

## EPHESIANS

All quotes and comments by PHEME PERKINS unless otherwise stated.

- 1) Perhaps not written by Paul, but a "circular letter" sent by one of his disciples. Or, if written by Paul, it was sent from him in prison in 63 AD. David Trobisch argues that only Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, and Galatians was actually written by Paul. All other letters attributed to him were written by others. The writer of Ephesians used Colossians and other Pauline letters, sometimes quoting directly, sometimes just using ideas, and sometimes actually changing the content. PHEME PERKINS (NIB) makes the bald statement, "Since Ephesians was written after Paul's martyrdom..." And later: "Since the writer of Ephesians has read Colossians, he knows that Paul..."
- 2) 1:5 – The basis for Calvinism and earlier doctrines of predestination. (In the original Greek, vv 3-14 was one long sentence of 202 words, by far the longest in the NT.)
- 3) 1:9 – "This mystery (God's plan for salvation through Christ) was hidden from prior ages but has been made manifest to the saints in Paul's preaching to the Gentiles."
- 4) 1:18 – Resembles the Essene language of election as in the blessing pronounced over those who entered the covenant: "May he illumine your heart with the discernment of life and grace you with eternal knowledge."
- 5) 1:22-23 -- Since Ephesians 4:10 refers to the ascent of Christ above the humans in order to fill the universe, the phrase "fullness of time who fills all in all" probably belongs to the same tradition. Nothing remains outside the Christ who fills all. "The filling" already exists as a divine reality. If Christians recognize the presence and power of God in all things, they have a secure basis for the hope for the riches of God's glorious inheritance (vs. 18). Christ is head of a body that fills the entire cosmos. V.22: Psalm 110:1
- 6) 2:1-7 -- "power of the air" -- popular Hellenistic cosmology: "air" is the murky, polluted region between earth and moon in which the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air) are mixed. Demons occupy the air. Philo: both angels of God and evil angels are there. Ammonius developed Plato's demiurge into a lower power that rules the sublunary world. /// Use of 2:3 as evidence for the doctrine of original sin belongs to later theological development. (See note @ Romans 5:12.) This passage must be based on the Jewish tradition of Gentile sinfulness.
- 7) 2:14-16 -- Informed by Colossians 1:19-22, but Colossians does not provide the image of a dividing wall of hostility that is central to Ephesians. /// The law referred to in vs. 15 is the whole of Jewish law, and is the "dividing wall" in vs. 14 which keeps Jews and Gentiles apart. /// In Vs. 16, we find the only explicit reference to the cross in Ephesians.
- 8) 2:20 -- In 1 Corinthians 3:9-11, the foundation is Christ, the apostle is the master builder, and others build upon his work.. Ephesians shifts the imagery to Christ as the cornerstone or the capstone. But see Revelation 21:14 where the names of the 12 apostles are inscribed on the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem.
- 9) 3:1-13) -- These verses refer to Paul's conversion and form a key piece of evidence for the hypothesis that Ephesians has drawn on the text of Colossians 1:23-28 (see NIB p 407).
- 10) 3:3-4 -- No consensus as to what this means: previous letter not extant, or a letter to Colossians which reached Ephesus, or an earlier passage in this letter?
- 11) 3:5 -- This expression supports the claim that Ephesians was not composed by Paul. He would have said "us apostles" as in 1 Cor 4:9.

- 12) 3:13 – Paul’s imprisonment has secured the Gentiles’ life and future glorification.
- 13) 3:14 -- The kneeling position instead of standing is almost always associated with death -- Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60, 20:36, 21:5. \\\ A play on words not easily reproduced in English: Father (*pater*) from whom his whole family (*patria*) is named. The meaning is obscure: perhaps “everything belongs to the one family because everything has been created by the one Father.”
- 14) 3:16-19 -- Contains variations of phrases from Colossians: “riches of glory” – Col 1:27, “hearts held together in love” – Col 2:2, “rooted and built up in him” – Col. 2:7.
- 15) 3:21 -- The only doxology in the NT to mention Christ and the church as the locus of praise!
- 16) 4:8 --The spiritual enemies that Jesus defeated at the cross. Psalm 68:18.
- 17) 4:11 -- The term “evangelist” appears in only two other places in the NT: Philip in Acts 21:8, and Timothy in 2 Tim 4:5. In both places the evangelist has been commissioned by the apostles to preach the gospel.
- 18) 4:16 -- Many interpreters conclude that the “ligaments” are teachers that bind others to Christ.
- 19) 4:30 -- The sealing is probably baptism, referring back to 4:5's “one baptism.”
- 20) 5:1 -- This injunction “to be imitators of God” appears nowhere else in the NT.
- 21) 5:3 -- Some scholars suggest that “greed” in this context means unrestrained sexual greed, such as coveting the neighbor’s wife.
- 22) 5:14 -- Probably a hymn of the early Christians. The citation may be a reference to the baptismal imagery of arising from death (Rom 6:4, 13). Or perhaps the Christian remains awake in anticipation of the Day of the Lord while others are in darkness or drunken sleep (Rom 13:11-14).
- 23) 6:1 -- The Essene example indicates that “children” refers to adults obligated to care for elderly parents.
- 24) 6:12 -- “Evil spirits in the heavens” is often translated as “cosmic powers” and refers to deities like Artemis. Paul in 1 Cor 10:20 calls these gods demons and cautions against worshipping their idols.
- 25) 6:14 -- The “belt of truth” may derive from Isa 11:5 where he uses the “belt of righteousness.” “Your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace” may derive from Isa 52:7 -- “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him bring glad tidings, announcing peace...” “Hold faith as a shield” from Wisdom 5:19 -- “He shall take invincible rectitude as a shield.” “Take the helmet of salvation” from Isaiah 59:17 – “He put on justice as his breastplate, salvation as the helmet on his head.”