

Ephesians Ep 222



In this outline are a few links to some of my favorite books that have really helped me understand the context and content of the scriptures. [Click here to see all of my favorite books on Amazon](#). As an Amazon Affiliate, I do earn a small commission from qualifying purchases (at no extra cost to you).

Ephesians – Introduction

Dealing with the issues of the early church

There are some difficult passages in the text – Roman Household Codes – see Eph. 5.22-33 and Eph. 6.5-9.

This may have been a general letter to the church.

Ephesians is a temple text – veiled language in Ephesians 1

This is D&C 93, John 1, Book of Abraham, First Israelite Temple Religion

Authorship

The authorship of the Epistle to the Ephesians is attributed to Paul (Ephesians 1:1), but scholars have observed differences in style, vocabulary, and themes compared to his other letters. This has led to the conclusion that Paul may not have directly written or dictated it.¹ However, there are possibilities where Paul could have provided an outline, given general directions, approved someone else's work, or been involved in other ways that would still allow his name to be associated with it. Stylometry, a field of study that involves the statistical analysis of literary style, examines various quantitative attributes of documents, such as average sentence length and relative frequencies of specific words. Paul's letter to the Ephesians has been found to use sentences that are longer than the letters that are attributed to Paul.²

The Epistle claims to have been written by Paul during his imprisonment (Ephesians 1:1; 3:1; 4:1). It is most likely associated with his Roman imprisonment, during which he was under "house arrest." This type of imprisonment allowed him certain freedoms such as receiving visitors, writing letters, and residing in a home-like setting. There are four other letters known as the "prison letters" that share similarities with Ephesians: Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians.

In summary, while the authorship of Ephesians remains a subject of scholarly debate, it is attributed to Paul in the text itself. However, the distinct characteristics and differences from his other letters raise

¹ Marcus Borg writes, "In Ephesians, as in Colossians, many of the sentences are very long, unlike the commonly short and energized sentences of Paul's genuine letters." Marcus Borg, [Evolution of the Word: The New Testament in the order the books were written](#), Harper-Collins, 2012, p. 553.

² Thomas A. Wayment, [The New Testament: A Translation for Latter-day Saints](#), Deseret Book, 2019, p. 339.

questions about direct authorship, suggesting alternative scenarios where Paul's involvement could have taken different forms.

Issues with Ephesians that show that perhaps this was not written in Paul's lifetime or that he may have not written it as it currently exists:

1. Ephesians contains longer sentences than how Paul wrote in the letters generally attributed to him by the majority of biblical scholars.
2. Edgar Goodspeed, *The Meaning of Ephesians* – from pg. 81 to the end of the letter. His argument is that if Paul didn't write it, his words are in here.
3. Perhaps Ephesians was written around 90-110 CE. It is likely that this was a circular letter written to many Christian communities and perhaps not solely to the saints in Corinth.³
4. There were many Christianities when Ephesians was put together⁴ – Apostles and those following them, Ebionites, Gnostics, to name a few. In the second century, a new group of Christians emerged, groups like the Marcionites and the Montanists. Other schools of thought over time emerged as well, such as the early Alexandrian and Antiochene schools.
5. The argument of "ecclesiology" is the argument that Ephesians is dealing with the issues of what the church is supposed to look like.
6. Bachman's paper on D&C 132 – this section was put together from many sources. This is what scripture is doing – lots of stuff put together.⁵
7. Paul's words are recontextualized to deal with problems of the early second century in Christianity. Remember, Paul was killed in (according to tradition) the mid 60's during the reign of Nero in Rome.⁶

³ S. Kent Brown, Ephesians, p. 39. Craig S. Keener wrote, "As notes in most translations point out, not all manuscripts include "in Ephesus" (v. 1). Many scholars have argued that Ephesians was originally sent to a number of churches, of which Ephesus was only the most prominent. (Thus it would be a "circular letter," like imperial edicts.) But because Ephesus (the province's most prominent city) was one of the cities addressed, and because all these churches would presumably be in the area around Ephesus, the history of the Ephesian church will help us understand the background to this letter (see Acts 19:1-41)." See: Keener, [The IVP Background Commentary: New Testament](#), IVP Academic, 2014, p. 543. Levine and Brettler add the following: The text's connection to Ephesus is also problematic: the words "in Ephesus" (1.1) are absent from some of the best early manuscripts. Defenders of Pauline authorship argue that the letter was written late in Paul's ministry for a different audience (Marcion, a second-century Christian thinker, later condemned for heresy, suggested the Laodiceans). Without the opening and closing sections (1.1-2 and 6.21-24) the letter reads more like a sermon or exhortation addressed to Christian communities in general, rather than a letter specifically dealing with the problems and concerns of one community in particular. Levine and Brettler, [The Jewish Annotated New Testament](#), Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 345.

