*hymeis hoi kath' hena*) points a finger directly at each husband among Paul's readers and then underlines this individual appeal with the word ἕκαστος (*hekastos*, each). The result is impossible to translate literally, but effectively says, "You—every single one of you."[44] The admonition Paul gives is a summary of what he has said in 5:28–29b, strengthened by the reminder of the common reading of Gen. 2:24.

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and so cannot "refer to the degree of the mystery" (cf. Sampley 1971: 87; Hoehner 2002: 775). I agree that μέγας is used predicatively here, but it is unclear to me why the predicate adjective cannot also refer to the degree of the mystery.

43. As Jesus does in the Sermon on the Mount, the only other uses of the phrase in the NT (Matt. 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44).

44. Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (first cent. BC), who describes how the remnant of an army eventually came back together after "every single member" of it had been scattered: συνελθεῖν ἔφθασαν οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ καθ' ἕνα διεσκεδασμένοι (*Ant. rom.* 9.14.3).

Each husband must love his own wife as himself because she is one flesh with him. The way Paul puts his admonition recalls Lev. 19:18, which is also framed in the singular and also compares love for the other with love for oneself. If this recollection is intentional, however, then Lev. 19:18 is redefined by the unique sense in which the wife is the husband's neighbor. She is one flesh with him and thus the closest possible neighbor. Perhaps this is why Paul emphasizes that the husband is to love "his own [ἑαυτοῦ, *heautou*] wife" as himself. Although believers should understand Lev. 19:18 to refer to their love for every neighbor, including their enemies (Mark 12:31, 33; Matt. 19:19; 22:39; Luke 10:27; Gal. 5:14; Rom. 13:9; James 2:8), the husband's love for his wife is to have a unique quality, reflecting the truth expressed in Gen. 2:24—that he and his wife are "one flesh."

The wife, for her part (δέ, *de*), "should fear" (ἵνα φοβῆται, *hina phobētai*) her husband. Using ἵνα and the subjunctive to express an imperative is characteristic of the Greek in Hellenistic Jewish texts (e.g., 2 Macc 1:9), including the NT (Mark 5:23; 10:51; Matt. 20:33), and it shows up several times in the Pauline corpus (1 Cor. 7:29; Gal. 2:10; 2 Cor. 8:7).[45] In the NT it often carries a softer, more respectful nuance than the simple imperative. When Jesus asked blind Bartimaeus what he wanted him to do, "The blind man said, 'My rabbi, that I might see again' [ἵνα ἀναβλέψω, *hina anablepsō*]'" (Mark 10:51; cf. Matt. 20:33). This was a softer way of saying, "Give me back my sight!" Similarly, James, Cephas, and John did not order Paul and Barnabas around when they decide how to divide their missionary labor, but they "asked only one thing, that we remember [ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν, *hina mnēmoneuōmen*] the poor" (Gal. 2:10 NRSV). The same tone is probably what Paul intended here, particularly since he has just used the proper imperative mood in the previous clause.[46] The husband is told emphatically to love his wife, but the command to the wife has a milder tone: she "should fear her husband" (Barth 1974: 648).

The softer tone is consistent with the more reserved tone of the command for wives to submit to husbands in 5:22 and 24, where in each case the verb has to be supplied and the imperative is implied rather than stated. This does not remove the reality of the imperative—it is certainly present—but it is perhaps a subtle recognition that in terms of the balance of power bestowed by Greco-Roman society on husband and wife, the wife had the more difficult role. In a society in which women had less say over who they married than men, and less power within the relationship once the marriage had taken place, it was important for a household code that had been transformed by the gospel not to be heavy-handed in its instructions to the less-powerful partner.

The softer tone may be especially appropriate here, since Paul calls on the wife to "fear" (φοβέω, *phobeō*) her husband. This recalls his instructions to

45. MHT 2:95; Moule 1959: 144–45; BDR §388.4; Wallace 1996: 477.

46. It is certainly true that ἵνα + the subjunctive does not always carry this nuance (2 Macc. 1:9), but it sometimes does so, and the contrast here between the imperative used for the husband and the subjunctive used for the wife shows that Paul was reaching for a different tone when he addressed the wife.

all believers in 5:21, that they should submit to one another "in the fear [φόβῳ, *phobō*] of Christ." Just as fear there was something more than respect and less than terror, and was tempered by Paul's lavish references to Christ's love (see the comment on that verse), so here "fear" recognizes the authoritative role of the husband, but also the way in which Paul has tempered that role with extensive instruction to the husband to love his wife. But what if the wife is married to someone who does not love her as Christ loved the church? Perhaps the softness of the imperative is a recognition that the wife's obedience to Paul's instructions will often involve complexities introduced by the inevitable mixture of her husband's sinfulness with his position of authoritative head.

Summary

In 5:21–33 Paul continues his positive instruction about how believers ought to live carefully and wisely in the present evil time (5:15–16), doing the Lord's will (5:17), growing in maturity, and living in the Spirit (5:18). In this passage, he begins to focus on how this way of living looks when it is applied to the makeup of the traditional Greco-Roman household. He first addresses the duties of wives and husbands to each other, and his purpose in this description is twofold. First, he offers what initially sounds like the culturally traditional advice that the wife should submit to her husband and that the husband is the head of his wife. In the same breath, however, he redefines the traditional expectations about the husband's authority so that his power is used entirely for his wife's benefit, even if loving her in this way should involve laying down his life for her.

Second, Paul wanted to give an account of the close, loving relationship between Christ and the church. Paul's prayer report in 1:19–23 has included the petition that his readers might understand how God, in Christ, has put his great power into effect on behalf of the church. Now, in a digression from the practical conduct of wife and husband in marriage, he elaborates on how God has done this. Christ showed his love for the church by dying for it, cleansing it of sin, and separating it from the rest of the world, just as a bride is cleansed and made beautiful before her wedding. Surpisingly, says Paul, this is why God has instituted marriage in the first place. On the human level it illustrates the extent of God's great love for his people in Christ.

Additional Notes

5:22. Two very early Alexandrian manuscripts (𝔓46, B) have no verb in this verse and expect the reader mentally to supply some form of the verb ὑποτάσσω (cf. vv. 21, 24) to fill out the meaning. According to Jerome, writing from Bethlehem in the late fourth century, the verb was missing "in the Greek codices" (Heine 2002: 233). In other Alexandrian manuscripts (א, A, I, P, 6, 33, 81, 104, 256), however, the verb ὑποτασσέσθωσαν appears after ἀνδράσιν, so the text reads αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὑποτασσέσθωσαν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ (Let wives submit themselves to their own husbands as to the Lord). In a few Western witnesses ὑποτάσσεσθε appears after γυναῖκες, just

as it does in Col. 3:18 (D, F, G, and one manuscript of the Old Latin). In some late manuscripts of an independent text type (dating from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries), the same form appears after ἀνδράσιν (075, 0150, 424, 1852, 1912, 2200). In one late Alexandrian manuscript (Ψ), the form ὑποτασσέσθωσαν appears after γυναῖκες.

The variations are not entirely insignificant for the meaning of the passage. Without the verb, v. 22 is more closely connected to v. 21, and if Paul wrote the third-person-plural form of the verb, he is no longer addressing wives directly but simply telling his readers generally that wives must submit to their husbands (cf. 1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Clem. 21.6; Ign. *Pol.* 5.1; Pol. *Phil*. 4.2).

It is likely, however, that Paul did not supply a verb for verse 22. This supposition makes it easy to account for the presence of a verb in various forms and various places among the witnesses. When 5:22–6:9 began to be read aloud in churches as a separate passage, it would be necessary to supply a verb somewhere in the first sentence to make the reading intelligible (Robinson 1904: 204), and it is understandable that the form of the verb and its precise location would vary as the text was read in slightly different ways in different places. It is not easy, however, to account for the omission of the verb if Paul had originally supplied it.

Among the witnesses who supply a verb, moreover, the best attested form is the third-person imperative, and yet if Paul had written this, it is strange that he then proceeded to address children and slaves directly in the second person (6:1, 5). Although the manuscripts without the verb are few and from a single tradition (the Alexandrian), they nevertheless are early and, in view of the other considerations, probably preserve the original text.

5:27. I take the phrase ἵνα παραστήσῃ to refer to a reality that already exists (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 377; Schnackenburg 1991: 250–51; Best 1998: 545–46) rather than to a future reality (e.g., Ellicott 1859: 131; Eadie 1883: 422–23; O'Brien 1999: 425). This means that Paul uses παρίστημι differently here than he has used it in the betrothal imagery of 2 Cor. 11:2, where he is the chief actor and, in this role, envisions himself presenting the Corinthian congregation to Christ in marriage as a "pure virgin" unsullied by false teaching (11:4). That is a future reference in step with Paul's desire expressed elsewhere that the congregations under his oversight arrive at the final day "holy" and "blameless" (1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23; Col. 1:22) and that he be able to present them to the Lord Jesus on that day as his "crown" (1 Thess. 2:19; Phil. 4:1; cf. Rom. 15:16).

In the difference between 2 Cor. 11:2 and Eph. 5:27, however, there is no reason to see a sign that Ephesians is pseudepigraphic. Even in the undisputed letters the image can vary: in 2 Cor. 4:14 God "will present" (παραστήσει) both Paul and the Corinthian congregation to himself at the time of the resurrection, and in Rom. 12:1 the Roman believers are to "present" (παραστῆσαι) their bodies as sacrifices to God in the present (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15). It is certainly within the bounds of Paul's previous use of this image, therefore, for him to speak here of Christ presenting the church to himself in the present as a bride that is already cleansed, holy, and blameless.

5:30. In a number of manuscripts—across the Alexandrian (Ψ, 104), Western (D, F, G; cf. 1912), and Byzantine traditions (most)—the phrase ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ (from his flesh, and from his bones) follows Paul's comment that μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ (we are parts of his body). The phrase is clearly an allusion to Gen. 2:23 (with the order of "flesh" and "bones" reversed), but its meaning is obscure. Does it mean that Christ nourishes believers through the Lord's Supper (Calvin 1965: 209)? That he is united with them in their humanity (Ellicott 1859: 134–35)?[47] No explanation is convincing. From one way of looking at the problem, this might reduce the probability that a scribe added the phrase. Scribes tended to clarify rather than cloud the text (Muddiman 2001: 268; Hoehner 2002: 769–70).

47. See the thorough survey of earlier attempts to explain the phrase in Eadie 1883: 427–29.

The phrase is missing, however, from an impressive array of Alexandrian uncials as well as from several valuable minuscules with Alexandrian leanings (e.g., $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$,א, A, B, 048, 6, 33, 81, 1739). It is true that this limits the absence of the phrase primarily to one text type (Hoehner 2002: 769n3), but the antiquity and conservative nature of these manuscripts outweighs the value of the diversity of manuscripts with the longer reading. The phrase probably represents an unskillful attempt to smooth what is otherwise an abrupt transition from the thought that believers are members of Christ's body (v. 30) to the interpretation of Gen. 2:24 in terms of Christ and the church in (vv. 31–32).

2. Children and Parents (6:1–4)

Paul turns next to the relationship between children and parents, the second of the three major topics of Hellenistic philosophical reflection on the ordering of the household and a common topic of moral discussion in antiquity generally. Once again, he addresses children and fathers directly, speaking to the subordinate member of the pair first, and probably imagining that both groups are gathered within a house with other believers for worship, listening to his letter as it is read aloud (cf. 5:19–20).

Whereas his instruction to husbands has been longer than his instruction to wives, however, here the subordinate members of the pair—children—receive most of the attention. Paul urges children to obey their parents and gives three reasons why they should do this. First, it is conduct expected of those who have been incorporated into the Lord through their faith in the gospel. Second, it is "right," by which Paul probably means that obedience to parents is widely acknowledged to be fair and proper. Third, the Scriptures both command it and attach a promise to the command—the first promise in the Mosaic law that is attached to a specific command. Paul is primarily concerned with this third reason for obedience to parents: the Scriptures promise that, generally speaking, children who obey their parents will live successful and long lives.

When Paul turns to parents, he narrows his focus to fathers. Although children must obey both parents (6:1–2), Paul implicitly recognizes that as the dominant person in the ancient household, fathers need special instruction on how to use their positions of authority. Just as he did with husbands, Paul restricts the father's use of his authority to benevolent and positive purposes in the life of the one under his authority. Fathers should lovingly rear their children in the traditions of the faith, not driving them to anger, but warning them away from harmful influences (cf. 4:14) and teaching them to be disciples of the living Christ (cf. 4:20).

Exegesis and Exposition

[1]Children, obey your parents ⌜in the Lord⌝, for this is right. [2]Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, [3]that it might go well with you and you will live long on the earth.

[4]And fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

6:1 Just as in his treatment of wives and husbands and slaves and masters, Paul first addresses the subordinate members of the pair, and does so directly, as if they are present in the worshiping assembly where he expects this letter to be read. The tone of the command to children is slightly stronger than it was with wives: instead of implying a passive form of the verb ὑποτάσσω (*hypotassō*, submit) in his command, as he did with wives (5:22, 24b), he explicitly expresses an active form of the verb ὑπακούω (*hypakouō*, obey). The emphasis on the voluntary element in the submission of wives, then, is missing from the command to children. "Childen," he instructs them, "obey your parents" (cf. 6:5).

In the Greco-Roman world, the duties of children toward their parents included love (Cicero, *Part. or.* 25.88; Seneca, *Ben.* 3.1.5; Chaeremon in Stobaeus, *Flor.* 79; Balla 2003: 66, 68–69), honor (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil.* 7.120; Seneca, *Ben.* 3.1.5; Balla 2003: 63), providing for them in old age, burying them, and venerating them after death (Balla 2003: 64–68). All these activities were part of *pietas*, the virtue that lay "at the core of the Romans' ideal of family relations" and that involved the heartfelt fulfillment of one's duty toward the gods, country, and family (Saller 1994: 105). A person's highest moral duty, said Cicero (*Off.* 1.17.58, in Balla 2003: 64), was first to one's country and then to one's parents, "for their services have laid us under the heaviest obligation."

Obedience was a critical element in these obligations, although there were unusual circumstances in which disobedience was thought to be understandable (Saller 1994: 105–14; Balla 2003: 73–76). Musonius Rufus's first-century discourse on whether "obedience to parents in all things" (πάντα πειστέον τοῖς γονεῦσιν, *panta peisteon tois goneusin*) is necessary demonstrates the approach of most people: obedience to parents was the norm, and any exceptions to it needed thoughtful discussion.

Hellenistic Jewish literature takes a similar approach. Children were expected not only to provide for their elderly parents and see to their burial (Sir. 3:12; Sib. Or. 2.159–60; Philo, *Decalogue* 116; Tob. 4:3–4; Balla 2003: 94–96), but also to honor them next only to God (Philo, *Decalogue* 106–7; Sib. Or. 2.59–60; Ps.-Phoc. 8; Jub. 7.20; Balla 2003: 86–91), speak respectfully to them (Exod. 21:16 LXX [21:17 MT, Eng.]; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.248; Sir. 3:8; Sib. Or. 2.275–76; Balla 2003: 92), and provide for them in old age (Tob. 4:3; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.261; Balla 2003: 95; cf. 1 Tim. 5:4, 8; Matt. 15:3–8).

Just as in the Greco-Roman world generally, obedience to parents was a critical element in fulfilling one's duty toward them (Sir. 7:23; Jub. 39.6; Prov. 1:8–9; 3:11–12; 17:25; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15; Heb. 12:6–7; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.204; T. Reu. 3.8; T. Jud. 1.4; Balla 2003: 83–84, 93), although here too obedience to parents was sometimes qualified. It seems to have been assumed that where a conflict arose between obedience to parents and what is "just and profitable" (Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.236), including obedience to God (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.206), it would be necessary to disobey the teaching or wishes of one's parents (Balla 2003: 104–9).

Although in the closely parallel passage in Col. 3:20 Paul tells children to obey their parents "in all things" (κατὰ πάντα, *kata panta*), and here he simply tells them to obey their parents with no qualifications, it seems unlikely that he would have differed from his culture in advocating unlimited obedience to parents. As with his admonition to wives in 5:24 to submit to their husbands "in everything" (ἐν παντί, *en panti*), his emphasis lies on submission to those in authority. Since he is being concise, and since he assumes an ideal situation in which Christian parents are instructing Christian children (6:4), he does not say what he probably assumed his readers knew: there are unusual circumstances in which this command cannot be strictly obeyed.

Paul describes three motivations for his command, the first two of which occur in this first sentence of the new section. First, children are to obey their parents ἐν κυρίῳ (*en kyriō*, in the Lord). These words are missing from several important manuscripts in both the Alexandrian and Western traditions, but as the additional note explains, the argument for including them is more persuasive than the case for their omission. Throughout Ephesians the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ has referred to the incorporation of believers into Christ: they grow up into a holy temple "in the Lord" (2:21); Paul is a prisoner "in the Lord" (4:1); Paul gives his readers ethical instruction "in the Lord" (4:17); and when they believed the gospel, Paul's readers became light "in the Lord" (5:8). Here too, then, Paul must be talking about conduct that he expects of children because they are "in the Lord." Because they have been incorporated into Christ by faith (1:13), they should obey their parents.

Second, children should obey their parents because it is "right" (δίκαιος, *dikaios*) to do so. The adjective δίκαιος refers to conduct widely acknowledged to be fair and proper (Sir. 10:23; Phil. 4:8; Matt. 20:4; Luke 12:57; BDAG 247), and this statement probably reflects Paul's understanding that obedience to parents was a nearly universally acknowledged virtue. The philosopher Pythagoras (sixth cent. BC), for example, apparently considered gratitude, love, and obedience to parents to be "right" (δίκαιος), in part because parents are "our earliest and greatest benefactors" (Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorae* 38–40; G. Clark 1989: 15).[1] It was only fair that children should be dutiful toward their parents since their parents had given them life and reared them.

For Paul, obedience to parents was basic to the functioning of society, and the widespread neglect of this obvious principle of conduct was a sign of the moral chaos into which the world had degenerated in "the last days" (Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2). Believing children, however, should have nothing to do with this trend: their conduct with respect to their parents should match what everyone recognizes to be right.

Third, Paul believes that children should obey their parents because the Decalogue mandates it in what ancient Jews numbered as the fifth commandment **6:2–3**

1. See the discussion of Pythagoras in Balla 2003: 14–16, 22–24.

(Philo, *Decalogue* 106).[2] No formula introduces Paul's quotation of this commandment, and no conjunction joins it to the admonition it is intended to support. Paul simply states the commandment, probably a sign that he thinks it is well known to his readers and that it is self-evidently authoritative.

First-century Jewish interpreters frequently pointed out the important place that the commandment occupies within the Decalogue and the implications this has for the immense stature of parents. It sits on the "borderline," Philo says, "between the two sets of five," the first set governing one's relationship with God, and the second set governing one's relationship with people. This is because "parents by their nature stand on the borderline between the mortal and the immortal side of existence." Like other human beings, they are mortal, but because they give rise to a succession of other human beings, they share in God's immortality (*Decalogue* 106–7; cf. 119–20; *Spec. Laws* 2.224–25; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.206; Barclay 2007: 288–89).

Paul draws no parallels between parents and God. Instead, he explains the importance of the command from the promise that is attached to it and thus from the blessing that comes to children who obey it. Its importance is clear, he reasons, from its status as "the first command [ἐντολὴ πρώτη, *entolē prōtē*] with a promise."

This statement has puzzled interpreters for centuries because at first it seems to be incorrect. As Origen had already noticed in the third century, there is a promise attached to the second commandment, which forbids making idols. There we read that God will both punish those who hate him and show mercy to those who keep his decrees (Exod. 20:4–6; Heine 2002: 245). How, then, can Paul say that the fifth commandment is the first commandment with a promise attached?