⁴ If it was indeed textualized around 110 CE.

⁵ In the *Journal of Mormon History*, Danel Bachman wrote an article illustrating how the Prophet Joseph Smith's revelation on plural marriage was in reality three separate documents that have been merged together into one to create a single literary text. Bachman writes: it is likely that each of these questions arose under different circumstances and at separate times. Nevertheless, Section 132 is a deft amalgamation of the answers to each into a cohesive unity. It is significant that the material immediately following verse one does not answer the question therein about the patriarchs. The name of Abraham or any of the ancients is not mentioned until verse twenty-nine. Danel Bachman, "New Light on an Old Hypothesis: The Ohio Origins of the Revelation on Eternal Marriage," *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 5 (1978), p. 23. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23286035>

⁶ The precise circumstances surrounding the death of St. Paul remain uncertain, but according to tradition, he was martyred by beheading in Rome. This event is believed to have occurred as part of the persecution of Christians initiated by the Roman emperor Nero in the aftermath of the great fire that swept through the city in 64 CE.

Ecclesiology

The field of ecclesiology concerns the study of the nature, purpose, structure, and function of the Christian Church. It encompasses various theological perspectives and debates regarding the understanding of the Church's identity and mission. While there are different arguments within ecclesiology, here are some key points commonly discussed:

1. **Nature of the Church:** One aspect of ecclesiological argumentation revolves around defining the nature of the Church. Various perspectives exist in the various forms to Christianity today, ranging from understanding the Church as a visible, organized institution with hierarchical structure to viewing it as a spiritual and invisible body of believers united by faith in Christ. Ephesians emphasizes the unity of believers within the Church. It describes the Church as the body of Christ, with Christ as the head (Ephesians 1.22-23). The letter emphasizes the idea of believers being joined together in Christ, forming a unified community (Ephesians 4.4-6).
2. **Church Authority and Governance:** Another central argument revolves around the authority and governance of the Church. Ephesians 2.19-20 deal with this, as the author discusses a "foundation of apostles and prophets." Different ecclesiological models propose varying forms of leadership, including hierarchical structures with ordained clergy, congregational autonomy, or a combination of both. The debate often considers issues such as the role of bishops, presbyters (elders), deacons, and the involvement of the laity in decision-making processes. The early Christians debated these things, and worked towards orthodoxy in the first few centuries. Ephesians is dealing with these issues, and emphasizes that the leaders outlined in Ephesians 2.19-20 and Ephesians 4.11-12 are to be there to bless the lives of those that work to follow Jesus Christ.
3. **Sacraments and Worship:** Ecclesiology also encompasses discussions on the role and significance of sacraments (such as baptism and the Lord's Supper, often called the Eucharist in the Catholic tradition) within the Church. The understanding of how sacraments are administered, their efficacy, and their relation to the Church's mission can vary among different ecclesiological perspectives. I see a coded message in Ephesians 1 that is related to the endowment and can be seen to those who have been initiated.
4. **Mission and Social Engagement:** Ecclesiology also explores the Church's mission in the world, addressing questions about evangelism, social justice, and the Church's responsibility to address societal issues. The argument often includes discussions on the balance between spiritual and social aspects of the Church's mission. The letter to the Ephesians emphasizes the Church's role as a means through which God's wisdom is made known to the world (Ephesians 3.10).

Purpose

S. Kent Brown has given the following:

Historical records confirm that St. Paul was indeed imprisoned in Rome, and it was during this period of captivity that he wrote several of his epistles or letters. See: [How did the Apostle Paul Die?](#) Christianity.com, accessed 6.30.23. See also: [How did St. Paul the Apostle die?](#) Britannica.com, accessed 7.5.23.