Interpreters have answered this question in a wide variety of ways. Some argue that the word πρώτη carries a meaning other than its usual one of "first in sequence." Perhaps obedience to parents is the "weightiest" commandment with a promise (Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 95), or a "pre-eminent" commandment with a promise (Best 1998: 566–67), or the "most important" of the commandments that promise something (Muddiman 2001: 275), or "a commandment of great importance, with a promise attached" (BDAG 893).

Against all these interpretations, however, must stand the normal meaning of the term πρώτη. It is true that in the Gospels Jesus can speak of "the great and most important [πρώτη] commandment" (Matt. 22:38; cf. Mark 12:28–29), but even here πρώτη means "first in a sequence of two commandments ordered according to their importance" (Matt. 22:39; Mark 12:31). "The πρώτη commandment with a promise" most naturally means the first of a series of commands that has a promise (Meyer 1880: 315).

2. It is the fourth commandment in Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Anglican reckoning. A longer treatment of Paul's use of Exod. 20:12 here appears in Thielman 2007: 829, from which some of the wording of my comments on this verse is taken.

Three other explanations of the phrase start with the assumption that this is what it means. One of these explanations organizes the Decalogue into two parts, the first part governing duties to God, and the second part treating duties toward other human beings. The command to honor one's parents, then, would be the "first" commandment of the Decalogue's second part (Schnackenburg 1991: 261–62). There is no clear evidence, however, that first-century Jews organized the commandments this way. Philo describes the commands of the Decalogue that deal with God as more important than the commands that deal with mortals, and he considers the command to obey one's parents to "be concerned with mortal things" (*Spec. Laws* 2.261, trans. Colson 1939; Schnackenburg 1991: 262). Elsewhere, however, he places obedience to parents "on the border-line between the two sets of five" (*Decalogue* 106, trans. Colson 1939) and considers it the last of the commands about one's duty to God (*Decalogue* 51, 121; cf. Best 1998: 556). If we can tell anything from Rom. 13:9 about how Paul organized the Decalogue in his own thinking, he also considered obedience to parents as the last of the first five commands, not as the first command of the second set of five.

A second explanation says that Paul must have thought Exod. 20:12 to be the first commandment that children learned as they were growing up (Abbott 1897: 177, although hesitantly). If Paul had meant this, however, he would have expressed himself more clearly. It would have been simple to write, "This is the first commandment that you learned with a promise."[3]

The third among those explanations that assign πρώτη its most obvious meaning in this context, then, is probably correct, and most interpreters down through the centuries have adopted it. If Paul is thinking of the legislation that God gave to Moses for Israel on Sinai, and not of commandments that precede the Mosaic law, then the command to obey one's parents turns out to be the first commandment with a promise attached specifically to it. The second commandment certainly does precede the fifth commandment and does have a promise associated with it, but the promise is general in nature and applicable to much more than the second commandment: God punishes those who reject him and shows love to those who love him and keep his commandments (Calvin 1965: 213; Ellicott 1859: 138; Meyer 1880: 314; Eadie 1883: 439–40; Robinson 1904: 210; Aletti 2001: 295n98; Lincoln 1990: 404; cf. Moritz 1996a: 156, 172–74). Paul expresses the great importance of the command to obey one's parents by reminding the children in his audience that this is the first command in the Mosaic law specifically attached to a promise.

The promise given to those who obey the command has two parts: "that it might go well with you" and "that you will live long on τῆς γῆς [*tēs gēs*, the earth]."[4] The first part of this promise is identical to the fifth commandment

3. In Greek, this would simply involve inserting the phrase ἣν ἐμάθετε after πρώτη.

4. Ἔσῃ is the future indicative of εἰμί and represents a departure from the LXX of Exod. 20:12 and Deut. 5:16, both of which have ἵνα μακροχρόνιος γένῃ at this point (cf. Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.261). Commentators usually understand ἔσῃ to be dependent on ἵνα and point out that

as it appears in the LXX of both Exod. 20:12 and Deut. 5:16.[5] The second part of the promise in Eph. 6:3 drops the further definition of τῆς γῆς in both OT texts as "the land that the Lord your God is giving to you." This has the effect of changing the specific reference to the land of Canaan in the commandment into a reference to long life in general (cf. Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.261), thus making a commandment once pertinent only to the nation of Israel into a precept by which "the one new man" drawn from both Jews and Gentiles should live.

In Eph. 2:15, when Paul speaks of "setting aside the law of commandments [promulgated] in [the form of] decrees," therefore, he does not mean that the Mosaic law is no longer useful for guiding the conduct of God's people, nor do we find here that it is now useful for God's people in the same way that it once was. Rather, parts of the Mosaic law have been absorbed into the ethical teaching for the newly formed people of God, and they have been changed to make them universal in nature.

Much ink has flowed over the question of how the promise that obedient children will live long on the earth should be understood. Clearly, every obedient child does not have a long life. Some interpreters, therefore, have thought that the reference is to eternal life (Jerome [Heine 2002: 246–47]; Muddiman 2001: 274), others that the whole people as much as the individual is in view (De Wette 1843: 154), and still others that the reference to long life must be taken literally but represents a regressive and shallow moral perspective (Best 1998: 568).

Perhaps the most sensible comment on the issue came from Alford (1857: 138) long ago: "When we remember that the persons addressed are τὰ τέκνα, we must not depart from the simplest sense of the words." Paul envisioned an audience of children gathered in the house churches where this letter would be read aloud and whom he addresses directly. He therefore avoided subtleties and simply recalled to their minds a commandment that many of them had probably learned by heart. Ephesians was written in a world where between 39 and 50 percent of children died before their tenth birthday (Saller 1994: 25), rates so high that excessive mourning over a child's death was thought to be in poor taste (Dixon 1992: 99, 107). In such a situation, Paul probably expected that the same parents who taught their children the fifth commandment had already addressed the probing questions children

there is precedent for a future indicative following ἵνα elsewhere in Paul (Gal. 2:4; 1 Cor. 9:18; Eadie 1883: 440; Abbott 1897: 177; Hoehner 2002: 792).

5. The two Hebrew texts of the command differ slightly. Deuteronomy 5:16 speaks of long days and of life going well in the land, but Exod. 20:12 speaks simply of long days in the land. Some scholars (e.g., Bruce 1984: 397–98) have thought that Paul was quoting Deut. 5:16, presumably because his quotation agrees more with the Hebrew text of that command than with the Hebrew text of Exod. 20:12. But it seems reasonably clear that Paul was following the LXX of Exod. 20:12 rather than any Hebrew text. In the LXX of Exod. 20:12, σου is missing after μητέρα, just as it is in Eph. 6:2. Σου is present after μητέρα, however, in Deut. 5:16. See Lincoln 1982: 37–38; Moritz 1996a: 154–55; Best 1998: 566; Hoehner 2002: 788; Thielman 2007: 829.

often ask about how such ethical principles apply to practical, everyday life. Everyone would be aware that many well-behaved children succumb to untimely deaths, but most people would also know that, provided they escaped disease and accident, children who took to heart the wisdom of those who cared for them had a better chance of doing well and living long than those who despised their parent's instruction (Prov. 15:5; 20:20; 30:17; cf. Prov. 6:20–22; 13:1; 23:22).

6:4 Just as in his treatment of wives and husbands (5:22–33), so here in his treatment of children and parents, Paul instructs the male head of the household to conduct himself toward those under his authority with restraint and for their good. The καί (*kai*, also) with which the sentence begins stresses the mutuality of the relationship between children and parents: in the same way that children have a responsibility to obey their parents, fathers "also" have a responsibility to use their authority for the good of their children (Ellicott 1859: 139; Abbott 1897: 178; Haupt 1902a: 227; O'Brien 1999: 445).

Specifically, fathers are not to "provoke" their children "to anger" (παροργίζω, *parorgizō*), a verb that recalls the use of its corresponding noun in 4:26 (παροργισμός, *parorgismos*) and the command issued there not to let the sun set on one's wrath.[6] There Paul was concerned with the bitterness and resentment that results from anger left to fester. Here he is probably also concerned with the smoldering anger that results from unreasonable parental demands and severe punishment (cf. Col. 3:21). Although it is possible to exaggerate the extent to which the father in ancient Roman households threw his weight around (Saller 1994: 133–53), by modern standards he was an extraordinarily powerful figure, with far-reaching legal authority over his children. The powerful father was also part of Greek and Jewish culture (Hoehner 2002: 794–96). Here Paul reins in this power, urging fathers not to abuse their authority by treating their children in harsh, unfair ways that create resentment and bitterness.

Instead of this, fathers are to "bring up" (ἐκτρέφω, *ektrephō*) their children in "the training [παιδεία, *paideia*] and instruction [νουθεσία, *nouthesia*] of the Lord." Paul used the term ἐκτρέφω in 5:29 to refer to the loving care a husband should provide for his wife. In the LXX the term frequently refers simply to "rearing" children (e.g., 1 Kings 11:20; 12:8–10; 2 Kings 10:6; 2 Chron. 10:10; Isa. 23:4; Hos. 9:12; Zech. 10:9; 1 Esd. 4:16, 20; 1 Macc. 6:17; 2 Macc. 7:27). The "rearing" of children in the Jewish tradition included not only providing for their physical needs, but also showing them affection (2 Sam. 12:3 LXX), and especially teaching them the law of God (Deut. 6:6–7; 11:18–19; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.204; cf. 1.60; 2.173–74; *Ant.* 4.211; Barclay 2007: 287). Something similar to this last concern is Paul's focus when he says that children should be reared in the παιδεία and νουθεσία of the Lord.

6. In Greek literature, including the LXX, the verb appears far more often than the noun. Paul was familiar with the verb's common meaning "to provoke to anger" (LEH 473) in the LXX, as his quotation of Deut. 32:21 in Rom. 10:19 shows.

The term παιδεία had a broad range of meanings, from physical and mental training in the values of a particular culture (e.g., Plato, *Resp.* 2.376e; Pseudo-Plato, *Def.* 416; 4 Macc. 10:10; 13:22; 1 Tim. 3:16) to disciplinary punishment (e.g., 2 Esd. 7:26 LXX [Ezra 7:26 MT, Eng.]; 2 Macc. 6:12; 7:33).[7] In early Christian literature, even when the element of disciplinary punishment in παιδεία is emphasized, the educational value of the punishment, and so its inherently merciful quality, is also important (2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 12:5–11; 1 Clem. 56.16).

The term νουθεσία could refer simply to "good counsel" (Aristophanes, *Ran.* 1009, trans. Henderson 2002), but closer to the time of Paul it was used with slightly more negative connotations. In the Wisdom of Solomon it means the "warning" (NRSV) God gave the wilderness generation of Israelites about their conduct when he sent serpents among them in response to their complaints against God and Moses (16:6; cf. Num. 21:5–7). Philo used it in the same way of the "admonition" God gave the Egyptians when he struck them with plagues (*Moses* 1.113, 119, trans. Colson 1939). The rod that Judah left with Tamar reminds Philo of "admonition" (νουθεσία), "chastening" (σωφρονισμός, *sōphronismos*), and "discipline" (παιδεία; *Names* 135, trans. Colson 1939). Paul, too, calls the scriptural record of God's punishment of Israel's idolatry at the time of the exodus a "warning" (νουθεσία) for the Corinthian believers (1 Cor. 10:11; cf. Titus 3:10).

Here in Eph. 6:4, where Paul both circumscribes the power of the father of the household and reminds him of his responsibilities, it is likely that νουθεσία has an admonitory, but not a punitive, nuance (cf. Schnackenburg 1991: 263). His use of the word is similar to that of Diodorus Siculus (first cent. BC), who describes how the Sicilian tyrant Dionysius sold the philosopher Plato into slavery for speaking candidly to him. Plato's friends purchased his freedom and shipped him to Greece "with the friendly admonition [φιλικὴν νουθεσίαν, *philikēn nouthesian*] that a wise man should associate with tyrants either as little as possible [ἥκιστα, *hēkista*] or with the best grace possible [ἥδιστα, *hēdista*]" (Diodorus Siculus, *Biblio. hist.* 15.7.1, trans. C. Oldfather 1933–67).[8] Plato's friends used a traditional aphorism as a well-intended "admonition" to Plato not to make the same serious mistake again.

The tradition that Paul wanted fathers to use in the education of their children comes from "the Lord" (κυρίου, *kyriou*), that is, the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 5:20). The genitive noun κυρίου, then, is subjective, and Paul refers to the training and instruction that the Lord gives to children through the family father (Bertram, *TDNT* 5:624). Paul probably had especially in mind the sort of training and instruction about "the truth in Jesus" (4:21) that he had already mentioned in 4:20–24.

7. On the use of the term in Greek philosophy, see Urmson 1990: 121.

8. C. Oldfather 1933–67 notes that this proverb was thought to be from Aesop (*Fab.* 9.28).

Summary

In 6:1–4 Paul continues his instruction on living wisely in evil days, doing the Lord's will, growing in maturity, and living in the realm of the Spirit (5:15–18) with respect to one's conduct in the household. In this paragraph he addresses the relationship between children and their parents, especially their fathers. He instructs children to obey their parents for three reasons: (1) it is required by their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) it is universally recognized as the right thing to do; and (3) God has commanded it and has emphasized its importance, promising that, as a general rule, children who obey their parents will prosper. Fathers, for their part, should not use their authority over their children in ways that breed resentment but should instead instruct and admonish them with the teaching of Jesus.

Additional Note

6:1. The phrase ἐν κυρίῳ is absent from the important Alexandrian manuscript B and the Western trio D, F, and G. The manuscript support for including the phrase, however, is stronger. It includes the early Alexandrian witnesses 𝔓^{46}, ℵ, A, and Ψ; most Byzantine manuscripts; and 1912, which has Western affinities.

The strength of the external support for including the phrase has led most commentators to accept it (e.g., Meyer 1880: 311; Lincoln 1990: 395; Metzger 1994: 541–42; Hoehner 2002: 785–86n1). If it were a scribal gloss, they argue, it would have probably read ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ (5:22; 6:7) or would have been placed after δίκαιον (cf. Col. 3:20).

Best (1998) argues for omitting the phrase because the quotation of the commandment in 6:2 already implies the divine origin of the author's instructions. There was no need, then, for the author to emphasize that obedience to parents was a duty "in the Lord."

Redundancy is such a prominent stylistic feature of Ephesians, however, that a double reference to the divine origin of the idea of obedience to parents is not surprising. It seems best, then, to agree with the majority of commentators and accept the phrase as original on the basis of its superior external attestation.

3. Slaves and Masters (6:5–9)

Paul next addresses the relationship between slaves and masters, the third and final set of household relationships in the household code. As with the other two pairs (wives-husbands, children-parents), Paul first addresses the subordinate member of the slave-master pair, and as with the children-parents pairing, he devotes most of his energy to the subordinate party (Sellin 2008: 465). His advice to slaves consists of a main admonition to obey their masters (6:5a), followed by a series of phrases that describe the quality of this obedience (6:5b–7). Basically, slaves are to perform their duties for their masters with integrity and consider their work as done for Christ. Paul next gives the reason why slaves should do this: God will repay everyone, whether slave or free, for the good they have done (6:8). Surprisingly, he then tells masters to do for their slaves what he has just required slaves to do for their masters (6:9a), and again he finishes with a clause that gives the reason why masters should do this: they too have a master, and he is no respecter of persons (6:9b–c).

Throughout the section the emphasis lies on the leveling effect that Christ's lordship has on human relationships, and the reciprocity that should result from this among members of the household. Paul achieves this emphasis rhetorically by comparing the lordship of Christ with the lordship of the slave master (6:5, 6, 9b). He achieves it theologically by appealing to the principle of God's impartiality on the final day of judgment (6:9c).

It is often said that this passage accepts unquestioningly the institution of slavery as it existed in the first century. "There is doubtless no approval, but at the same time no disapproval of the existing slavery in itself," said Meyer (1880: 318) long ago, and most commentators would agree with him. Some more recent interpreters go further and see in the passage not merely an acceptance of slavery but also an attempt to provide theological support for the institution, particularly as it benefited the slaveholder (e.g., Glancy 2006: 144–45; Harrill 2006: 90–92).

As the notes below explain, however, this passage is more radical than the account of it given in either of these readings. There is no explicit criticism of slavery here, but the level of mutuality and reciprocity that is assumed to exist between master and slave creates an atmosphere in which it would have been difficult for slavery to survive if the advice of the passage had been rigorously followed. The problem that the passage highlights is not its own failure to rise above this brutal and ubiquitous institution, but the

failure of those who received the passage as authoritative both in antiquity and in more recent times to live out its radical implications.[1]

Exegesis and Exposition

[5]Slaves, obey your fleshly masters with fear and trembling in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ, [6]not in mere appearance as people-pleasers but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the inner person, [7]working as slaves with goodwill, as for the Lord and not for human beings, [8]because you know that each person who does something good will be repaid for this from the Lord, whether slave or free.

[9]And masters, do the same things for them, with the result that you give up the threat of violence, because you know that their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

6:5–7

Paul addresses slaves first, just as he has addressed wives and children first in the other two pairs of relationships. Paul's advice to slaves, like his advice to wives and children, moreover, is that they submit to the authority of the male household head. For wives, the submission is voluntary, but the term used for slaves is identical to the term used for children: they should "obey" their masters. Paul describes the slaves' "masters" (κύριοι, *kyrioi*) as "fleshly" (κατὰ σάρκα, *kata sarka*), and this subtly communicates that there is another "master" (κύριος, *kyrios*), Christ himself, whose authority is greater than that of any "fleshly" master and to whom the believing slave's ultimate loyalty lies. Eventually Paul will develop this thought in a direction that, from a theological perspective, levels the ground between slave and master. In 6:9 he reminds believing masters that both they and their slaves have a "Master" (κύριος) in heaven, who is no respecter of persons.

For the moment, however, Paul uses five phrases to describe the slave's obedience, and each phrase emphasizes the sincerity with which slaves should obey. First, they should obey "with fear and trembling." Within the NT, this phrase occurs only here and in the undisputed letters of Paul, where it can refer to the Philippian believers' manner of working out their salvation: they should do so "with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). It can also refer to the Corinthian believers' willingness to obey Titus when he came to them with corrective advice from Paul: they welcomed Titus "with fear and trembling" (2 Cor. 7:15). In a slight variation of the phrase, Paul says that he came among the Corinthians "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2:3). The phrase, then, seems to refer to the recognition of the subordinate and weak position that one occupies with respect to others. There is nothing here to indicate that the subordinate party fears physical punishment, and

1. On the brutality of Roman slavery, see especially Bradley 1987: 113–37; Saller 1994: 133–53; and W. V. Harris 2001: 317–36; for a review of the way NT scholars have treated ancient slavery, particularly in the context of their work on the undisputed letters of Paul, see Byron 2008.

insofar as Paul speaks to slaves with believing masters, he makes it clear that he expects masters not to use even the threat of violence against their slaves (6:9). Slaves, then, are to obey in full recognition of the subordinate position they occupy with respect to their masters.

Second, slaves should obey "in ἁπλότητι [*haplotēti*] of heart." The term ἁπλότης (*haplotēs*) means "integrity," and coupled with "heart" it refers to inner sincerity. It was a virtue highly valued in Hellenistic Judaism (1 Chron. 29:17; Wis. 1:1; T. Reu. 4.1; T. Iss. 3.8; 4.1; 7.7; Ps.-Phoc. 50; Sib. Or. 2.122; cf. BDAG 104; Sellin 2008: 448). In his commentary on Pseudo-Phocylides, W. Wilson (2005: 111) has captured its meaning in these contexts precisely:

> As a virtue, it was an important concept of moral anthropology, specifying the personal integrity that accompanies the correspondence of inner feeling with external expression. Predictably, the "soul" or "heart" was identified as the locus of moral efforts intended to cultivate this trait.

In the NT, ἁπλότης is a strictly Pauline word, appearing here, in the parallel passage in Col. 3:22, in 2 Corinthians (1:12; 8:2; 9:11, 13; 11:3), and in Romans (12:8), where it consistently refers to a sincere attitude, often expressed in giving generously to others (Ellicott 1859: 141; BDAG 104). The obedience of the slave, Paul says, should have this straightforward character: there should be no division between the quality of the labor produced and the attitude of the one who produces it.

Third, slaves should obey "as to Christ." Some early Christian domestic advice urged slaves to "be subject to" their "masters as to a replica of God" (Did. 4.11; cf. Doctrina Apostolorum 4.11), but that is not the meaning here (quoted from Harrill 2006: 88–89). Just as in 6:7 and Col. 3:23, Paul instead contrasts laboring as a slave for human beings with laboring as a slave for the Lord (see the comments above on 5:22). It is not that the master represents Christ to the believing slave, but almost the opposite: the master is factored out of the equation and replaced with the Lord. Work that believing slaves have no choice but to do now becomes a way for them to "walk worthily" of their calling as believers (4:1). In light of this, Harrill's comment (2006: 90) that masters are the only people in the passage "directly accountable to the Lord" is very wide of the mark.

Fourth, slaves are to obey not merely when the slave master's eye is on them, as if they were merely to please people, but from their inner being as people who are slaves of Christ and committed to the will of God. The term ὀφθαλμοδουλία (*ophthalmodoulia*, eye-service) apparently appears here and in Col. 3:22 for the first time in extant Greek literature (as a search of the *TLG* confirms), but there is little doubt about its meaning, especially since Paul couples it both here and in Col. 3:22 with the term ἀνθρωπάρεσκος (*anthrōpareskos*, people-pleaser [ESV]). Paul refers to service that is performed only under the gaze of one's overseer and does not come "from the inner person" (ἐκ ψυχῆς, *ek psychēs*; cf. the similar contrast in 2 Clem. 13.1).

Once again, Harrill's comments on the passage misconstrue its meaning. Harrill (2006: 91) argues that the author of Ephesians, in line with ancient optical theory and ideologies of slave control, wanted slaves to identify their masters with the all-seeing Lord, who knew whether the slave was being obedient even in the absence of the earthly master. In addition, slaves must give up any struggle to keep their autonomy and should concede to their masters full power over their inner selves (ψυχαί, *psychai*).

The Paul of the undisputed letters, however, emphasizes the importance of sincerity and honesty in one's dealings with others (2 Cor. 1:17–18; 2:17; 3:2; 4:2), a quality that sometimes is translated into specific instructions to those under his authority to obey him "not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence" (Phil. 2:12), or into Paul's insistence that what he says in his letters when absent he does when he is physically present (2 Cor. 10:11). This ideal of acting sincerely and according to one's inner convictions was widely valued in ancient Greco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish ethics, and it is not surprising to see it repeated either in the undisputed letters of Paul with respect to believers generally or in Ephesians and Colossians with respect to the conduct of slaves.[2] It is unlikely, then, to be a subtle power play designed to get more and better work from slaves.

Fifth, Paul says that slaves should do their assigned work "with goodwill" (μετ' εὐνοίας, *met' eunoias*). Ἐυνοία was a virtue that slaveholders valued in a slave. A slaveholder might leave in his will instructions to release at his death his "slave bodies . . . for [their] goodwill [εὔνοιαν] and affection" (P.Oxy. 494.5–6), and another might regret the loss of "the only friendly [εὔνουν, *eunoun*] and faithful slave she had" (Lucian, *Bis acc.* 16; trans. Harmon, Kilburn, and MacLeod 1913–67).[3] Slaves should obey their owners, then, with a positive attitude. Perhaps recognizing that this could be difficult because of the innate injustice involved in the institution of slavery, Paul urges slaves to consider their obedience as rendered "to the Lord [κυρίῳ, *kyriō*]" rather than to human beings.

In sum, slaves should obey their masters with sincerity and integrity, recognizing the subordinate position they occupy. They should avoid a division between the obedience they render and their willingness to render it. Their obedience to their masters (κύριοι, *kyrioi*) should instead arise from their inner commitment to the Lord (κύριος, *kyrios*).

6:8 Paul next gives the reason why the obedience that slaves give their masters should arise from the inner attitude of goodwill he has just described.[4] Any good thing an individual does, he says, is "repaid" by the Lord, and this is true of the slave as much as it is of the free person. The term κομίζω (*komizō*),

2. See W. Wilson 2005: 109–11 and Sellin 2008: 468, who cite, for example, Homer, *Il.* 9.312–13; Prov. 26:23–25; Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 10.5; Ps.-Phoc. 48–50; Sib. Or. 2.120–24.

3. See BDAG 409. Both texts come from the mid-second century AD. Cf. also Xenophon, *Oec.* 12.5, where εὔνοια is the most important quality of the slave who oversees other slaves on an estate (Alford 1857: 138).

4. Εἰδότες is an adverbial participle of cause, modifying the main verb ὑπακούετε in 6:5.

when it appears in the middle voice, as it does here, means "receive," often in the sense of repayment in kind (2 Macc. 8:33; Col. 3:25). Paul uses it this way in 2 Cor. 5:10 to refer to the appearance of believers before Christ's judgment seat so that "each might be repaid for the things he or she did in the body, whether good [ἀγαθόν, *agathon*] or not so good [φαῦλον, *phaulon*]." Although it is possible that the reference here in Ephesians is to the mundane rewards a master might give a slave to encourage the slave's cooperation and increased productivity (Harrill 2006: 92), it is much more likely, in light of the parallel in 2 Cor. 5:10 and the application of the principle to both "slave" and "free," that Paul describes the eschatological reward that those will receive whose inner convictions have given rise to good conduct.

The phrase "whether slave or free" (εἴτε δοῦλος εἴτε ἐλεύθερος, *eite doulos eite eleutheros*) is reminiscent of other statements in the Pauline corpus that nullify social and ethnic divisions for those who have been baptized and who have thus "put on" Christ or the "new human being" (Gal. 3:27–28; 1 Cor. 1:28; 12:13; Col. 3:10–11; cf. Philem. 16). The implication of the statement is clear: ultimately there is no difference between slave and free in God's eyes. This would come as an encouragement to slaves, whose freedom was often limited merely to the attitude they took toward what they were commanded to do, and it would come as a warning to masters, who may have thought of themselves as free to do whatever they wished with their slaves.

6:9 Paul now makes this thought explicit as he turns directly to slave masters. The form of his instruction to them is similar to the form of his instruction to slaves, although briefer. Masters are addressed directly (cf. v. 5a); they are instructed in how to behave (cf. vv. 5b–7); and the reason why they should behave this way is given in a clause beginning with the participle εἰδότες (*eidotes*, because you know; cf. v. 8). Paul can be brief because he intends for masters to act in the same way he has just instructed the slaves to behave—there is no need to repeat himself.

What could Paul mean by saying that masters should "do the same things" to their slaves? Most interpreters claim that Paul merely intends to instruct masters in a general way to treat their slaves as well as their slaves should treat them. The command is another way of urging masters to treat their slaves justly and fairly (Col. 4:1). As Westcott (1906: 90) puts it, there is a presupposition of human equality here, but it is "identity of spirit and not identity of action."[5] Presumably Paul does not mean that masters should obey their slaves (v. 5), but three considerations make it probable that the radical nature of the statement should not be downplayed.

5. Paul's advice, then, would be fairly conventional, at least for a thoughtful Stoic. Cf. Seneca's pithy summary of his view of the treatment of slaves: "Treat your inferiors as you would be treated by your betters" (*Ep.* 47.11, trans. Gummere 2006). Some interpreters think that Eph. 6:9 articulates a somewhat lower standard than this. Muddiman (2001: 281) thinks that the author "was not in the slightest degree interested in laying down rules for the behaviour of slave-owners." Harrill (2006: 90) believes that 6:9 means Christian leaders should reward "good" slaves (cf. v. 8) as a way of shutting them up.

First, the context moves in the direction of mutuality between slave and master. Paul has spoken of "fleshly masters" in 6:5, subtly reminding slaves and masters alike that they all are ultimately subject to another master. He says this explicitly at the end of 6:8 and the end of 6:9, with his comments that slave and free will be treated in the same way at the final judgment and that there is no favoritism with the heavenly master to whom both are ultimately subject.

Second, there was a strong conviction in early Christianity, originating in the teaching of Jesus, that those in positions of authority should adopt the role of slaves with respect to those under their authority (Mark 10:41–45; Matt. 20:24–28; John 13:1–17; cf. Luke 12:37). The Paul of the undisputed letters was aware of this ethic of mutual service (Gal. 5:13; 1 Cor. 9:19), and it is likely that the mutual submission articulated at the head of the household code, in 5:21, is indebted to it (*pace* Best 1998: 583).

Third, the theology of Eph. 1–3 is deeply indebted to the notion that human beings are united with one another in their rebellion against God (2:2–3, 11–12; 4:17–19, 22; 5:7–8a) and in the opportunity to become newly created human beings through faith in the gospel (2:10, 14–22; 4:23–24). It is plausible to think of the mutuality expressed in the phrase "do the same things for them" as originating from this view of humanity.[6]

This approach is consistent with Paul's next step: he deprives masters of the threat of violence (ἀπειλή, *apeilē*), the primary means of slave control in antiquity.[7] Slaves were regularly beaten with the whip in Roman society, a reminder to everyone of their low social status as people completely without honor (Saller 1994: 133–53). Slave masters could, and regularly did, vent their anger on their slaves with various forms of physical abuse, an activity that was occasionally criticized, but even then, the concern was typically with the harm that excessive wrath might do to the master rather than any feeling of pity for the slave (W. V. Harris 2001: 317–36). Although positive encouragement to obey was also used to keep slaves in submission, violence was the primary foundation of the institution: "Slaves were never in a position to predict when the wrath of an owner would descend upon them and their lives were thus conditioned by this perennial fear of physical abuse and maltreatment. Within that element of fear lay owners' capacity for the permanent control of their slaves" (Bradley 1987: 137; cf. Garnsey 1996: 8–9; W. V. Harris 2001: 322). Believing masters, however, must "give up" (ἀνίημι, *aniēmi*) the threat of violence.[8] The command is not qualified in any way. It is not that masters

6. It was Gregory of Nyssa who finally, in the late fourth century, concluded from the Christian understanding of God's creation of humanity that slave ownership was a sin and an affront to God (*Homilies* 4 on Eccles. 2:7, quoted and analyzed in Garnsey 1996: 80–83).

7. Ἀπειλή seems to have been a natural word to use of precisely the kind of physical violence with which slaves were frequently threatened. See Philo, *Virtues* 124; Diodorus Siculus, *Biblio. hist*. 37.13.2; Plutarch, *Cohib. ira* 459a.

8. Syntactically, the participle ἀνιέντες is probably an adverbial participle of result ("do the same things for them, with the result that you give up the threat of violence"), but the rhetorical effect is virtually the same as an imperative.

must give up certain forms of threatening (*pace* Hoehner 2002: 814), but they must give up threatening entirely. With this command, Paul has cut the thread that held the institution of slavery together.

He concludes by providing the reason why masters should act in such countercultural ways toward their slaves: there is no favoritism with the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the "master" (κύριος, *kyrios*) not only of slaves, but also of slave masters (κύριοι, *kyrioi*). The principle frequently expressed in the OT and early Judaism that God is an impartial judge (e.g., Deut. 10:17; 2 Chron. 19:7; Sir. 35:12–13; Jub. 5.16; 21.4; 30.16; 33.18; T. Job 43.13) was used in early Christianity to demonstrate the theological legitimacy of the gospel's reach across ethnic lines from Jews to Gentiles (Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:34–35; cf. Dunn 1988: 89; BDAG 887). Here Paul applies the same principle to differences in social standing, with the effect that there is no difference between slave and master when both are in the presence of the Lord (cf. Gal. 2:6; Col. 3:25).

Summary

In 6:5–9 Paul concludes his advice on how believers within a traditional Greco-Roman household can live wisely, do the Lord's will, grow in maturity as human beings, and live in the Spirit (5:15–18). Slaves may wonder how any of this can happen for them since they are not free to live as they choose. Paul's advice shows that these characteristics of the believer's life can be theirs also since they can always freely choose what their attitude will be to the work they are forced to do. They can view even forced labor as a way of serving the Lord, and this will reduce the tension between their inner disposition toward their work and the work itself. The Lord, moreover, is not really a slave master. He makes no distinction between slave and free, but rewards both groups on the final day not according to their social status but according to the good they have done.

Paul's advice to believing slave masters subtly undermines the whole system of slaveholding. Slave-owning believers are, in a sense, to submit to their slaves (5:21), serving their slaves in the same way they desire their slaves to serve them. The threat of violence is impossible in such an arrangement, and without the threat of violence, the whole system will theoretically collapse.

This is the only option consistent with the anthropology and soteriology of Eph. 1–3. If every believer had been previously dead because of sin, and if the cross has torn down not only the wall of sin between every believer and God but also the wall between every believing Gentile and Jew (2:14), then the wall between slave and free also has to crumble.

X. Avoiding and Transforming the Deeds of Darkness (5:3–14)
XI. Wise Conduct within the Household (5:15–6:9)
➤XII. Standing against the Strategies of the Devil (6:10–20)
XIII. A Concluding Commendation and a Final Prayer-Wish (6:21–24)

XII. Standing against the Strategies of the Devil (6:10–20)

Paul concludes the main part of his letter with a stirring call to arms and to prayer in light of all that he has said up to this point. "Henceforth" (τοῦ λοιποῦ, *tou loipou*; 6:10) his readers should be strong in the mighty strength of God by putting on the armor that God provides and being devoted to constant prayer. Only in this way will they be able to "stand" against the onslaught of the devil and his cosmic allies.

The passage shows the same curious mixture that appears elsewhere in the letter of a clear general structure that is ambiguous in its details.[1] At one level, the passage seems to fall into two sections: an exhortation to be strong, using military imagery (6:10–17), and an exhortation to pray that is more straightforward and in which the military imagery all but disappears (6:18–20).[2] At the grammatical level, however, these two distinct parts are closely tied together. The participles προσευχόμενοι (*proseuchomenoi*, praying) and ἀγρυπνοῦντες (*agrypnountes*, watching) at the beginning of the exhortation to pray (6:18) depend grammatically on the imperative δέξασθε (*dexasthe*, receive) at the end of the exhortation to put on the armor of God: "*Receive* [δέξασθε] the helmet of salvation and the sword that comes from the Spirit, which is the word of God, *praying* [προσευχόμενοι] at all times in the Spirit, through every prayer and urgent petition, and *being watchful* [ἀγρυπνοῦντες] in this very thing with all devotion and urgent petition for all the saints."

Despite these structural ambiguities, the purpose of the section is clear. It exhorts the letter's readers, in light of all that has been said, to be strong in the Lord. In 1:17–23, Paul reported to his readers that when he prayed for them, he asked God to enlighten the eyes of their hearts so that they might understand the massive power that God has placed at their disposal through the risen and victorious Christ. This power has given them victory over "the Ruler of the realm of the air" (2:2, 6) and has constituted them as a unified people. Paul can describe this unified people by using the imagery of a newly created "human being" (2:15; cf. 4:11–16) and of the "dwelling place" of God's Spirit (2:19–22). As a unified church, they are the primary evidence that God's plan to unite all things in heaven and on earth in Christ (1:9–10) is being successfully executed (3:6), and so the church serves as a witness to the enemy powers of the cosmos that their defeat remains secure (3:10). This

1. See the introductory comments above on 1:3–14, 20–23; 2:1–10; 3:1–7, 8–13; 4:1–16; 4:25–5:2.

2. There is perhaps an echo of the military image in the theme of watchfulness (ἀγρυπνοῦντες). "Probably not," according to Best 1998: 606.

critical unity, however, needs to be worked out in practical ways in the day-to-day interaction of believers with each other (4:1–16; 4:20–5:2; 5:15–6:9) and with the unbelieving world (4:17–19; 5:3–14).

With this concluding call to arms and exhortation to pray, Paul draws these themes together and succinctly outlines the task that lies ahead for his readers. God's great strength is available to them in Christ (1:19–23), but they must be empowered in this great strength (6:10). They have been rescued from following the Course of this world, the Ruler of the realm of the air (2:2), but they must recognize the strategic cleverness of their foe, who is not blood and flesh, and that the enemy's defeat, although certain, has not yet been accomplished (6:11–12). They know the truth (1:13; 4:21, 24–25; 5:9), understand righteousness (4:24; 5:9), and have been prepared for battle by the gospel of peace (2:14–15, 17; 4:3). They have exercised faith in the gospel (1:13; 2:8; 3:12, 17) and through it have received the Spirit and salvation (1:13; 2:8). Now they must "put on," "take up," and "receive" these gifts anew and in the present time (6:11, 13, 14–15, 17). In this way they will be able "to stand" (στῆναι, *stēnai*; 6:11, 13), "stand" (στῆτε, *stētei*; 6:14), and "to withstand" (ἀντιστῆναι, *antistēnai*; 6:13 NRSV) the onslaught of the devil and the cosmic powers aligned with him.

This section of Ephesians has played an important role in the argument that the letter is pseudonymous. It seems to some interpreters to be an edited version of Col. 4:2–4, where there is also a request for prayer whose vocabulary is similar to Eph. 6:18–20. It is difficult, say these interpreters, to imagine Paul editing Colossians in this way (e.g., Lincoln 1990: lii; Schnackenburg 1991: 30, 281, 282, 284).[3] The reference to Paul's coworkers in Col. 4:3 ("praying at the same time for *us*"), moreover, has dropped away (Schnackenburg 1991: 282–83), and in the view of some interpreters, Paul now appears as a martyr, boldly bearing witness to the gospel despite his imprisonment (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 441; 1995: 109; Sellin 2008: 484–87). Such a portrait seems to fit better in the late first century, when Paul was becoming a legendary hero, than during Paul's lifetime (Sellin 2008: 58, 486; cf. Beker 1991: 71–72).

This understanding of the paragraph, however, is not convincing. As Muddiman (2001: 295) observes, it is difficult to imagine what would motivate a pseudonymous author to make the minute and seemingly inconsequential adjustments to the vocabulary of Col. 4:2–4 that this theory requires (see footnote 3). Judgments about what seems characteristic of the late first century and what seems characteristic of the historical Paul are subjective, but it does not seem implausible that the Paul of the undisputed letters would speak in

3. Ephesians 6:18–20 and Col. 4:2–4 share a concern that their readers be watchful (ἀγρυπνέω/γρηγορέω) in their praying, that they devote (προσκαρτέρησις/προσκαρτερέω) themselves to it, and that they pray that (ἵνα/ἵνα) God might open (ἄνοιξις/ἀνοίγω) Paul's mouth (τοῦ στόματός μου) or a door for the word (θύρα τοῦ λόγου) so that he might explain (γνωρίζω/λαλέω) the mystery (τὸ μυστήριον/τὸ μυστήριον) of the gospel (τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) or of Christ (τοῦ Χριστοῦ), for which he is a prisoner (ὑπὲρ οὗ πρεσβεύω ἐν ἁλύσει/δι' ὃ καὶ δέδεμαι), as he is supposed to do (ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι/ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι).

the voice of Eph. 6:18–20, asking the Ephesians to pray for him that he might proclaim the mystery of the gospel boldly. In Romans, Paul asks his readers to pray for him personally in light of his impending, difficult mission to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:30–32; *pace* Best 1998: 607, no coworkers are mentioned). In Philippians, the imprisoned Paul values the Philippians' prayers and hopes that he might not be ashamed but speak boldly when called on to do so (Phil. 1:19–20). The ironic remark in Eph. 6:20 that he "serves as an enchained ambassador," moreover, seems fully in step with the paradoxical way Paul speaks of his suffering in 2 Cor. 2:14; 4:7–12; 6:4–9; 11:21–33; 12:7–10; and 13:4.