What arises at the beginning and end of the epistle frames (Paul's) emphasis. At the letter's opening, a reader encounters the dazzling view of the heavens and what has occurred and will occur therein. It was there that God the Father set out his intentions "before the foundation of the world" that would open "the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself" and grant to Christ's followers "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (1.4-5, 7). More than this, at the endtime, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times," the Father will "gather together in one all things in Christ," offering the faithful "an inheritance" in the celestial realms after being "sealed with the holy Spirit of promise" (1.10-11, 13). In this light, the Apostle plainly presented the grandeur of unfolding, celestially driven events. It was his purpose to remind his readers about unspeakable events that had swirled around them since their premortal existences and were continuing to enrich them in their earthly lives. Why? Because times were about to get rough.

Paul did not draw readers' attention to conflict with government authorities as a source of future troubles. Instead, he anticipated that unsavory matters would arise inside the church and were apparently already beginning (see Eph. 5.3-7). Internal troubles, of course, could weaken, even cripple, congregations where church members gathered. Seeking to slow evil's penetrating power, he took up the topics that we meet in Ephesians 5 and 6... At the end of the letter, the second place of emphasis, Paul landed hard on the looming apostasy, whose tentacles were already reaching into the church in the form of lechery and deception (see Eph. 5.3-7). To hold this hardcharging, sable mass at bay, Paul appealed for strong marriages and families, not even excluding slaves who served inside the home (Eph. 5.22-6.9). This emphasis on families brings home an important message. And how might Paul's readers meet the challenge? By becoming "imitators of God" (Eph. 5.1). Furthermore, they were to "put on the whole armor of God" and "stand" (Eph. 6.11). Theirs would not be an easy task because it would take inspiration arising from holding to "the word of God" – that is, by embracing the scriptures and "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6.11). In a word, church members stood on the edge of a precipice that overlooked the vast darkness of "spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6.12) where their enemies would like to push them.⁷

Ephesians Outline

I. Introduction (Ephesians 1:1-2)

- A. Greeting and identification of the author (Paul) and recipients (the saints in Ephesus)
- B. Benediction of grace and peace

II. The Blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-3:21)

- A. Praise for God's blessings and election in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14)
- B. Prayer for revelation and spiritual enlightenment (Ephesians 1:15-23)
- C. The transformation of the Gentiles through Christ (Ephesians 2:1-22)

⁷ S. Kent Brown, [The Epistle to the Ephesians: Brigham Young University New Testament Commentary](#), BYU Studies, 2023, p. 24-25.

D. The mystery of God's plan to unite Jews and Gentiles in Christ (Ephesians 3:1-13)

E. Paul's prayer for spiritual strength and understanding (Ephesians 3:14-21)

III. The Unity of the Church (Ephesians 4:1-6:20)

A. Exhortation to unity and living a worthy life in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16)

B. Instructions on putting off the old self and putting on the new self (Ephesians 4:17-32)

C. Exhortation to imitate God and live in love (Ephesians 5:1-21)

D. Instructions for various relationships: husbands and wives, parents and children, slaves and masters (Ephesians 5:22-6:9)

E. The armor of God and the spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:10-20)

IV. Conclusion and Final Greetings (Ephesians 6:21-24)

A. Tychicus' mission and purpose (Ephesians 6:21-22)

B. Benediction and final greetings (Ephesians 6:23-24)

Things to Consider

The Blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-3:21)

A. Praise for God's blessings and election in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14)

B. Prayer for revelation and spiritual enlightenment (Ephesians 1:15-23)

Ephesians 1 as a temple text

Sod experience – “to stand” (Eph. 6.13). Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is encouraging them to stand, meaning to me, stand in the presence of God. We see this throughout the sod experiences of prophets who have stood in the council of God. This brings us to the premortal language that Paul uses in Ephesians 1.

Paul is an apostle “by the will of God” (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ) – Eph. 1.1

The point, of course, is that the will of god had manifested itself in the vision that burst upon Paul on his way to Damascus. No human agent came to him; his contact was with the divine Jesus (see Eph. 3.2; Acts 9.1-9; 22.3-11; 26.12-18; Gal. 1.11-17).⁸

Heavenly Father and Jesus – Eph. 1.2

We have been “in him” before the foundation of the world – Eph. 1.4

He has “predestinated” us - προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν “He having foreordained us into the adoption through Jesus Christ into him.” It is God the Father’s will that we come to the Father by Christ.

⁸ S. Kent Brown, *Ephesians*, p. 37.

Elder Maxwell taught:

“The foreseeing of those who will accept the gospel in mortality, gladly and with alacrity, is based upon their parallel responsiveness in the premortal world...The Lord, who was able to say to his disciples, 'Cast the net on the right side of the ship' (John 21:6), knew beforehand that there was a multitude of fishes there. If he knew beforehand the movements and whereabouts of fishes in the little Sea of Tiberias, should it offend us that he knows beforehand which mortals will come into the gospel net?