Lincoln (1995) has emphasized both the stirring nature of the rhetoric of this section and its function as a recapitulation of the major themes of the letter. These two characteristics of the section feature largely in his argument that the author has purposely constructed 6:10–20 as a *peroratio*, or ἐπίλογος (*epilogos*), the prescribed concluding element for a speech in the ancient rhetorical handbooks (e.g., Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.19; Quintilian, *Inst*. 6.1). The *peroratio* was supposed to recapitulate the argument of a speech in a way that made the audience ill disposed toward the speaker's opponents and well disposed toward the speaker himself. This happens in 6:10–20, argues Lincoln (1995: 107–8), when the author describes the devil in bleak terms ("darkness," "evil") and uses the device of pseudonymity to engender sympathy among his readers with Paul, who courageously continues to proclaim the gospel despite his chains.

Lincoln (1995: 110–11) also suggests that 6:10–20 borrows elements from the prebattle speeches that generals gave to their soldiers to encourage them to fight bravely (e.g., Xenophon, *Cyr*. 1.5.7–14; Thucydides, *Pel. War* 2.89; Polybius, *Hist*. 3.63–64; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 6.6–9; Cassius Dio, *Rom. Hist*. 38.36–46; 50.16–22, 24–30; Herodian, *Hist. Emp.* 3.6.1–7).[4] Lincoln's analysis is helpful in a general sense. There may have been an expectation among many well-educated people in the first century that the final part of a discourse should include a summary of what was said, and that an exhortation to action could end with a succinct emotional appeal. The differences between 6:10–20 and either the *peroratio* or the general's speech before battle, however, are notable. This passage recapitulates what has gone before and stirs the emotions in a more subtle way than the handbooks envision for the *peroratio* (Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.19.5–6; Quintilian, *Inst*. 6.1.1–2, 9–55). It is much shorter, moreover, than the typical prebattle speech in the accounts of the Greek historians, and unlike those speeches, it emphasizes the strength of the opposing enemies (6:12) rather than their weakness (Xenophon, *Cyr*. 1.5.11; Thucydides, *Pel. War* 2.89.2, 11; Polybius, *Hist*. 3.64.5–8; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 6.7.4; Cassius Dio, *Rom. Hist*. 50.16.2–3; 50.18.1–4;

4. Best (1998: 586) also believes that 6:10–20 has affinities with such speeches but cites 1QM 15 as his example. In both its brevity and its thematic elements, the 1QM passage provides a closer analogy to Eph. 6:10–20 than the lengthy and politically complex prebattle speeches of the Greek historians.

50.27.6–7; 50.29; Herodian, *Hist. Emp.* 3.6.6–7). The picture of Paul at the end, moreover, does not so much call the reader to emulate the courage of a martyred hero as ask for prayer for one who seems afraid that he may not, in his own strength, be able to rise to the challenge of what he knows he must do (6:18).

This final section of the letter's argument, then, is probably not consciously constructed as a *peroratio* or prebattle speech, nor is it the product of an admiring follower of Paul. It is instead an expansion of the call to watchfulness, arms, and courage that Paul has used elsewhere near the end of his letters (1 Thess. 5:7–8; 1 Cor. 16:13; Rom. 13:11–14), and a realistic request for prayer in difficult circumstances similar to Rom. 15:30–32.

Here Paul subtly sums up what the readers of the letter must do in order to fulfill their role in God's plan to unite all things in Christ. They must stand against the devil and his forces on the ground that God has won for them in Christ. To do this they must live in the truth of the gospel, the righteousness that it inculcates, the preparation to battle evil that it brings, and the faith with which they first have believed it. They must constantly receive both salvation and the Spirit's application of the gospel to their lives. In addition, they must constantly and devotedly pray for themselves, for other Christians, and especially for Paul in his difficult circumstances.

A. Wearing God's Protective Armor (6:10–17)

The exhortation to grow strong in the Lord by putting on his armor can be divided into three parts: an introduction that states the basic concern of the exhortation (v. 10); a general command to put on the armor of God, with reasons why it is necessary to do so (vv. 11–13); and a more-specific exhortation to put on six pieces of armor, each identified with an element of the believer's existence in the Lord (vv. 14–17).

The basic exhortation (v. 10) is almost a title over the whole section, grammatically unconnected to the rest. Paul wants his readers to make use of the great power that God has placed at their disposal and that, according to 1:17–23, he has prayed they would understand (v. 10).

The general command to put on the armor of God (vv. 11–13) explains specifically how Paul's readers can carry out the exhortation of 6:10 and why they must carry it out. This subsection of the passage is arranged in four parts, the last two essentially repeating the first two:

A command (to put on God's armor)
  The reason for the command (the enemy is nonphysical and powerful)
A command (to take up God's armor)
  The purpose for the command (to prepare for withstanding present evil)

The redundancy of the subsection emphasizes the gravity of its point: believers must prepare themselves for the intense spiritual struggle they are facing if they are to keep the ground that God has won for them in Christ.

Paul next describes six pieces of armor that his readers should put on (vv. 14–17). Each piece is identified with an element of Christian existence that has played an important part in the rest of the letter: truth (1:13; 4:15, 21–25; 5:9), righteousness (4:24; 5:9; 6:1), gospel preparation (1:13; 2:17; 3:6, 8; 4:11), faith (1:1, 13, 15, 19; 2:8; 3:12, 17; 4:5, 13), and salvation (1:13; 2:5, 8; 5:23). Paul connects putting on the first four pieces of armor closely with the initial imperative "stand, therefore" and presents equipping oneself with this armor as the means by which "standing" firm in the midst of the onslaught of evil becomes possible (vv. 14–16). The flow of thought can be displayed in an overly literal translation laid out in schematic form:

Stand		
by having girded	your waist	with truth
by having put on	the breastplate	of righteousness

by having shod	the feet	with the readiness of the gospel of peace
by having taken up	the shield	of faith

The last piece of armor in this set, "the shield of faith," stands apart from the other three as especially important. Paul's readers are to take it up "in addition to everything else," and it has a special purpose: "to snuff out all the ignited missiles of the evil one."

The last two pieces of armor are connected with a new imperative, "receive" (v. 17). The term emphasizes the gift character of these two pieces, but its imperative mood emphasizes that believers have a role to play in making these gifts effective: they must "receive" them.

The tension between what God has already done for believers and the need for believers to appropriate what he has done for them in their day-to-day existence lies beneath all of 6:10–17. Believers are already saved (2:8) by their faith in the word of God (1:13), and this salvation "is the gift of God" (2:8–9). Yet in order to stand against the devil and his cosmic allies, believers must receive these gifts as armor and wield them in their defense.

Exegesis and Exposition

[10]⌜Henceforth⌝, grow strong in the Lord and in the might of his strength.
[11]Put on the armor of God that you might be able to stand against the strategies of the devil, [12]because ⌜our⌝ intense struggle is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the evil spiritual beings in the heavenly places. [13]Because of this, take up the full armor of God that you might be able to withstand in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to stand.
[14]Stand, therefore, having girded your waist with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15]and having shod your feet with the ⌜readiness⌝ of the gospel of peace, [16]in addition to everything else, having taken up the shield of faith by which you are able to snuff out all the ignited missiles of the evil one. [17]And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword that comes from the Spirit, which is the word of God, . . .

6:10 Most commentators quickly pass over the opening phrase of this new section, and this is entirely appropriate if one thinks either that Paul wrote the accusative-case expression τὸ λοιπόν (*to loipon*) or that, if he wrote the genitive form τοῦ λοιποῦ (*tou loipou*), he understood it in the same sense as τὸ λοιπόν.[1] In either case, Paul moves to the concluding section of his letter with the simple expression "Finally. . . ."

1. For the first position, see, e.g., Eadie 1883: 455; Hoehner 2002: 819–20; for the second position, see, e.g., Robinson 1904: 212; Masson 1953: 218n5; Schnackenburg 1991: 271n1; Aletti 2001: 306n7; Lincoln 1990: 441; Best 1998: 589–90.

This simple reading of τοῦ λοιποῦ, however, is not convincing. As the additional note explains, Paul probably did not write τὸ λοιπόν here but τοῦ λοιποῦ, and τοῦ λοιποῦ does not mean "finally." It is a short form of the phrase τοῦ λοιποῦ χρόνου (*tou loipou chronou*) and clearly means "from now on," "in the time that remains," "henceforth."[2] It is best to give τοῦ λοιποῦ its natural meaning, therefore, and to understand it as an introduction to an admonition that outlines what Paul wants his readers to do "from now on" (Westcott 1906: 92; Yoder Neufeld 1997: 109–10; 2002: 292).[3] He is urging them to leave the past behind—perhaps their past attitude of discouragement (3:13) or lingering elements of their existence as unbelievers (2:1–3, 11–13; 4:20–25; 5:8). From this point forward they must actively resist the onslaught of the devil and his minions with the gifts of "armor" that God has given his people (6:11–17) and with prayer (6:18–20).

Near the letter's beginning Paul has told his readers that he constantly prays for God to give them an understanding of his mighty strength (τὸ κράτος τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ, *to kratos tēs ischyos autou*), placed at their disposal in Christ (1:17–23). Here in 6:10 he revisits both the concept of God's power and the concept that this power is available "in Christ." Now, however, he moves beyond understanding to action by urging his readers to "grow strong [ἐνδυναμοῦσθε, *endynamousthe*] in the Lord and in the might of his strength." The term ἐνδυναμόω means "strengthen" in the active voice, and in the passive voice can mean "be strengthened, empowered" (Ps. 51:9 LXX [52:9 MT; 52:7 Eng.]). It was sometimes used to refer to God's empowerment of someone for a special task. According to the text of Judg. 6:34 LXX (Vat.), "A spirit of the Lord empowered [ἐνεδυνάμωσεν] Gideon" (NETS); and according to Clement of Rome, "Many women, being strengthened [ἐνδυναμωθεῖσαι] by the grace of God, have performed many manly deeds" (1 Clem. 55.3; Holmes 2007): Judith, for example, killed Holophernes (55.4–6), and Esther delivered her people from destruction (55.6).

The imperative form of the verb here, however, makes it likely that the term, although passive, has an active nuance (cf. BDAG 333). Just as Abraham "grew strong in faith" (ἐνεδυναμώθη τῇ πίστει, *enedynamōthē tē pistei*) by trusting God to be faithful to his promise despite all appearances to the contrary (Rom. 4:20), and just as Timothy should "grow strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" by imitating the faithfulness of Onesiphorus (2 Tim. 2:1; cf. 2 Tim. 1:16–17), so the readers of Ephesians should "grow strong" in their position in the Lord and in their use of the power God has made available to them by putting on the armor of God.

2. See MM 380; LSJ 1060; and LSJSup 198. For the full phrase, see Sophocles, *El.* 317; and for the short form, see, e.g., Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.189; Thucydides, *Pel. War* 4.98.1; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.101; 4.187; 7.145, 362. Paul uses the short form in Gal. 6:17, and there too "from now on" or "henceforth" makes good sense. The temporal use of τοῦ λοιποῦ is not merely a classical idiom. It also appears in the common Greek of the papyri from the third century BC to the second century AD with the meaning "henceforth" (MM 380).

3. This does not mean that we should follow Barth (1974: 759–60) and adopt an eschatological meaning for the phrase ("For the remaining time . . .").

This certainly does not mean that they "grow strong" by their own efforts alone: as 3:16 makes clear, believers are "strengthened in power" by God, as a free gift. Paul nevertheless considers it also appropriate to call on them to "be strengthened" by making use of the gifts God has given them ("put on," v. 11; "take up," v. 13; "stand firm," v. 14). In a similar way, Paul can urge the Corinthians, "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, take courage, grow strong [κραταιοῦσθε, *krataiousthe*]" (1 Cor. 16:13; Bruce 1984: 403).

6:11 Although no conjunction links this next sentence with what Paul has just said, the logic is straightforward. To be empowered "in the Lord and in the might of his strength" (v. 10), Paul's readers must "put on [ἐνδύσασθε, *endysasthe*] the armor [πανοπλίαν, *panoplian*] of God." As we saw in the comments on 4:22–24, the metaphor of "putting on" certain ethical qualities as one would put on clothing was common in the OT, Hellenistic Judaism, and Greek philosophy, and in 4:22–24 Paul was concerned that his readers clothe themselves with righteousness, holiness, and truth.

Paul's use of the metaphor here shares with 4:22–24 the idea that his readers should "put on" a particular set of characteristics, but the metaphor itself moves in a different direction. Here it is closely related to a traditional image, which also appears in Isa. 59:17 and Wis. 5:16–23, of God as an armor-equipped warrior doing battle against injustice.[4] It is unclear whether Paul and the author of Wisdom borrowed their language from Isaiah independently of each other or whether the similarities among the three texts result from a common use of traditional language.[5] In either case, Paul has used the language of God's armor in his own way. He speaks not of a heavily armed God appearing on the scene to battle injustice but of God's people putting on the armor that God supplies and defending themselves against the devil.

This shift is not new in the Pauline literature, nor is the picture of the individual battling the values of most of the rest of the world unique to early Christian literature. In 1 Thess. 5:8 Paul can urge believers to stand apart from "the rest" of the world by "putting on [ἐνδυσάμενοι, *endysamenoi*] the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation." In 2 Cor. 10:3–6 he can describe his own ministry among the Corinthians as the work of an army that destroys the philosophical arguments of those who oppose the knowledge of God (cf. 2 Cor. 6:7). In Rom. 13:12 he can tell the Roman believers, "Let us set aside, therefore, the works of darkness, and let us put on the weapons [ἐνδυσώμεθα δὲ τὰ ὅπλα, *endysōmetha de ta hopla*] of light" (cf. Rom. 6:13). Timothy should fight the good fight (1 Tim. 1:18) and accept suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 2:3–4).[6]

Malherbe points out that Seneca (*Ep.* 96.5; cf. 107.9), writing at roughly the same time as Paul, can speak of life's difficulties as a battle that the Stoic

4. Cf. the similar metaphor, but without the imagery of armor, in Isa. 11:5 and 1QSb 5.24–25.

5. For a more detailed discussion of the debate, see Thielman 2007: 830–33.

6. On all this, see Harnack 1981: 35–40. Cf. Westcott 1906: 92.

should fight with courage (cf. Epictetus [Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 3.31–37]). Cynic philosophers, too, thought of the distinctive way of dress that announced their philosophical commitments as armaments against the luxurious life of those who shunned philosophy (e.g., Pseudo-Crates, *Ep.* 23; Pseudo-Diogenes, *Ep.* 34).[7] It seems reasonable to think of Paul adopting the language of the OT but perhaps shifting the armor from God to the individual believer in a way that was consistent with the use of the similar metaphor in the philosophical traditions of his time.

If this was his procedure, we should be cautious about reading too much of the broader context of Isa. 59:17 into the meaning of the passage. It is certainly not irrelevant, as the comments below will show, but his meaning is reasonably clear as it stands, and on its own terms. God has given his armor to his people.[8] Like any soldier preparing for battle, his people must put their armor on, and as they do so, they become strong in the mighty power of God (v. 10).[9]

The purpose for doing this is to stand against the "strategies [μεθοδείας, *methodeias*] of the devil."[10] They are standing on ground that God's anointed king, Jesus, has already won for them (1:20–23; 4:8), but they must stand against the devil's cleverly planned counterinsurgency tactics (Schwindt 2002: 360). As we saw in the comments on 4:14, the rare word μεθοδεία probably means "system," or in a military context such as this, "strategy" (cf. Best 1998: 592; *pace* Abbott 1897: 181). The "devil" is identical with "the evil one" in 6:16 who fires ignited missiles at believers. He is the being who in 2:2 is called "the Ruler of the realm of the air" and is said to be powerfully active among unbelievers, who blindly go along with the sinful structures of the world. In 4:27 Paul has told his readers that they need to be alert to the devil's willingness to take advantage of opportunities, such as anger, to harm believers. Elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, Satan is a plotting, clever adversary (2 Thess. 2:9–10; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:14), bent on hindering the gospel's progress (1 Thess. 2:18) and ready to take advantage of any opportunity to lead believers into sin (1 Cor. 7:5) or to inflict pain on them (2 Cor. 12:7).[11] Jerome has captured Paul's meaning precisely:

> Just as wise leaders of armies are accustomed to assault especially those places of a city which are least protected so that, when they have broken in through those places, the protected areas may be easily captured, so also the devil seeks to break in and reach the very citadel of our heart and soul through those places which he sees lying open or perhaps not shut up firmly. (Heine 2002: 254)

7. See Malherbe 1977: 72–73, 142–43; 1989: 101, 103–5; and Dibelius and Greeven 1953: 96–97.

8. Τοῦ θεοῦ is probably a genitive of possession, since in the other uses of the tradition, God is wearing the armor.

9. The expression ἐνδύσασθαι τὴν πανοπλίαν seems to have been a normal way to speak of putting on armor. See Josephus, *Ant.* 13.309; Plutarch, *Pyrrh.* 22.8; Lucian, *Dom.* 17.

10. Πρός followed by the articular infinitive indicates purpose (BDAG 874).

11. Cf. 1 Tim. 3:7 and 2 Tim. 2:26, where he is called ὁ διάβολος, just as he is in Ephesians.

When believers put on God's armor, they protect themselves against this clever enemy.

6:12 Paul continues to explain why it is necessary to become strong in God's mighty power with a more-detailed description of both the kind of warfare in which believers are engaged and the opponents against whom they are fighting. First, he says that the warfare in which believers are engaged is an "intense struggle" (πάλη, *palē*), but "not against blood and flesh." A πάλη is literally a "wrestling match," and commentators have frequently wondered why Paul has mixed his metaphors by depicting fully armed soldiers meeting their opponents in an athletic contest that was typically performed in very little, if any, clothing (Gudorf 1998: 331–32). The issue, however, has probably been blown out of proportion. Fully armed conflict had already been described by using the metaphor of an athletic wrestling match in well-known tragedies by Aeschylus (*Cho*. 866–68) and Euripides (*Heracl*. 158–61).[12] In addition, Gudorf (1998) has now shown that the best fully armed soldiers were sometimes thought to be expert wrestlers as well. The shift to the terminology of a wrestling match was, therefore, more natural in first-century Greek than it might seem to us.

A wrestling match involves close, intense conflict. By explaining believers' conflict with the devil and his minions in these terms, Paul emphasizes the gravity of the situation that believers face and the great need for them to put on the full armor he is about to describe.

The enemies with whom believers are locked in combat are not merely the devil (v. 11) but also an array of "evil spiritual beings" (τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας, *ta pneumatika tēs ponērias*). Paul calls them "spiritual" beings probably because they are related to "the spirit now powerfully working within the sons of disobedience" (2:2) in the same way that "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (1:3) is related to God's Spirit (Fee 1994: 28–32). They are as intimately attached to the devil as God's blessings are to God's Spirit.

The expression "blood and flesh" (αἷμα καὶ σάρκα, *haima kai sarka*) emphasizes the weak, mortal nature of humanity, especially in contrast to spiritual beings, such as the gods.[13] The second-century-AD orator Polyaenus (*Strat*. 3.11.1), for example, claims that the famous Athenian soldier Chabrias told his fellow soldiers before battle, "Since we are about to fight, let us not in any event think that we are engaging the enemy's gods, but men who have blood and flesh [αἷμα καὶ σάρκας] and who have shared the same nature we do" (3.11.1; trans. Krentz and Wheeler 1994: 1.293; cf. Schweizer, *TDNT* 7:99). This was meant to encourage the soldiers to believe that they had a chance of winning the battle. Paul's admonition uses the metaphor "blood and flesh" in a similar way, but his overall point moves in the opposite direction. Without

12. See BDAG 752; for the performance of tragedy in the first-century Roman Empire, see Beacham 1999: 233–37.

13. Cf. Heb. 2:14, which, like Eph. 6:12, uses the unusual order αἷμα καὶ σάρξ. For the more usual order, σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα, see, e.g., Sir. 14:18; Gal. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:50; Matt. 16:17.

the armor of God, the believer will be unable to prevail against these nonphysical evil beings.

Paul names these formidable foes as ἀρχαί (*archai*, rulers), ἐξουσίαι (*exousiai*, authorities), κοσμοκράτορες (*kosmokratores*, world-rulers), and πνευματικά (*pneumatika*, spiritual beings). The last name is probably a general term intended to cover any nonhuman evil powers he may have missed (Best 1998: 594). The first two names have already been paired in 1:21 and 3:10, but the term κοσμοκράτωρ appears here for the first time in known Greek literature.[14] When the term shows up in the second and third centuries, it refers first to the planets, which in antiquity were often thought to be fate-controlling deities, then to various gods (Zeus, Sarapis, Helios), and finally to the emperor.

The Testament of Solomon may provide some insight into its meaning despite its late date and Christian redaction.[15] In this text Solomon conjures seven demons, who identify themselves to him as "heavenly bodies, rulers of this world of darkness [κοσμοκράτορες τοῦ σκότους, *kosmokratores tou skotous*]." The description that follows makes it reasonably clear that these demons are planets. They are larger than the stars, change their positions, and "are named like gods" (T. Sol. 8.2–4; *OTP* 1:969–70). Five of them describe themselves as vices: deception, strife, fate, distress, and error. The two others simply and ominously call themselves "Power" and "The Worst." A similar scenario unfolds later in the same work, this time with thirty-six heavenly bodies, "the world rulers of the darkness of this age" (οἱ κοσμοκράτορες τοῦ σκότους τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, *hoi kosmokratores tou skotous tou aiōnos toutou*; T. Sol. 18.2; *OTP* 1:977). The Testament of Solomon may have been influenced by Ephesians, but even so, it probably reflects the kinds of associations Paul intended his reference to κοσμοκράτορες to carry.

Paul's qualifying phrase, "of this darkness" (τοῦ σκότους τούτου, *tou skotous toutou*), describes the realm over which these powers hold sway. In Ephesians the concept of "darkness/be darkened" (σκότος/σκοτόομαι, *skotos/skotoomai*) is associated with alienation from God, ignorance, hard-heartedness, and debauchery (4:18; 5:8, 11–12). The "world rulers of this darkness," then, are the evil spiritual powers who preside over the chaos that those alienated from God have brought on themselves (2:1–3; 4:17–19).

All the evil powers Paul lists are located "in the heavenly places" (ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, *en tois epouraniois*). In Ephesians, "the heavenly places" are the location of the risen, victorious Messiah Jesus (1:20–21); of believers who are "in" him (2:6) and so receive his blessings (1:3); but also, as here, of a host of enemy powers (3:10; W. H. Harris 1991: 89). Since believers live both in the heavenly places (1:3; 2:6) and within the give-and-take of everyday life (4:17–6:9), the phrase refers more to a "dimension" of existence than simply

14. The term occurs in a fragment supposedly from the fifth-century BC "historian" Ctesius, but according to F. Jacoby, the authenticity of this fragment is doubtful (*FGH* 688 no. 69). On the term, see also Michaelis, *TDNT* 3:913–14; Arnold 1989: 65–68; and Schwindt 2002: 371–74.

15. The Testament of Solomon probably contains material from the first century AD but took its present form several centuries later. See the discussion in D. C. Duling, *OTP* 1:940–43.

to heaven as opposed to earth.[16] In this spiritual dimension, Christ has already won the victory over the rebellious and demonic powers (1:20–22a), but the victory has not yet been fully implemented. Demonic powers are still active in the world, influencing the "Course" it takes and working within human beings who continue to rebel against the Creator (2:2–3). It is necessary, then, for believers to put on God's full armor, to take their stand on the ground that Christ has won, and to resist the final, ultimately futile attacks of the devil.[17]

6:13 The phrase διὰ τοῦτο (*dia touto*, because of this) refers back to the list of evil spiritual powers: it is necessary to take up the full armor of God because of the strength of the cosmic enemies Paul has just mentioned. Although 6:13 repeats the substance of 6:11, then, there is a slight shift in emphasis. In 6:11 believers need to put on God's armor because of the shrewdness of the devil's strategies against them, but here they need to take up the armor because of the power of the devil and his minions who are opposed to them.[18] The battle is against formidable foes who have mounted an attack against ground that the soldier's king has already won and occupied. The soldier's duty is to "withstand" (ἀνθίστημι, *anthistēmi*; NRSV) the onslaught of that enemy and so to remain standing.

It is unclear, however, whether the phrase ἅπαντα κατεργασάμενοι στῆναι (*hapanta katergasamenoi stēnai*) means that the soldier in the imagery should stand "after preparing everything" or "after winning the victory" (cf. LSJ 924; BDAG 531). The first meaning fits Paul's normal and frequent use of κατεργάζομαι (*katergazomai*) elsewhere (do, produce, prepare, perform).[19] The second meaning fits the immediate context of the battle imagery nicely (cf. Herodotus, *Hist*. 6.2.6; Thucydides, *Pel. War* 4.85.2) but would give κατεργάζομαι a unique meaning within the Pauline corpus.

The way Paul develops his image of a soldier arming himself for battle tilts the decision in favor of the usual Pauline meaning for the word (cf. Hoehner 2002: 836). His focus throughout 6:10–17 is not on the victory itself (*pace*, e.g., Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph*., hom. 22 [*NPNF* 13:160]) but on the preparations that must be made by taking up the armor of God in

16. The word "dimension" belongs to Hanson 1980: 138, as quoted in W. H. Harris 1991: 86. Harris (1991) has shown that when "heaven" and earth (or the earth's "lower parts") stand in contrast with each other in Ephesians, οὐρανός, rather than ἐπουράνιος, is the word of choice (1:10; 3:15; 4:10; 6:9).

17. Sellin (2008: 477–78) comments insightfully that in Ephesians this is the equivalent of the tension in the earlier Pauline correspondence between what has "already" been accomplished through the death of Christ and the believer's faith (e.g., Rom. 3:21–26; 5:1–2a, 6–8, 11; 8:1–17, 31–34) on one hand, and the redemption that has "not yet" been realized (e.g., Rom. 5:2b–5, 9–10; 8:18–30, 35–39) on the other hand.

18. As with the expression "to put on" (ἐνδύσασθαι) one's armor in 6:11, it was normal to speak of "taking up" (ἀναλαβεῖν) one's armor (πανοπλία). See, e.g., Jdt. 14:3; Josephus, *Ant*. 4.88, 244; 20.110.

19. The term is characteristic of Paul. Of its thirty-five occurrences in the NT and LXX combined, twenty belong to the Pauline corpus, and of those, all but this occurrence are found in the undisputed letters.

order to obtain the victory. This becomes especially clear in the parallelism between 6:13b and 6:14a. The more specific picture in 6:14a of the soldier "standing" (στῆτε, *stēte*) after girding himself with truth parallels the general picture in 6:13b of the soldier "standing" (στῆναι, *stēnai*) after making all the necessary preparations for battle. The phrase ἅπαντα κατεργασάμενοι στῆναι, therefore, refers not to a soldier left standing after the battle is over, but to one who has finished "preparing" for battle and is now ready for the attack.[20]

The attack takes place at a particular time: "the evil day." Paul uses a similar phrase in 5:16, but there the plural makes it clear that he is speaking of the constantly recurring evils of the "times" in which he and his readers live. The singular and definite form of the phrase here has led interpreters to understand it in a wide variety of ways:

- The everyday difficulties of living as a marginalized believer in a world dominated by the devil (Theodoret [R. Hill 2001: 2.55]; cf. 5:16)
- Particularly difficult experiences of hardship that arise in the course of the believer's life (Calvin 1965: 219; Eadie 1883: 464–65)
- The final day of intense evil prior to the ultimate victory of God, a day for which believers must ready themselves with the armor of God (Meyer 1880: 331)
- The final day of evil, but in a "hazy" sense without any clear eschatological overtones (Schnackenburg 1991: 275–76; cf. Best 1998: 596–97)
- The final day of evil, which the author of Ephesians believes is now present but not yet in all its fullness (Barth 1974: 804–5; Lincoln 1990: 446; Sellin 2008: 478–79)

This last explanation is probably correct since it represents the basic orientation of the Pauline eschatological tradition, particularly in contexts where Paul urges believers to put on metaphorical armor (1 Thess. 5:8; Rom. 13:12; Best 1998: 596). The "last days" have arrived, and evil has intensified its grip on the world (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; 4:3; 2 Pet. 3:3; Jude 18). In light of this, and of the strength of their cosmic foes, believers need to take up the armor of God.

6:14 Paul now begins to describe taking up God's armor in detail.[21] The point of it all, he says once more, is to "stand" firm (στῆτε, *stēte*), presumably on the

20. Cf. the use of κατεργάζομαι in 2 Cor. 4:17 and 5:5.

21. Polybius (*Hist*. 6.23) gives a full description of "the Roman armor [πανοπλία]." This provides a helpful general picture of the soldier's equipment, but Polybius was writing in the second century BC and describing the armor of soldiers during the Second Punic War (218–201 BC). There were some changes in the equipment during the intervening centuries. For a description that pays careful attention to dating and relies heavily on archaeological evidence, see Webster 1985: 120–33. For clear, accurate illustrations of fully equipped first-century Roman soldiers, see Warry 1980: 186, 191, and 193.

ground that the Messiah Jesus has already gained for the church (1:20–23; 4:8–10).

For this to happen, Paul's readers must first have "girded" their "waist with truth" (περιζωσάμενοι τὴν ὀσφύν . . . ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, *perizōsamenoi tēn osphyn . . . en alētheia*). Although Paul does not use the word for "belt" here (cf. 6:15), the verb περιζώννυμι (*perizōnnymi*, gird) naturally produces the image of a soldier girding his waist with a belt, an important piece of military equipment in both Jewish and Greco-Roman culture. In the Jewish armor described in the OT, the belt held the warrior's sword (1 Sam. 17:39; 18:4; 25:13; Neh. 4:18 [2 Esd. 14:12 LXX]; Oepke, *TDNT* 5:305). Roman soldiers also dangled their swords from belts, and sometimes they wore two belts crossed, one for a sword and one for a dagger (Bishop and Coulston 2006: 106).

Paul's description of the girding of the waist is probably dictated less by any particular piece of military equipment in the armor of the first-century Roman soldier, however, than by the expressions used in Isa. 11:5 LXX. There a descendant of David comes both to God's people and to the nations to judge them justly and to punish the wicked (11:1–4). "He shall be girded with righteousness around the waist [δικαιοσύνῃ ἐζωσμένος τὴν ὀσφὺν αὐτοῦ, *dikaiosynē ezōsmenos tēn osphyn autou*] and bound with truth [ἀληθείᾳ, *alētheia*] around the sides" (11:5 NETS). Both here and in Ephesians, the armored soldier fights evil with virtues that are depicted as pieces of military equipment, and truth is one of those virtues. In the Isaiah text, however, the attack is offensive and is already under way, whereas here in Ephesians the soldier is preparing for an assault on his position, and as part of his preparations, he straps truth around himself.

References to truth elsewhere in Ephesians link it closely with speech (4:25), particularly with the proclamation of the gospel (1:13) and the teaching about Jesus (4:21). It is also closely aligned with "righteousness," "goodness," and "holiness" (4:24; 5:9). Since Paul will shortly explain the soldier's footwear as "the readiness of the gospel of peace" (6:15), he probably has in mind here also the truth of the good news that is centered on Jesus and his reconciling death on the cross (2:14–18). This is the truth that, when lovingly expressed (4:15), will successfully defeat "human trickery . . . in the service of the system [μεθοδείαν, *methodeian*] of error," especially insofar as this trickery involves false teaching about Jesus (4:14; cf. 4:20–21). It is easy to think of such trickery in this context as one of the devil's "strategies" (μεθοδείαι; 6:11).

In order to stand, Paul's readers must also have "put on the breastplate of righteousness." The "breastplate" (θώραξ, *thōrax*) was a metal shield worn like a shirt over the breast to protect the chest (Philo, *Alleg. Interp.* 3.115) and the vital internal organs located there (Josephus, *Ant.* 8.414). Soldiers, therefore, "put" it "on" (ἐνδύομαι, *endyomai*) like a piece of clothing (1 Thess. 5:8; Philo, *Embassy* 97; Josephus, *Ant.* 7.283; cf. Isa. 59:17; Wis. 5:18). The first-century Roman "breastplate" consisted of three main parts: a set of horizontal metal strips, joined at the back with hinges and at the front with leather ties or buckles, which covered the midriff; a set of metal plates, again

hinged at the back and buckled in the front, which covered the upper chest and back areas; and a set of vertically arranged metal strips that arched over both shoulders and were riveted to the metal plates. This arrangement was flexible when in use, could be disassembled for easy transport, and was more useful than metal mail at absorbing blows. Soldiers probably wore padding under the shoulder area, and they certainly wore scarves around their necks to prevent chafing.[22]

Although this was probably what Paul pictured when he thought of a "breastplate," he made nothing of its details. His emphasis lies on the identification of the breastplate with "righteousness" (τῆς δικαιοσύνης, *tēs dikaiosynēs*; a genitive of apposition). His language recalls Isa. 59:17 LXX, where the Lord has endured the injustices of his people against one another long enough, and "appalled that there was no one to intervene" (59:16), he finally comes himself, dressed as a warrior, to "bring wrath to his adversaries" (59:18) and redemption to those willing to turn from their transgression (59:20). "And he put on righteousness like a breastplate [θώρακα, *thōraka*] and placed a helmet of salvation on his head, and he clothed himself with a garment of vengeance and with his cloak, as one about to render retribution, reproach to his adversaries" (59:17–18a NETS; cf. Wis. 5:18). Just as with the possible allusion to Isa. 11:5 in the soldier's belt, so here the warrior puts on a particular quality and does battle against evil. Here the correspondence is closer because both the piece of armor and the quality match.

Two differences, however, are also important. First, in Isa. 59:17 the armor aids an offensive attack, whereas here the armor is used to defend a position. Second, in Isa. 59:17 God wears the armor, but here in Ephesians God provides his own armor for his people to wear. The pattern of his allusion to Isa. 59:17 here, then, is identical to the pattern of his allusion to Isa. 11:5 in the preceding phrase. The differences between the imagery in Isaiah and Paul's use of it here probably mean that he is not providing a commentary on Isa. 11:5 and 59:17 but developing the imagery in his own way.

What is the "righteousness" that guards believers from diabolical assault? It could refer to behaving in an upright way (e.g., Alford 1857: 141; Abbott 1897: 185; Lincoln 1990: 448; Hoehner 2002: 841; BDAG 248) or to "the righteousness that comes through faith, justification" (De Wette 1843: 157; cf. Eadie 1883: 468; Best 1998: 599). Elsewhere in Ephesians, righteousness is aligned with virtues: holiness (ὁσιότης, *hosiotēs*; 4:24), goodness (ἀγαθωσύνη, *agathōsynē*), and truth (ἀλήθεια, *alētheia*; 5:9), and here Paul lists it after "truth" (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6–7). Probably, then, Paul is thinking of an ethical quality—being just, fair, equitable, and generally upright in dealings with others (cf. BDAG 247–48). This sort of righteousness is a characteristic of God's armor (Isa. 11:5; 59:17; Wis. 5:18), and so it naturally characterizes the people who wear his armor.

22. See the description and detailed illustrations in Warry 1980: 191; Webster 1985: 123–25; and Biship and Coulston 2006: 95–100.

6:15 The participle ὑποδησάμενοι (*hypodēsamenoi*, having shod), like περιζωσάμενοι (*perizōsamenoi*; having girded) and ἐνδυσάμενοι (*endysamenoi*; having put on) in 6:14, modifies the imperative στῆτε (*stēte*, stand) at the beginning of 6:14. It describes a third means by which believers stand against the forces of the devil "in the [present] evil day." The reference is to the foot equipment that soldiers wore, perhaps to the heavy combat boots that were standard issue for Roman legionaries and a trademark of the Roman army. They were made from leather, with open sections around the sides of the feet and ankles to allow for ventilation and a comfortable fit. Their soles were made of several layers of leather and equipped with hollow-headed metal studs that provided a firm grip on the soil, allowed for comfortable marching, and could even be used as an offensive weapon.[23]

Spiritual soldiers, Paul says, should also have properly equipped feet. Specifically, they should put on their feet "the readiness of the gospel of peace" (ἑτοιμασία τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς εἰρήνης, *hetoimasia tou euangeliou tēs eirēnēs*). But what does this mean? At some level there is probably an allusion here to Isa. 52:6–7, where the feet of a messenger (in the LXX, it is God) bring the good news of peace. The conjunction of feet, good news, and peace in both passages make this allusion probable (Robinson 1904: 135; Sellin 2008: 482; *pace* Best 1998: 600). We can also hear an echo of Isaiah's prominent theme that in the era of Israel's restoration, good tidings of peace would be announced from the mountaintops (Isa. 40:9; 52:7; O'Brien 1999: 478).

Still, Paul uses the imagery here in a different way than Isaiah uses it. For Paul, the properly shod soldier does not run to proclaim the gospel (*pace* Robinson 1904: 135, 215; Sellin 2008: 482), but stands to fight against the evil powers (Best 1998: 600). In this instance, the "gospel of peace" is not a message to be proclaimed, but paradoxically, military equipment used in a raging battle.

The expression probably means, then, that the gospel, whose content is peace, is the source of the metaphorical soldier's "readiness" (ἑτοιμασία). At the center of the gospel stands the death of Christ on the cross, the peace that this death brings between rebellious humanity and its Creator, and the peace that it brings to the various competing factions within humanity itself (2:11–22). The message of this multifaceted reconciliation is the subject of the church's proclamation to "the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (3:10). Fully embracing the gospel of peace in faith (cf. 1:13), then, is necessary preparation for doing battle with the forces of evil, which stand against the believer and against God's plan to unite all things in heaven and on earth in Christ (cf. 1:10).

6:16 The "shield of faith" stands apart from the other pieces of equipment in three ways. First, Paul introduces it with ἐν πᾶσιν (*en pasin*), a phrase that in this context means "in addition to everything else" (cf. Luke 16:26; Dibelius

23. See Webster 1985: 121; Bishop and Coulston 2006: 111–13. Cf. the illustration in Warry 1980: 191.

and Greeven 1953: 99). Although this might be nothing more than a way of dividing the first set of three pieces of armor from the second set (Sellin 2008: 482), it seems more likely that it is intended to emphasize the importance of the shield of faith.

Second, unlike the other pieces of equipment he mentions, Paul specifies a purpose for the shield. It will "snuff out all the ignited missiles of the evil one." This too has the effect of highlighting the importance of this piece of equipment.