It does no violence even to our frail human logic to observe that there cannot be a grand plan of salvation for all mankind, unless there is also a plan for each individual. The salvational sum will reflect all its parts. Once the believer acknowledges that the past, present, and future are before God simultaneously—even though we do not understand how—then the doctrine of foreordination may be seen somewhat more clearly. For instance, it was necessary for God to know how the economic difficulties and crop failures of the Joseph Smith, Sr. family in New England would move this special family to the Cumorah vicinity where the Book of Mormon plates were buried. God's plans could scarcely have so unfolded if-willy-nilly-the Smiths had been born Manchurians and if, meanwhile, the plates had been buried in Belgium!”⁹

“The mystery of his will” (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ) – Eph. 1.9

LeGrand Baker taught:

Paul taught that the Saints that each had made covenants in the Council — “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery [*mysterion*], even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory (1 Corinthians 2:7).” He also reminded the Ephesians, “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ... Having made known unto us the mystery [*mysterion*] of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself (Ephesians 1:3-4,9).” He left no question about what he intended to say when he added,

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery [*mysterion*], which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:8-9).

The mysteries (“secrets confided only to the initiated”) Paul describes are not only secrets in this world, but have always been, and always will be. He taught the Romans:

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery [*mysterion*], which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith (Romans 16:25-27).¹⁰

⁹ Elder Neal A. Maxwell, “[A More Determined Discipleship](#),” *Ensign*, Feb. 1979.

¹⁰ LeGrand Baker, “[Mystery and Secret in the Book of Mormon](#),” accessed 7.4.2023.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1.13).

Elder McConkie related:

Joseph Smith said that the particular seal placed upon these Ephesian Saints was that their callings and elections had been made sure. (Teachings, pp. 149-151.) Theirs was the same promise and assurance given certain worthy persons in this dispensation to whom the Lord said: "I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even the Holy Spirit of promise; which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the testimony of John. This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom; Which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son." (D. & C. 88:3-5.)¹¹

The holy spirit is the earnest of our inheritance - ὅς ἐστιν ἀρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν "which is the earnest of our inheritance" – Eph. 1.14.

Paul here speaks of the Spirit as a "deposit" (niv)—a term used in ancient business documents to mean a "down payment." Those who had tasted the Spirit had begun to taste the life of the future world that God had promised his people.¹²

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints (Eph. 1.17-18).

On April 29, 2023, S. Kent Brown spoke of these verses as having to do with our coming to know God himself.

Ephesians 1.19-23 can be a bit of a challenge in the KJV. Here is an alternate translation¹³:

and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us who are believing, according to the working of the power of His might, which He wrought in the Christ, having raised him out of the dead, and did set [him] at His right hand in the heavenly [places], far above all principality, and authority, and might, and lordship, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in the coming one; and all things He did put under his feet, and did give him -- head over all things to the assembly, which is his body, the fulness of Him who is filling the all in all.

Far above all principality and power (Eph. 1.21)

S. Kent Brown writes, "As in other appearances of these persons (that is, the "principalities and powers" of Eph. 1.21 and 6.12) such individuals are citizens of the unseen world."¹⁴

¹¹ Bruce R. McConkie, [Doctrinal New Testament Commentary](#), "The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians," Volume 2, Deseret Book, 2002.

¹² Keener, [Background](#), p. 544.

¹³ Young's Literal Translation.

¹⁴ Brown, [Ephesians](#), p. 220.

Another scholar notes:

The subordination of these powers beneath Christ in this age and the coming one express the confident exaltation above enemies in Ps 110:1 (linked with Ps 8:6; cf. 1 Cor 15:27). Exorcists and magicians tried to manipulate powerful spirits by invoking their names; the supremacy of Jesus' name above all other names means that he is higher than all the spiritpowers being invoked and could not be exploited.

By Paul's day Jewish people commonly recognized that demonic and/or angelic powers were at work behind the political structures of the world; these powers were thus thought to direct the earthly rulers and peoples (v. 21; see Deut 32:8 lxx; *Jubilees* 15:31-32; 35:17; Dead Sea Scrolls 1QM 15.13-14; *1 Enoch* 61:10; esp. Dan 10:13, 20; for angelic ranks, *1 Enoch* 69:3).