Third, the soldier's θυρεός (*thyreos*, shield) was the most prominent part of his equipment in size, and critically important in combat. "Size probably varied, but something approximating to the distance from knee to shoulder may have been usual" (Bishop and Coulston 2006: 92).[24] It was made of sturdily constructed wood laminate with outside edges curving toward the soldier and thus providing some protection from the sides as well as the front. It was covered in leather, rimmed with metal, and had a metal boss on the outside for the protection of the hand that held it (Webster 1985: 126–27; Warry 1980: 191). It was critical to the survival of the soldier in combat, whether from missiles launched from a distance or from the blows of weaponry in close combat (e.g., Josephus, *J.W.* 6.58, 65, 224).

These three considerations make it difficult to agree with Barth (1974: 771) that nothing indicates the shield as more necessary than the other pieces of armor. The shield stands out among the pieces of armor because "faith," for which it stands, is fundamentally important to the letter's theology. Faith in the gospel's witness to Christ Jesus is the means by which Paul's readers are saved (2:8; cf. 1:13), have access to God (3:12), and have Christ dwelling in their hearts (3:17). The common faith of Paul's readers binds them together in unity (4:5, 13).

The shield is particularly useful in extinguishing τὰ βέλη τοῦ πονηροῦ τὰ πεπυρωμένα (*ta belē tou ponērou ta pepyrōmena*, the ignited missiles of the evil one). The term βέλος (*belos*) could refer to any projectile used as a weapon—a thunderbolt (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.203), a javelin (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.296), something launched from a catapult (Polybius, *Hist.* 11.11.3), or an arrow (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.547; MM 108; BDAG 174). Sometimes these missiles were set alight to increase destruction and mayhem among the enemy (e.g., Ps. 7:13 [7:14 LXX, MT]; cf. Thucydides, *Pel. War* 2.75.5; Diodorus Siculus, *Biblio. hist.* 20.96.7). Paul and his readers may have had in mind the common picture of the gods, or various demonic powers, striking people with their βέλη (e.g., Herodotus, *Hist.* 4.79; LSJ 313; Schwindt 2002: 376–79).

Against every form of evil (πάντα, *panta*) that "the evil one" can fire at the believer, the shield of faith serves as an effective defense. It is the means through which the believer's salvation, access to God, and relationship with Christ remain secure. It is also the foundation of the church's unity. It is, then, the ultimate defense against the devil's strategies.

24. Polybius (*Hist.* 6.23.2), writing in the second century BC, says that the shield measured 2.5 x 4 feet.

6:17 For the next two pieces of armor, Paul begins a new sentence. Rather than continuing to use adverbial participles related to the imperative "stand" (στῆτε, *stēte*) in 6:14, he formulates a second imperative (δέξασθε, *dexasthe*) that instructs his readers to "receive" the final pieces of their armor.[25] The first of these pieces is ἡ περικεφαλαία τοῦ σωτηρίου (*hē perikephalaia tou sōtēriou*, the helmet of salvation). The first-century Roman helmet included a padded metal bowl, a short brow guard, a larger and sometimes flared neck guard, and hinged cheek guards. It protected not only the head but also the neck and shoulders (Bishop and Coulston 2006: 101).

This was probably what Paul and his readers pictured when they thought of a soldier's helmet, but once again, the Greek text of Isaiah supplied Paul's wording. Following Isa. 59:17 LXX closely, he has used the adjective σωτήριος as a substantive to mean "salvation" rather than the more common noun σωτηρία (*sōtēria*), which appears both in 1:13 and in the allusion to Isa. 59:17 in 1 Thess. 5:8. In Isa. 59:17, God will wear the helmet of salvation when he comes as a warrior to intervene on the side of justice and as Redeemer of his people. The "salvation" is redemption of his people from their own sin (Isa. 59:20; Oswalt 1998: 527). In 1 Thess. 5:8 Paul urges the Thessalonian believers to put on "as a helmet the hope of salvation" (περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας, *perikephalaian elpida sōtērias*). He is echoing the Isaiah passage to tell his readers that they should arm themselves with the certain hope, whose fulfillment the OT promised, that God would save his people.

Here in Ephesians the allusion to Isaiah's meaning is more distant (despite the closer verbal correspondence) since Paul views the salvation of God as available to his readers in the present (cf. 2:8–9). This shift is consistent with Paul's concern in the letter generally that his readers understand the great power God has already exercised on their behalf (1:19–23; 3:18–19) when he saved them as a free gift and seated them alongside the victorious Christ (2:5–9).

He urges his readers, then, to receive salvation not because they do not already have it, but because, although they have it, they need to appropriate it constantly in faith. In the context of first-century Asia Minor, where many people believed that the spiritual forces of the air and the heavens controlled their fate, this might mean reminding themselves that they do not need to fear such powers because of all that God has already done for them in Christ (Arnold 1989: 111; cf. Schwindt 2002: 376–79).

Paul's readers should also receive τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅ ἐστιν ῥῆμα θεοῦ (*tēn machairan tou pneumatos, ho estin rhēma theou*, the sword that comes from the Spirit, which is the word of God). The term μάχαιρα could be used of a knife short enough to chop fruit but large enough to do serious bodily harm (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.662; *Ant.* 17.183; Acts 12:2; 16:27; cf.

25. The rhetorical imbalance this created may be responsible for the textual variant in the Western textual tradition (D, F, G) that left out δέξασθε in 6:17 and made the final two pieces of armor dependent on ἀναλαβόντες in 6:16 ("and [taking up] the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit").

Herodotus, *Hist*. 6.75; Demetrius, *Eloc*. 293), such as in hand-to-hand combat (Herodotus, *Hist*. 7.225; cf. Mark 14:47). It was standard military equipment (Polybius, *Hist*. 6.23.6; Acts 16:27; Epictetus [Arrian, *Epict*. *diss*. 1.30.7]), and unless we include the soldiers' boots (see above), is the only offensive weapon in the set of armor that Paul describes.

Paul does not identify the sword with the Spirit, as he has identified the breastplate with righteousness, the shield with faith, and the helmet with salvation, although the genitive construction in each case is the same. If the sword were the Spirit, the result would be both theological and syntactical nonsense: believers would control the Spirit, which would then be identified, confusingly, with the word of God. Since the parallelism among the pieces of armor has already been broken by the introduction of the imperative δέξασθε, it is much better to think of the genitive phrase τοῦ πνεύματος (*tou pneumatos*) as indicating the source of the sword, just as God is the source of the word in the phrase that follows. The Spirit, then, supplies the sword to the believer (*pace* Lincoln 1990: 451), and this sword is "the word of God."[26]

"The word [ῥῆμα, *rhēma*] of God" has been interpreted primarily in two ways. One set of interpreters believes the phrase refers to a Spirit-inspired word targeted against specific diabolical attacks.[27] If this is correct, Jesus illustrates what the author has in mind when he resists Satan's temptations in the wilderness by quoting Scripture (Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13), including a quotation of Deut. 8:3 LXX, "A human being will not live by bread alone, but by every word [ῥῆμα] that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

Another set of interpreters believes that ῥῆμα refers to the gospel.[28] This fits the context, since "the gospel of peace" has just been mentioned (6:15), and the gospel is understood in Ephesians as something verbally proclaimed to the readers (1:13). This understanding of the phrase is also consistent with the NT use of ῥῆμα elsewhere to refer to the gospel (Rom. 10:8, 17–18; 1 Pet. 1:25; Heb. 6:5). In the discussion of ῥῆμα in the comments on 5:26, we saw that there the term probably referred to the gospel, which the readers of Ephesians have heard and believed (1:13), and by which they have therefore been spiritually cleansed. Since that (5:26) is the only other use of the term in Ephesians, and since elsewhere in Paul's Letters it refers to the gospel, we should probably understand it that way here.

The gospel is closely aligned with "truth," "salvation," and "peace" in Ephesians (1:13; 2:17; 6:15, 17), whereas the devil stands behind the ignorance, estrangement from God, and enmity that characterize the rebellious,

26. The relative pronoun ὅ, which introduces the phrase, is neuter not because its antecedent is πνεύματος but either because its antecedent is the entire preceding phrase (e.g., Fee 1994: 728n210; Best 1998: 603) or because it has been attracted to the gender of ῥῆμα (e.g., De Wette 1843: 159; Hoehner 2002: 852).

27. See, with slight variations, e.g., Haupt 1902a: 240; Westcott 1906: 97; Masson 1953: 222; Bruce 1984: 409; Best 1998: 604; Hoehner 2002: 853.

28. See, e.g., Ellicott 1859: 153; Meyer 1880: 339; Schlier 1957: 298; Lincoln 1990: 451; Schnackenburg 1991: 280.

unbelieving world (2:1–3, 12–13; 4:17–19, 26–27). The gospel, with its proclamation of peace between God and humanity and between warring factions within humanity itself, and with its accompanying implications for day-to-day living in "the righteousness and holiness of the truth" (4:24), is the sword that will successfully answer every attack of the evil one. It does this, however, not merely because it provides reliable information and outlines a sensible way of life but also because it is the word of God and therefore carries with it the effective power of God (Ps. 33:6 MT, Eng. [32:6 LXX]; Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12), particularly the power to slay the spiritual enemies of God and his people (Isa. 11:4; 2 Thess. 2:8; cf. Sellin 2008: 484).

Summary

Paul nears the end of his letter with a moving admonition for his readers to leave behind the past with its discouragement and immaturity. The present darkness in which the church lives gives ample proof that there is a battle to be engaged. It is not that new territory remains to be conquered but that what Christ's victory has secured for the church needs to be defended.

If Paul's readers are to be prepared for this conflict, they must "put on" and "receive" the armor that God has given them: the truth of the gospel, the sort of righteousness that is demonstrated in justice and equity, the readiness for the battle that the peace of the gospel provides, and most important, the shield of faith. To these should be added the assurance that God has saved them and the gospel truths that the Spirit has made effective in their lives.

If believers are clothed in this armor, Paul assures his readers, they will be able to withstand the final, desperate attempts of the devil and his allies to attack God's people, and at the end they will remain standing.

Additional Notes

6:10. The term translated here as "henceforth" is τοῦ λοιποῦ in Greek and represents a reading that appears primarily in the Alexandrian tradition (e.g., $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, ℵ, A, B, I, 33, 81, 1175, 1739). A number of manuscripts from the Western (D, F, G) and Byzantine traditions, but with some Alexandrian support (Ψ), read τὸ λοιπόν at this point. Hoehner (2002: 819n1) concludes that the geographical spread and good character of the manuscripts reading τὸ λοιπόν tilts the decision in its favor, especially since "both readings mean the same thing."

As the comments on this verse above argue, however, τοῦ λοιποῦ consistently means "henceforth" or "from now on" in the literature and is the less-usual phrase in the Pauline corpus, appearing elsewhere only in Gal. 6:17. Τὸ λοιπόν can mean either "from now on" (1 Cor. 7:29; Heb. 10:13) or "finally" (Phil. 3:1; 4:8). It would not only have been more familiar to scribes copying the Pauline corpus, but would probably also have made better sense to them as the introduction to the moving concluding section that follows. These internal considerations, alongside the solid support of the conservative Alexandrian tradition, make the reading τοῦ λοιποῦ likely, and it is correctly adopted by most recent interpreters of the text.

6:12. The manuscript evidence is nearly evenly divided between ἡμῖν and ὑμῖν, with some Alexandrian manuscripts (ℵ, A, I, 1739) and the majority of the Byzantine tradition supporting ἡμῖν, and other early Alexanian manuscripts ($\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, B, Ψ, 1175) and the Western tradition (D, F, G) supporting

ὑμῖν. There is a consensus among commentators and textual critics, however, that ἡμῖν is correct since scribes would have been more likely to conform an original ἡμῖν to the second person of the surrounding context than the reverse.

6:15. The LXX sometimes uses ἑτοιμασία with the meaning "foundation, base, place" (2 Esd. 2:68; 3:3 LXX [Ezra 2:68; 3:3 MT, Eng.]; Ps. 88:15 [89:15 MT; 89:14 Eng.]; Zech. 5:11; Dan. 11:7, 20, 21 Theod.; LEH 246). A few interpreters have argued for that meaning here: the gospel of peace provides firm footing for the soldier in his battle against the forces of evil (e.g., Barth 1974: 771, 797–99; Best 1998: 585, 600). This meaning is unique to the LXX, however, and seems to be derived from the thought that a foundation was "preparation" for construction work on the rest of a building. In other words, the notion of "readiness" is still the primary meaning of the word (Meyer 1880: 335).

B. Persevering in Watchful Prayer (6:18–20)

In order to stand against the strategies of the devil and other evil powers, believers must, in addition to putting on the armor of God, pray with constancy, devotion, and alertness. This new section is tied grammatically to 6:10–20 by the dependence of the two participles in 6:18 on the imperative δέξασθε (*dexasthe*, receive) in 6:17. Thematically, however, the section begins a new train of thought. The military imagery largely disappears, and Paul now focuses on a straightforward appeal to his readers to devote themselves to prayer for all believers, and especially for him.

The section can be divided into two main parts. First, in 6:18a Paul formulates a highly repetitive, and therefore emphatic, exhortation to his readers to devote themselves to prayer. Second, in 6:18b–20 he describes the object of their prayers. This second main part briefly urges his readers to pray for all God's people and then asks them, in much more detail, to pray for him in light of the tension he is experiencing between his status as a prisoner and his calling to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.

Exegesis and Exposition

[18]. . . praying at all times in the Spirit, through every prayer and urgent petition, and being watchful in this very thing with all devotion and urgent petition for all the saints, [19]and for me, that speech might be given me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery ⌜of the gospel⌝ [20](for which I serve as an enchained ambassador) that, ⌜with respect to it⌝, I might speak boldly, as I must.

6:18 Paul now moves away from the image of the armor of God and exhorts his readers to engage in prayer. The main verbal elements in 6:18–20 are the two participles here in 6:18, προσευχόμενοι (*proseuchomenoi*, praying) and ἀγρυπνοῦντες (*agrypnountes*, being watchful). It is difficult to know exactly how these participles are related to the rest of the section. Some interpreters put a period at the end of 6:17, indicating that the two participles are part of a new sentence. If this is correct, then they must be understood imperatively ("pray . . . watch"), and there is precedent for this in Rom. 12:9–21 (Sellin 2008: 484n79).

In Robertson's judgment, however, "no participle should be explained in this way that can properly be connected with a finite verb" (1923: 1134; quoted in Wallace 1996: 650). Two finite verbs could supply the needed connection: στῆτε (*stēte*, stand) in 6:14 and δέξασθε (*dexasthe*, receive) in 6:17. If the participles go with στῆτε, then they join the list of pieces of armor to indicate a seventh means by which believers can stand their ground against

the devil's onslaught: they can stand by paying careful attention to prayer. Στῆτε, however, is too far from these two participles to function plausibly as the main verb to which they are related. This leaves δέξασθε, and attaching the participles to this imperative is a more reasonable way to understand the syntax (Fee 1994: 730; Hoehner 2002: 854).

Still, this explanation is not entirely satisfactory. Paul does not develop the thought that his readers should receive salvation and the word of God by praying and watching, which is, strictly speaking, the meaning the syntax would demand. Instead, a simple and straightforward focus on the need for prayer replaces the military imagery.

The two participles, then, are probably used loosely in a way similar to the use of ὑποτασσόμενοι (*hypotassomenoi*, submitting) in 5:21. There too the participle is syntactically related to the imperative πληροῦσθε (*plērousthe*) in 5:18, but the thought has shifted away from the results of being filled in the Spirit (speaking, singing, making melody, giving thanks) to the imperatival thought that believers should submit to one another. The participles in both 5:21 and here are being used adverbially and are related to the imperative-mood verb that occurs before them, but these participles adopt an independent, imperatival quality of their own.

The result of all this for interpreting the passage is that Paul somewhat enigmatically begins a new thought with two participles formally related to a main verb they do not really explain. Instead, his participles introduce a new subject. He was probably still thinking of ways in which his readers could hold their ground in the struggle against the devil and his powerful spiritual allies, but he has dropped the military imagery and decided to devote a lengthy "sentence" to prayer.

His readers' prayers should have five characteristics. First, he urges them to pray constantly. The initial phrase διὰ πάσης προσευχῆς καὶ δεήσεως (*dia pasēs proseuchēs kai deēseōs*, through every prayer and urgent petition), with its redundancy and its stress on the variety of prayer, communicates the need for frequent prayer. The phrase ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ (*en panti kairō*) meaning "at all times" (cf. Ps. 33:2 LXX [34:2 MT; 34:1 Eng.]; Tob. 4:19 Vat.; 14:98 Sin.; Luke 21:36), performs the same function but more explicitly. Prayers should not be reserved only for certain occasions but should be a constant activity of the believer (cf. 1 Thess. 5:17) and therefore as varied in their subject matter as the circumstances of life itself.

Second, Paul's readers should pray "in the Spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι, *en pneumati*). When Paul connects prayer with the Spirit elsewhere, he seems to refer to prayer that the Spirit empowers (Rom. 8:26; cf. Fee 1994: 731). This is not merely prayer "in the sphere of the Spirit," as many commentators have thought (e.g., Eadie 1883: 475; Heil 2007a: 290), or "spirited" or heartfelt prayer (e.g., Westcott 1906: 97), but prayer that the Spirit has given the believer the strength to utter.[1]

1. Cf. Jude 20–21, where Jude's readers, in contrast to the false teachers who "do not have the Spirit," should "keep" themselves "in the love of God by praying in the Holy Spirit."

Third, they should be alert and attentive to constant prayer. The phrase εἰς αὐτό (*eis auto*) means "for this [or that] purpose" (cf. Josephus, *Ant*. 12.15; 19.208) and refers back to the constant prayer in the previous clause. If Paul's readers are to pray as much as they need to, then they will have to be attentive to the task. The verb ἀγρυπνέω (*agrypneō*) means basically "lie awake, pass sleepless nights" (LSJ 16) and was used in eschatological contexts in early Christianity of the need for believers to "stay awake" as they awaited the coming of the Son of Man (Mark 13:33). This means being busy about the work the Master has assigned them (13:34). It means not lapsing into debauched and drunken behavior, but instead being watchful (ἀγρυπνεῖτε) in prayer in order to escape the coming judgment (Luke 21:34–36). Paul is also concerned that the readers of Ephesians avoid "the unfruitful works of darkness" (5:11) and the "wrath of God" that will come to those who are involved in such works (5:6). Perhaps this request that they be watchful in prayer arises in part out of that concern (cf. 1 Thess. 5:4–11; Rom. 13:11–14). Being attentive to prayer is one way of walking carefully and wisely, of "redeeming the time," in light of the evil days in which they live (5:15).

Fourth, they should be zealous in their devotion to prayer. The noun προσκαρτέρησις (*proskarterēsis*) is a rare word, appearing prior to Ephesians only twice: once in a second-century-BC inscription from the island of Andros and once in the first-century-BC philosopher Philodemus. Philodemus's use of the term to speak of recounting arguments in "painstaking detail" is not particularly illuminating.[2] The Andros inscription, however, is more helpful. It refers to an admired physician who "gave himself over" (ἐπέδωκεν ἑαυτόν, *epedōken heauton*) to his profession with "particular devotion" (προσκαρτέρησις).[3] Here too Paul urges believers to give themselves over to prayer with the kind of enthusiasm and zeal normally associated with the committed practice of a craft or trade (cf. Col. 4:2; Acts 1:14; 2:42, 46; 6:4).

Fifth, they should pray for all God's people (περὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων, *peri pantōn tōn hagiōn*). Their "urgent petition" (δέησις, *deēsis*) should not merely focus on themselves and their own battle with the evil one and his forces, but should also include all other believers and the battle against the devil that all face together.

To summarize, Paul urges his readers to defend their position in Christ against the onslaught of evil by prayer that is constant, Spirit-empowered, alert to surrounding evil, zealous in its devotion, and ecumenical in its breadth.

6:19–20 Next, Paul asks his readers to pray for him personally because, in light of his legal troubles, he needs courage to proclaim with clarity and freedom the mystery contained in the gospel.

2. See Sudhaus 1892: 11 (col. 6, lines 36–37): οὔτε πρὸς ὄνυχα τὴν προσκαρτέρησιν πονεῖσθαι δοκιμάζομεν, which Chandler (2006: 22) translates, "We do not see fit to elaborate in detail." Cf. Philodemus's use of προσκαρτερητικῶς ("painstakingly," LSJ 1515) in Sudhaus 1892: 92 (col. 54, lines 4–5).

3. *IG* 12.249.8. Cf. the use of the verb προσκαρτερέω in Rom. 13:6.

Paul frequently asked the congregations who read his letters to pray for him and his coworkers (1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1; 2 Cor. 1:11; Rom. 15:30–32; Col. 4:3–4), and he asked for prayer specifically for himself when the success of his witness to the gospel was under threat from outside circumstances (Rom. 15:30–32; Col. 4:3b–4; cf. Phil. 1:19; Philem. 22). The problem here is that Paul is wearing a "chain" (ἅλυσις, *halysis*) because he is a prisoner. Presumably the situation in which he will have an opportunity to explain the gospel is a legal hearing of some kind. Since his proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles was the cause of his imprisonment (3:1), and since he would present his defense before a Roman magistrate, it is understandable that he would be tempted either not to explain the gospel at all, or in explaining it to leave out critical elements that might be politically sensitive.

Paul knows that he must not yield to this temptation because, despite his imprisonment, he "serves as an ambassador" (πρεσβεύω, *presbeuō*; 2 Cor. 5:20). Someone who served as an ambassador in the eastern Roman Empire was charged with traveling to a specific destination for the purpose of communicating the interests of another party to those in power in that other place (Bash 1997: 4). Paul's use of the term here fits with the picture he has developed of himself in 3:1–13 as responsible for administering the gift that God has given him to preach to the Gentiles the mystery of their inclusion in the people of God (3:2–3, 6), a responsibility that, despite its importance, has landed him in prison (3:1, 13).

Here in 6:19 Paul emphasizes that if he is to be faithful to his ambassadorial role, he must explain the mystery of the gospel with clarity and candor. So he asks for prayer by using a series of expressions referring to speech that is both divinely inspired and straightforward. The Scriptures sometimes describe God as opening the mouth of his spokesperson (e.g., Exod. 4:12 LXX; 4:15; Num. 22:28; Ezek. 3:27; 29:21 LXX; 33:22; cf. Prov. 31:8 LXX; Luke 1:64), and Paul can use that expression elsewhere to refer to candid speech (2 Cor. 6:11). Both the noun παρρησία (*parrēsia*) and the verb παρρησιάζομαι (*parrēsiazomai*), moreover, were used to describe boldness in speaking the truth freely, especially in the presence of powerful people (e.g., Let. Aris. 125; Acts 4:13, 29; Josephus, *Ant*. 16.377–78). Paul has already used παρρησία with this meaning of the straightforward communication believers have with God because they are "in Christ" (3:12).[4] Paul has reminded the Thessalonians that when he was among them, he preached the gospel with this sort of clarity and boldness, despite the suffering he was experiencing (1 Thess. 2:2; cf. 2 Cor. 3:12; Phil. 1:20), and early Christian tradition remembers Paul's bold proclamation of the gospel as a characteristic of his ministry (Acts 9:27–28; 14:3; 19:8; 26:26; 28:31).

Paul describes the message that he wants to give as τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (*to mystērion tou euangeliou*, the mystery of the gospel). This

4. For more information on the meaning of both noun and verb, see the comments on that verse.

refers to the mystery defined earlier in the letter and contained in the gospel. It is the revelation that Jews and Gentiles are being brought together as they believe the gospel and become part of Christ's body (3:3–6, 9–10). It is also the revelation that this social unity is part of a cosmic unity that will eventually embrace everything in the heavens and on earth (1:9–10), including "all rule and authority and power and lordship" (1:21). This may have been precisely the element of the mystery that Paul was tempted to leave out of any testimony before a government official.[5]

Summary

In 6:18–20 Paul urges his readers to pray as part of their defense against evil. Their prayer activity should be more than an avocation or a sideline. It should be characterized by enormous breadth—they should pray at all times and for all the saints—and should be energized both by their own zeal and by the Spirit's power.

Paul considers himself to be one of the saints for whom they should pray. He is an ambassador of the gospel mystery, that God is uniting all people groups by means of his enthroned, anointed king and has placed all other powers and authorities under Jesus's feet. Yet he is also in chains and knows full well that this message will be difficult to deliver faithfully to those who have imprisoned him. He asks his readers, then, for prayer that he might have courage to explain the gospel—even this politically sensitive element of it—with clarity and courage when the opportunity arises for him to speak.

Additional Notes

6:19. The phrase τοῦ εὐαγγελίου does not appear in the important Alexandrian manuscript B (Vat.) and in significant witnesses from the Western tradition (F, G, some manuscripts of the Old Latin, Victorinus of Rome, and Ambrosiaster). The presence of the phrase, however, has strong testimony from the Alexandrian (א, A, I, Ψ, 33, 1739), Western (D), and Byzantine traditions (most manuscripts). Although the phrase might have been added in an attempt to make the reference to τὸ μυστήριον more specific, τοῦ εὐαγγελίου would be an odd way to do this, since τοῦ Χριστοῦ and τοῦ θεοῦ were more readily available in 3:4; Col. 2:2; and 4:3 (Metzger 1994: 542). This consideration, combined with the strong manuscript support for the longer reading, make it probable that Paul wrote τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου.

6:20. Several witnesses either place ἐν αὐτῷ after παρρησιάσωμαι (e.g., 459 ,104 ,א) or, instead of ἐν αὐτῷ, have the simple accusative pronoun αὐτό (𝔓[46], B, 1739, 1881). The coalescence of 𝔓[46], א, B, and 1739 (all from the Alexandrian tradition) around a reading other than ἐν αὐτῷ παρρησιάσωαμι is impressive, but neither alternative to the more widely accepted reading is likely to be what Paul wrote. The reading with αὐτό is both reminiscent of Col. 4:4 (Best 1998: 609) and stylistically more concise (Metzger 1994: 542), and the reading with ἐν αὐτῷ following παρρησιάσωμαι probably

5. On the relationship between the imperial cult and Paul's references to political power in Ephesians, see the section in the commentary's introduction titled "The Circumstances That Prompted Ephesians."

preserves a less unexpected word order (cf. Col. 4:4; Ps. 11:6 LXX [12:6 MT; 12:5 Eng.], quoted in 1 Clem. 15.7; Acts 9:27–28). The witnesses for ἐν αὐτῷ παρρησιάσωμαι, moreover, form an impressive array from a broad spread of traditions—e.g., A, I, Ψ, 6, 33, 81 (Alexandrian); D, F, G (Western); and most Byzantine manuscripts. This reading, then, is likely to be correct. In any case, the meaning "with respect to it, I might speak boldly" remains unaffected.

X. Avoiding and Transforming the Deeds of Darkness (5:3–14)
XI. Wise Conduct within the Household (5:15–6:9)
XII. Standing against the Strategies of the Devil (6:10–20)
➤XIII. A Concluding Commendation and a Final Prayer-Wish (6:21–24)

XIII. A Concluding Commendation and a Final Prayer-Wish (6:21–24)

Paul signals the final major division of the letter with the conjunction δέ (*de*, now; cf. 3:20; 5:3). The purpose of this concluding section is first to describe the mission and character of Tychicus, the letter's courier, and second to provide the letter with a fitting conclusion in the form of two brief prayers for all believers, one that they might experience peace, love, and faith, and the other that they might experience grace. The section, then, falls neatly into two paragraphs, and in its broad structure it follows a pattern familiar from other letters in the Pauline corpus.

Near the conclusion of many of his letters, Paul requests prayer for himself, speaks of his (or his coworkers') travel plans, and utters a prayer-wish that his readers would experience God's peace. All his letters end with a prayer-wish for God's grace. These standard elements also appear in Ephesians. He requests prayer for himself, a request that we have examined in the previous section since it flowed naturally out of the admonition he gave his readers to be diligent in prayer for their fellow believers (6:18–19; cf. 1 Thess. 5:25; Rom. 15:30–33; Col. 4:18b). He discusses the travel plans of Tychicus, who, it is implied, is the letter's courier and who will both tell the letter's readers about Paul's circumstances and provide encouragement for them (6:21–22; cf. 1 Cor. 16:5–12; Phil. 4:15–20; 2 Cor. 13:1–10; Rom. 15:14–29; Philem. 22; Col. 4:7–9; Titus 3:12–13; 2 Tim. 4:9–13). He also concludes the letter with a double prayer-wish that peace and grace might come to his readers (6:23–24; cf. 1 Thess. 5:23, 28; 2 Thess. 3:16, 18; Gal. 6:16, 18; Phil. 4:9, 23; 2 Cor. 13:11, 13; Rom. 15:13, 33; 16:20).

Various elements show up in other Pauline letters that are not present here: practical instruction about church leadership (1 Thess. 5:12–13; Gal. 6:6; 1 Cor. 16:15–18); brief, pithy ethical instruction (1 Thess. 5:13–22; Gal. 6:7–10; 1 Cor. 16:13–14; 2 Cor. 13:11; Rom. 16:17–19; Col. 4:17; Titus 3:14); a command to have the letter read to the whole group (1 Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16); or a Pauline autograph (2 Thess. 3:17; Gal. 6:11), sometimes in the form of a greeting (1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18). But none of these elements appears invariably, and so it is not particularly surprising that they are absent from Ephesians.[1]

Ephesians does have two unique characteristics, however, that are more surprising in a Pauline letter. First, both the prayer-wish for peace and the

1. Commentators often observe that Ephesians brings no greetings from Paul's coworkers and has no instruction about greeting one another, but these elements are also missing from Galatians, and among the disputed Pauline letters, from both 2 Thessalonians and 1 Timothy.

prayer-wish for grace are in the third person ("Peace to the brothers [and sisters]. . . . Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ"), whereas elsewhere in the Pauline corpus the peace wish, where it occurs, is normally in the second person (Gal. 6:16 is the exception), and the grace-wish is always in the second person. This unusual element is probably yet another sign that the letter was intended for all the Christians in the various house churches in Ephesus, many of whom Paul did not know personally after his nearly seven-year absence from the city.

Second, most of 6:21 and all of 6:22 duplicate, word for word, Col. 4:7–8. Apart from the two words καὶ σύνδουλος (*kai syndoulos*, and fellow slave) in Col. 4:7, the agreement in wording between the two passages involves "twenty-nine consecutive words" (Mitton 1951: 59). The most reasonable explanation for this oddity is that the author of one letter—or his secretary—had before him, and copied out, the words of the other letter (Lincoln 1990: lv; cf. Mitton 1951: 59; Sellin 2008: 490). Although this is unique in a Pauline letter, it is not unprecedented among ancient letters generally. Ignatius also included an identical commendation of the letter courier Burrhus in two different letters, composed at the same time and sent to separate destinations (Ign. *Phld*. 11.2; Ign. *Smyrn*. 12.1).[2] This unusual feature of Ephesians is probably a result of the specific circumstances under which it was composed: Paul sent Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon with Tychicus, and after composing the description of Tychicus's mission and his commendation for Colossians, instructed his secretary to repeat them in Ephesians. This was done with a few, probably unconscious, changes.[3]

In sum, Paul ends Ephesians in a way that is broadly similar to the conclusions of his other letters, but with some unique features prompted by the historical situation out of which Ephesians arose. He tells his readers about the mission and character of Tychicus and then turns again to prayer, asking that all faithful believers experience "peace," "love," "grace," and "faith."

2. According to Richards (1991: 70–72), Burrhus was the courier, not the secretary (*pace* Lightfoot 1890: 34, 281), for these two letters.

3. Colossians has neither the awkward opening clause ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε καὶ ὑμεῖς nor the redundant τί πράσσω but includes in the description of Tychicus that he is καὶ σύνδουλος. It is probably fruitless to try to decide which letter came first on the basis of these differences. Colossians 4:7 might be a more concise version of Eph. 6:21 (cf. Best 1997b: 78–79), or Eph. 6:21 might be an attempt (through the omission of καὶ σύνδουλος in Col. 4:7) to focus attention on Paul alone (e.g., Gnilka 1971: 322; Lincoln 1990: 462). Since the καὶ ὑμεῖς in Eph. 6:21 hints that it was written after Col. 4:7–8 (see the additional note), it is probably best to think of Col. 4:7–8 as the foundational text that is repeated with slight variations in Eph. 6:21–22. The Ephesians text is certainly less polished, but this accords with the style of Ephesians generally.

A. Tychicus and His Mission (6:21–22)

In the first subsection of the letter's conclusion, Paul both describes Tychicus's mission and commends him to the recipients as a reliable messenger. Tychicus will fill in the details about Paul's circumstances that the written letter does not provide, and he will encourage the hearts of Paul's readers, who according to 3:13 were discouraged precisely because of the suffering that Paul was experiencing. We do not know what form this encouragement took, but perhaps it looked something like what Paul says of his suffering in Phil. 1:12–18b. There he describes his difficult circumstances (τὰ κατ' ἐμέ, *ta kat' eme*, my circumstances; cf. Eph. 6:21) as problems that do not really matter because through them "Christ is being preached, and in this I rejoice" (Phil. 1:18b).

Paul also wants his readers to know that Tychicus is a reliable messenger. He is, Paul says, not only a fellow believer but also a dear friend and a trustworthy assistant in the work that the Lord has given Paul and his coworkers to do.

Exegesis and Exposition

[21]Now, that ⌜you too⌝ might know my circumstances—how I am doing—Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make everything known to you, [22]whom I have sent to you for this very thing, that you might know our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.

6:21–22 Paul begins and ends his description of Tychicus with a reference to Tychicus's mission (6:21a, 22b). Tychicus will let the readers of Ephesians know all about Paul's circumstances.[1] The redundancy of Paul's Greek is remarkable, even in a letter as redundant as Ephesians. He uses three phrases to refer to his circumstances, τὰ κατ' ἐμε (*ta kat' eme*, my circumstances), τί πράσσω (*ti prassō*, how I am doing), and τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν (*ta peri hēmōn*, our circumstances). The plural in the third phrase probably refers to Paul and Tychicus (Best 1998: 616),[2] and the redundancy probably emphasizes how full Tychicus's account of

1. Ancient letters commonly referred to the circumstances of the writer or the recipient, even when the main purpose of the letter was something else. Cf. P.Eleph. 13.3 (223/222 BC) : "When Santos arrived, I received your letter, which having read, I rejoiced when I learned your circumstances [τὰ κατὰ σέ]."

2. Some interpreters think the plural refers to the people mentioned in Col. 4:9–14 and Philem. 10, 23–24 (Meyer 1880: 349; Westcott 1906: 99; cf. Ellicott 1859: 158; Eadie 1883: 481; Schlier 1957: 306), but since only Tychicus is mentioned here in Ephesians, this seems less probable.

his and Paul's circumstances will be. He "will make everything [πάντα, *panta*] known to you," Paul assures them. He similarly uses two phrases to show that it is precisely to make known his and Tychicus's circumstances that Tychicus is coming, ἵνα . . . εἰδῆτε καὶ ὑμεῖς (*hina . . . eidēte kai hymeis*, that you too might know) and εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ἵνα γνῶτε (*eis auto touto, hina gnōte*, for this very thing, that you might know). It is difficult to escape the impression that the oral account Tychicus would give of what Paul has been experiencing will be a vital supplement to what the apostle has written in the letter.[3]

Paul commends Tychicus to his readers with two phrases. He is first a "beloved brother" (ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφός, *agapētos adelphos*), a phrase that Paul also applies to Onesimus in Philem. 16 (cf. Col. 4:9). The use of sibling language for fellow believers is characteristic of the Pauline corpus, and Paul frequently refers to others by name as "beloved" (1 Cor. 4:17; Rom. 16:5, 8, 9, 12; Col. 1:7; 4:7, 9, 14; Philem. 1; 2 Tim. 1:2; Acts 15:25). The phrase probably means that the person is especially close to Paul; he can use it of Onesimus, who is his "very heart" (Philem. 16), and of Timothy, whom he considers to be his "beloved and faithful child" (1 Cor. 4:17).

Second, Paul describes Tychicus as "a faithful servant [διάκονος, *diakonos*] in the Lord." In Paul's time the term διάκονος could already refer to someone with important responsibilities in the church (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8, 12; 4:6), but it continued to carry connotations of menial service, such as a "courier" or "assistant" might perform (BDAG 230–31). It carries this second sense here; Tychicus has proved himself to be a reliable coworker in the practical details of spreading the gospel. This picture is consistent with what we know of him from the three other NT references to him. He was trustworthy enough to be selected as a representative from Asia to accompany Paul's collection for the needy believers in Jerusalem (Acts 20:4; cf. Acts 24:17; 1 Cor. 16:1–4).[4] He apparently not only carried Ephesians to its destination, but also took Paul's letters to the Colossians and to Philemon along to Colossae (Col. 4:7–9).[5] Later Paul would contemplate sending him to Crete to take over the work of Titus among the young churches on that island (Titus 3:12), and eventually Paul sent him to Ephesus again (2 Tim. 4:12).

In a culture where the only postal service was for the exclusive use of government officials, letters often had to travel with relatively unknown people who happened to be going in the right direction (Richards 2004: 177–82; Head

Those who think the letter is pseudepigraphic usually attribute the plural to the author's use of Col. 4:8 (e.g., Lincoln 1990: 462; MacDonald 2000: 353; Sellin 2008: 492).

3. Supplementing a letter with vital information not mentioned in the letter itself was a common role of the letter courier in antiquity (Head 2009: 286, 289, 293, 295–98).

4. Although Luke does not mention the reason for the delegation, Barrett (1998: 947) views it as "certain" that at least one purpose was the conveyance of the collection to Jerusalem.

5. Tychicus was "Asian" (Acts 20:4) but may have had connections to Rome, since most occurrences of the name outside the NT come from Rome (Hemer 1990: 236). Perhaps a connection both to Rome and to Asia explains why Tychicus was available to Paul to carry Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians, all of them probably written during the Roman imprisonment described in Acts 28:16, 30–31 and all of them intended for destinations in Asia.

2009: 284). Sometimes finding a reliable courier posed a problem. "I have been slow about sending one [a letter], for lack of a safe messenger," Cicero wrote to Atticus in the first century BC. "There are very few who can carry a letter of weight without lightening it by perusal" (*Att.* 1.13; quoted in Richards 2004: 181; cf. Head 2009: 283–84). Paul wants those who read this letter to know that the contents are safe with Tychicus (cf. Phil. 2:25–30; Rom. 16:1–2).

Summary

As Paul draws his letter to a close, he commends its courier, Tychicus, as his good friend and fellow believer, and a faithful worker in the Lord's service. He has trusted Tychicus to take the letter to its readers safely and to convey accurately the important information about Paul's circumstances that supplements the letter's contents.

Additional Note

6:21. Commentators have argued at length about the meaning of the καί in the phrase καὶ ὑμεῖς. If Tychicus will "also" let the readers of Ephesians know Paul's circumstances, then who else did Paul have in mind? Some commentators have thought that Paul had himself in mind—he had discussed his readers' circumstances in detail, and now it was their turn to find out about him (Alford 1857: 144; cf. Schnackenburg 1991: 288). Others believe that καί refers to the churches on Tychicus's itinerary (Robinson 1904: 217), especially the church in Colossae (Haupt 1902a: 245; Hoehner 2002: 869). Still others think there was no one else in mind at all: "Paul" was using καί imprecisely, perhaps to emphasize the following ὑμεῖς (Lincoln 1990: 464–65; Best 1998: 614–15).

It is true that καί is sometimes used imprecisely in Ephesians (1:15; 2:1; Best 1998: 615), but this is not usual, and it seems better to opt for an explanation that gives the word its normal significance if at all possible. Unless one is convinced on other grounds that Ephesians is pseudonymous, the most plausible explanation seems to be that Paul was sending Tychicus not only with Ephesians, but also with Colossians and Philemon as well. If so, then he assumed that the readers of Ephesians would know that Tychicus had also been charged with telling the Colossians about Paul's circumstances. Sellin (2008) is so convinced that καί must be given this significance that he opts for it, although he thinks the letter is pseudonymous. The verisimilitude created, he argues, is actually part of the pseudonymous author's strategy to convince his readers the letter is authentically Paul's (Sellin 2008: 490–91). It is equally plausible, however, to take the air of reality created by this small detail as evidence that both Ephesians and Colossians are genuine epistles of Paul, composed at about the same time and dispatched with Tychicus to their different destinations.

B. Peace, Love, Faith, and Grace for the Letter's Recipients (6:23–24)

Paul concludes the letter with a double prayer-wish that succinctly reminds his readers of four important themes within the letter. He prays that all believers (not simply the letter's readers) might experience both peace and love, and he connects love with faith. He then offers a separate prayer-wish that those who love the Lord Jesus Christ "incorruptibly" might experience God's grace.

In this quartet of abstract qualities, it is true that faith takes a subordinate role syntactically. Paul prays primarily for peace, love, and grace. In a letter that connects God's love for his people and the love of God's people for one another so clearly with faith (1:15; 3:17), however, it would be a mistake to make too much of this syntactical subordination.

Faith redefines existence, placing it "in Christ," where the blessings of peace (both peace with God and peace with others) and love (both God's love for his people and their love for one another) are freely given to God's people as demonstrations of his grace. Much of the letter has been about this peace, love, and grace that the letter's readers, like all God's people, have appropriated by faith in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Exegesis and Exposition

[23]Peace to the brothers [and sisters], and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [24]Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ incorruptibly. ⌜ ⌝

6:23

Paul often concludes his letters with a prayer-wish for God's peace (εἰρήνη, *eirēnē*) to rest on his readers (1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 3:16; Gal. 6:16; cf. Rom. 15:33; cf. Phil. 4:9; 2 Cor. 13:11; Rom. 16:20). In Ephesians, however, peace is such an important theme that Paul probably intended his readers to recall how he had defined it specifically in the preceding letter (Gnilka 1971: 324; Lincoln 1990: 466). Christ, he had said, is "peace" for believers because through his death on the cross he had set aside the Mosaic law and so made peace between Gentiles and Jews, and between humanity generally and God (2:14–18). Later he urges his readers to maintain the social unity that God's Spirit has brought to believers, and to do this by using "peace" as a "fastener" to hold the church together (4:3). As we have just seen in the discussion of the armor of God, "peace" is such an important element of the gospel that Paul can call it "the gospel of peace," and he urges his readers to be ready for battle against the

divisive spiritual forces of the cosmos by equipping themselves with the gospel defined in precisely these terms (6:15). According to this concluding prayer-wish, this is the peace that Paul wants God to give his readers.

In every letter but this one, Paul's concluding prayer-wishes are formulated in the second person (e.g., "And may the peace of God himself sanctify *you* [ὑμᾶς, *hymas*] completely"; 1 Thess. 5:23). Here Paul prays, less intimately, for peace to rest on "the brothers [and sisters]" (οἱ ἀδελφοί, *ho adelphoi*). The term ἀδελφοί (*adelphoi*) was commonly used among Jews in antiquity to refer to fellow Jews (e.g., Deut. 18:15; Ps. 22:22 Eng. [22:23 MT; 21:23 LXX]; Rom. 9:3), and the early Jewish-Christian community continued this practice (Matt. 5:22, 47; 7:3; 18:15; Acts 3:22; 7:37; Heb. 2:12). Jesus seems to have given this sort of figurative family language new meaning by defining it in terms of those who do God's will by sitting specifically under his teaching. Those who do this, he says, are "my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:33–35; cf. Matt. 12:48–50; Luke 8:21; 2 Clem. 9.11–10.1).

Whether Paul has derived this language from Judaism, from Jesus, from its common use in other Greco-Roman religious contexts, in Hellenistic letters, or from some combination of these is unknown, but he uses the term ἀδελφός figuratively more often than any other NT author (130 times), and like Jesus, he could expand the figure.[1] He sometimes refers to himself as the "mother" or "father" of those whom he has persuaded to believe the gospel (1 Thess. 2:7, 11; Gal. 4:19; 1 Cor. 4:15; Philem. 10; cf. 1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:22), to Jesus as the "brother" of believers (Rom. 8:29), and to all believers as "brothers [and sisters]" of one another.[2] The heavy concentration of familial language in the Pauline Letters may result from the alienation that Pauline Christians felt from their families and societies after their conversion (cf. Malherbe 2000: 110).

Paul also prays that the brothers and sisters who read this letter will experience "love with faith" (ἀγάπη μετὰ πίστεως, *agapē meta pisteōs*). Like peace, love has been an important theme throughout the letter, whether the love of believers for one another (1:4, 15; 4:15, 16; 5:2) or the love of God (or Christ) for believers (2:4; 3:17; 5:2). Faith, too, has been an important theme. Paul's readers were saved from rebellion against God and given a new existence "in Christ" when they put their faith in the gospel (1:13, 15; 2:8–10; 3:12). This close relationship was rooted and grounded in the love of God (and Christ) for them (3:17; 5:2), and its sacrificial nature forms a pattern that they should imitate in their love for one another (5:2, 25). Thus when Paul in 6:23 prays for his readers to experience "love with faith," he expresses the hope that their knowledge of God's love for them, and the love for each other that flows from this knowledge, might flourish in the fertile soil of their faith in the gospel.

1. On the use of figurative sibling language in Greco-Roman culture generally, see von Soden, *TDNT* 1:145–46 (from whom the statistical information is derived) and Malherbe 2000: 109–10.

2. See 1 Thess. 4:6, 10; 5:27; 2 Thess. 3:15; Gal. 1:2; 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:5–8; 8:11–13; 15:6; Phil. 1:14; Rom. 14:10, 13, 15, 21; Col. 4:15; Philem. 16; 1 Tim. 4:6; 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:21. Cf. Malherbe 2000: 150.

All of this—peace, love, and the faith that accompanies love—comes "from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Although elements of the peace and love for which Paul has prayed, and all of the faith that accompanies love, are attitudes and actions of human beings, those who have and do these virtues cannot take credit for them. If God answers Paul's prayer-wish, then these qualities will be gifts of God, just like the grace and peace that Paul has wished for his readers at the beginning of the letter (1:2).

6:24

Like every other letter in the Pauline corpus, the concluding lines of Ephesians contain a prayer-wish for God's grace. Elsewhere these prayer-wishes are formulated in the second-person plural and are relatively simple requests, with slight variations, that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ might be with the letter's readers (1 Thess. 5:28; 2 Thess. 3:18; Gal. 6:18; 1 Cor. 16:23; Phil. 4:23; 2 Cor. 13:13 [13:14 KJV]; Rom. 16:20; Philem. 25), or in most of the later Pauline letters, simply that grace might be with them (Col. 4:18; Eph. 6:24; 1 Tim. 6:21; Titus 3:15; 2 Tim. 4:22).[3]

Only 2 Cor. 13:13 and Eph. 6:24 show wide variations in the pattern, and they vary it in completely different ways. In 2 Cor. 13:13 Paul departs from the pattern with a threefold reference to grace, love, and fellowship, and an identification of the origin of each of these three gifts with a person of the Trinity. Here in Eph. 6:24 Paul seems to shift the frequent reference to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ into the reference to the recipients of this grace, and his description of the recipients becomes the most elaborate of these descriptions in the Pauline corpus. They are "all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ incorruptibly."

As interpreters have often noticed, this is the positive counterpart to 1 Cor. 16:22: "If anyone does not love [φιλεῖ, *philei*] the Lord, let him be accursed." Moreover, the notion that God's people are obligated to love God is prominent in both Old and New Testaments (e.g., Exod. 20:6; Deut. 5:10; 6:5; Judg. 5:31; Neh. 1:5; Ps. 145:20 MT, Eng. [144:20 LXX]; Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 2:9; 8:3; James 1:12; 2:5) and in other Jewish literature of the period (Sir. 1:10; 2:15–16; 34:16, 19; Pss. Sol. 4.25; 6.6; 10.3; 14.1; T. Iss. 7.6; T. Dan 5.3; T. Jos. 11.1; T. Benj. 3.1; cf. Hoehner 2002: 874–75; Aletti 2001: 319n19). Although this is an unusual statement for a concluding Pauline grace-wish, then, there is precedent for a reference to the importance of loving the Lord Jesus at the end of a Pauline letter, and nothing surprising from the perspective of early Christian theology about defining the people of God in terms of those who love the Lord Jesus.

The concluding prepositional phrase ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ (*en aphtharsia*) does come as a surprise, however, and has left interpreters puzzled (Sellin 2008: 494). The term ἀφθαρσία means "incorruptibility, immortality" (BDAG 155; cf. Robinson 1904: 217–18) and had a long history of use in Greek philosophical discussion over the eternity of God, the human soul, and

3. Philemon, although a later letter, follows the early group in speaking of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Philem. 25). See the useful table in Weima 1994: 80.

the world.[4] Hellenistic Jewish texts also used the term to refer to human beings who, because they were made in God's image, were immortal (Wis. 2:23; cf. 6:19; cf. Philo, *Flight* 59), to martyrs whose physical frame might be torn apart but whose immortality could not be damaged by their tormentors (4 Macc. 9:22; 17:12), and to the incorruptible, eternal existence of those who love wisdom (Wis. 6:18; cf. Rom. 2:7; Philo, *Agriculture* 100; *Drunkenness* 140). The term often stands in contrast to mortal, changeable, and corruptible existence (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:42, 50, 53, 54; 2 Tim. 1:10; Philo, *Creation* 153; *Drunkenness* 140; *Heir* 35; *Abraham* 55; *Moses* 2.194).

If this is the meaning of the term, however, it is difficult to understand precisely what ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ would signify in this context. From the perspective of the sentence's syntax, the most obvious way to take the phrase is as a modifier of τῶν ἀγαπώντων (*tōn agapōntōn*, those who love). But what could it mean to speak of people who love the Lord Jesus "in immortality"?

Some interpreters have taken the expression to refer to an unceasing (Hoehner 2002: 877) or persistent (Best 1998: 620) love. Neither of these options, however, are obvious translations for the term ἀφθαρσία, whose connotations of ceaselessness and eternality are derived only from the notion that what is ἄφθαρτος (*aphthartos*, imperishable) is not subject to decomposition.

Others believe that the phrase is not connected specifically with any element in the preceding sentence but serves rather as a rhetorical flourish loosely affiliated with the whole sentence and, to some extent, the whole letter. Believers, argues Heil (2007a: 306), are those who have been made alive, raised, and seated with Christ (2:5–6). They therefore exist in the realm of "immortality," and it is in this realm that the truths the letter has expressed find their reality (cf. Barth 1974: 814; Sellin 2008: 494). This explanation preserves the normal meaning of ἀφθαρσία but has the disadvantage of sacrificing the most obvious way of taking the syntax.

Many other interpreters connect the phrase with the initial word χάρις (*charis*, grace) and take the preposition ἐν (*en*, in) as a conjunction that joins "the following word to one or more preceding words so as to complete a series" (Bruce 1984: 416).[5] This solution has the merit of giving ἀφθαρσία its most obvious meaning at the same time that it renders the sentence perfectly intelligible. Paul's prayer-wish would be that "those who love our Lord Jesus Christ" be blessed with both "grace and immortality," and this fits nicely with the letter's emphasis on the eternal character of God's grace toward his people (2:7; Lincoln 1990: 468). The phrase ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ, however, is too far from χάρις to make this understanding of the sentence plausible.

4. See, e.g., Epicurus, *Epistula ad Menoeceum* 123; *Epistula ad Herodotum* 76; "Philo," *De aeternitate mundi* (Περὶ Ἀφθαρσίας Κόσμου, *On the Eternity of the World*); Plutarch, *Arist.* 6; *Mor.* 425d; Urmson 1990: 27, under the adjective *aphthartos*; and the use of the adjective ἄφθαρτος to refer to God in Rom. 1:23 and 1 Tim. 1:17. Cf. Robinson 1904: 217–18.

5. Bruce cites 1:4, 8; 3:12; 4:19; 6:2, 16 as other examples of the "comitative" use of ἐν. Lincoln (1990: 467) adds 2:7 to the list and notes that here too the first word is χάρις. See also, e.g., Gnilka 1971: 326; Pokorný 1992: 251; O'Brien 1999: 494–95; Muddiman 2001: 300.

The solution to the puzzle of this closing phrase may lie in comparing the structure and meaning of the entire sentence to an ascription of praise that concludes Pss. Sol. 6.[6] This brief psalm describes the blessings that come to the person whose inner character is disposed to call spontaneously on the Lord in prayer at the beginning and end of the day and throughout the vicissitudes of life. It concludes in much the same way that Paul concludes Ephesians:

Psalms of Solomon 6.6	Ephesians 6:24
εὐλογητὸς κύριος ὁ ποιῶν *eulogētos kyrios ho poiōn* Blessed be the Lord who does	
ἔλεος *eleos* mercy	ἡ χάρις *hē charis* Grace be
τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν *tois agapōsin* to those who love	μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγαπώντων *meta pantōn tōn agapōntōn* with all those who love
αὐτὸν *auton* him	τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν *ton kyrion hēmōn Iēsoun Christon* our Lord Jesus Christ
ἐν ἀληθείᾳ. *en alētheia*. in truth.	ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ. *en aphtharsia*. in incorruption.

The two sentences have a common structure. They begin with a reference to an abstract quality that God shows to human beings (mercy/grace), continue with a reference to the demonstration of that quality to "those who love" the Lord (him/our Lord Jesus Christ), and qualify the reference to love with an adverbial prepositional phrase of two words, "in" (ἐν) and an abstract noun (truth/incorruption) without the article.[7]

It is likely that this sort of expression was a known liturgical phrase among pious Jews in the first century BC since approximations of it appear elsewhere in the Psalms of Solomon:

4.25	Γένοιτο, κύριε, τὸ ἔλεός σου ἐπὶ *Genoito, kyrie, to eleos sou epi* πάντας τοὺς ἀγαπῶντάς σε. *pantas tous agapōntas se.*	O Lord, let your mercy come upon all those who love you.
10.3	Καὶ τὸ ἔλεος κυρίου ἐπὶ τοὺς *Kai to eleos kyriou epi tous* ἀγαπῶντας αὐτὸν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ. *agapōntas auton en alētheia.*	And the mercy of the Lord is upon those who love him in truth.

6. Translations of Psalms of Solomon here are my own.

7. For other occurrences of the verb ἀγαπάω qualified adverbially by ἐν with an anarthrous noun, see 2 John 1 (ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ) and 3 John 1 (ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ). Cf. T. Dan 5.3 (ἀγαπᾶτε . . . ἐν ἀληθινῇ καρδίᾳ); T. Gad 7.7 (ἀγαπᾶτε . . . ἐν εὐθύτητι καρδίας); and Ign. *Trall.* 13.2 (ἀγαπᾶτε ἐν ἀμερίστῳ καρδίᾳ). Each of these expressions refers to sincere or pure love, which is probably what τῶν ἀγαπώντων . . . ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ in Eph. 6:24 also means.

14.1	Πιστὸς κύριος τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτὸν *Pistos kyrios tois agapōsin auton* ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, τοῖς ὑπομένουσιν *en alētheia, tois hypomenousin* παιδείαν αὐτοῦ. *paideian autou.*	Faithful is the Lord to those who love him in truth, to those who patiently endure his discipline

Paul probably knew similar expressions and formulated his concluding grace-wish with the same basic structure.[8] If so, then the prepositional phrase "in incorruption" should be attached to the expression "those who love," and the term "incorruption" should probably be understood as a virtue, like truth, rather than as an eternal, incorruptible state. Like the Psalms of Solomon, Paul is describing the way in which those for whom he prays love God. Rather than saying that they love God "in truth" or "truly" (Pss. Sol. 6.6; 10.3; 14.1; *OTP* 2:658, 661, 663), he says that they love God "in incorruption," that is, "in integrity" or "sincerely."

Can the term ἀφθαρσία have this meaning? Earlier interpreters certainly thought so. Origen (*Cels.* 3.60) continued to see a reference to immortality in the use of the word here, but nevertheless he believed that it referred to being morally incorrupt (Heine 2002: 271–72). Ignatius seems to have used the term (although with no reference to Ephesians) to mean incorruption in the moral and doctrinal sense (*Eph.* 16.1–17.1; *Magn.* 6.2; Lightfoot 1890: 73; Moule 1953: 197). In the NT, the adjective ἄφθαρτος (*aphthartos*, incorruptible) seems to have both a moral and a temporal connotation in 1 Pet. 1:4, where it is associated with the terms ἀμίαντος (*amiantos*, undefiled) and ἀμάραντος (*amarantos*, unfading), and again in 1 Pet. 3:4, where it is associated with a gentle and quiet spirit. Since a moral meaning would parallel the reference to loving God "in truth" (that is, "truly" or "sincerely") in the Psalms of Solomon, Paul probably intended the term to carry moral connotations here too.

Paul prays, then, for God to be gracious to those whose love for the Lord Jesus Christ is "free from every element liable to corruption" (Westcott 1906: 100).[9] He is certainly not tacking on to the grace of God—in contradiction to 2:1–10—an eleventh-hour condition of perfect love for the Lord. He is instead closing his letter with an implicit admonition to love the Lord Jesus Christ simply and purely, in a way untainted by the futility, darkness, and alienation that characterized his readers' lives (2:1–3; 4:17–19; 5:8–12, 16; cf. 6:12) before they experienced the grace, love, and peace of God through their faith in the gospel.

8. The Psalms of Solomon are most plausibly dated sometime in the first century BC (*OTP* 2:641), and although probably not known to Paul, nevertheless reveal a form of piety with which Paul was probably familiar.

9. Cf. Calvin 1965: 224; 1973: 704; Eadie 1883: 484–85; Abbott 1897: 191; and Moule 1953: 197. Among translations, see KJV and ESV; among lexicographers, see LSJ 289.

Summary

Paul concludes the letter with a succinct prayer that concisely expresses three concerns. First, he asks that all believers might experience peace, which, in the context of the preceding letter, refers to peace with one another and peace with God. Second, he is concerned that the faith all believers have might bring love into their lives, which, again, in the context of the letter, refers to practical expressions of love for one another and to the personal experience of God's love. Third, Paul prays that all those who have a sincere love for Jesus Christ might experience the grace of God. He prays, in other words, that all believers might know God's immeasurable benevolence to his people both in giving them salvation and in equipping them to fulfill the role that God intends for his human creation and for his people, the church.

Additional Note

6:24. The letter ends with ἀμήν in some witnesses from the Alexandrian (Ψ, 1739), Western (D), and Byzantine traditions (most). Correctors of ℵ and 1739 also inserted the term. The early date and geographical spread of the manuscripts that omit the term, however, push the evidence heavily in favor of its omission. These include the Alexandrian manuscripts $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, ℵ, A, B, 33, 81, 1175, and 1739 and the Western manuscripts F and G. Among the Pauline Letters, only Galatians and Romans seem to have ended with ἀμήν (Best 1998: 620), and it is easy to imagine the term creeping into the copies of other letters as a result of the liturgical reading of the text (Metzger 1994: 543).

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