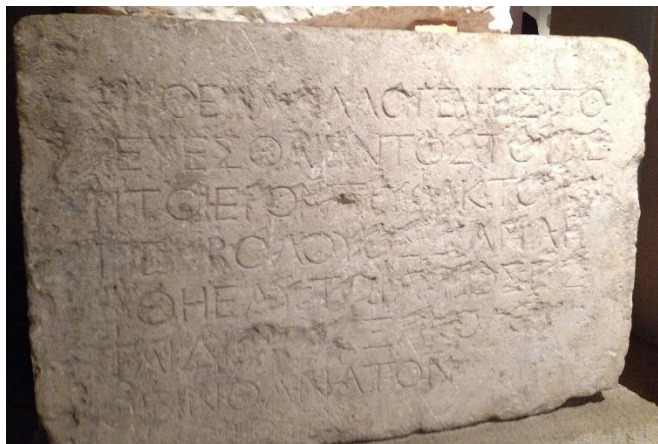
A growing view among some in Paul's day was that the world was run by Fate, which was usually expressed by the stars (which were viewed as heavenly beings). Some mystery cults, such as the cult of Isis, later gained popularity by claiming power to free initiates from Fate. Jewish people often believed that these powers ruled all the nations except Israel (*Jubilees* 15:32; *Sifre Deuteronomy* 315.2.1; cf. Dan 10:21; 12:1); later, by the third century, some teachers explained that Israel had been lifted above those heavenly powers in Abraham their ancestor (Genesis Rabbah 44:12; 48:6). Paul says that those united with Christ had also been raised above those powers. His words would be a great encouragement to Christians who had been converted from an occult background (cf. Acts 19:18-20). Some may have expected eschatological exaltation to the heavens (*Testament of Moses* 10:8-10; cf. Dan 12:3).

Jewish teachers came to speak of these heavenly powers that guided earthly rulers as "angels of the nations." Such beings were the ultimate expression of the spiritual division among different peoples, but Paul says that this distinction has been transcended in Christ—again making a point relevant to a congregation experiencing ethnic or cultural tensions (see introduction to 1:3-14). Thus Christ's body is "that which is filled by him who fills all"—"all" indicating especially representatives of all peoples in the church (4:6-10; cf. 3:19; 5:18).¹⁵

C. The transformation of the Gentiles through Christ (Ephesians 2:1-22)

He has "broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph. 2.14)

¹⁵ Keener, [Background](#), p. 544-545.



Jesus, in fulfillment of Isaiah 9.5-6, is described as the "Prince of Peace," embodying the role of bringing reconciliation and harmony. In the context of Jesus' ministry, the Holy Spirit assumes the role of spreading the message of peace, as seen in Doctrine and Covenants 6.23. The term "wall" mentioned could represent any obstacle or division between God and humanity, whether it be a spiritual barrier or the physical stone wall that separated the court of the Gentiles from the sacred area in the House of God. This separation was enforced

with strict warnings in multiple languages, emphasizing the consequences of entering the restricted space. As the discussion pertains to the inclusion of Gentiles in receiving the blessings of Abraham, it is fitting that the barrier between the court of the Gentiles and the Israelites would be removed. This barrier can also be understood as the "partition inside a house," which might refer to the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies in the temple. Regardless of the specific symbolism, the concept highlights the existence of a division between God and humanity that needed to be addressed.

Above: Jerusalem Temple Warning ΜΗΘΕΝΑΑΛΛΟΓΕΝΗΙΣΠΟ ΡΕΥΕΣΘΑΙΕΝΤΟΣΤΟΥΠΕΡΙΤΟΙΕΡΟΝΤΡΥΦΑΚΤΟΥΚΑΙ ΠΕΡΙΒΟΛΟΥΟΣΔΑΝΛΗ ΦΘΗΕΑΥΤΩΙΑΙΤΙΟΣΕΣ ΤΑΙΔΙΑΤΟΕΞΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΙΝΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ Translation: "Let no foreigner enter within the parapet and the partition which surrounds the Temple precincts. Anyone caught [violating] will be held accountable for his ensuing death." Source: [Temple Warning Inscription](#), Wikipedia, accessed 7.5.23.

Apostles and Prophets (Eph. 2.20)

President Hinckley taught:

"It has always seemed a remarkable thing to me that, although the Lord chose twelve Apostles to assist him in the work of the ministry, and to extend it following his death; and that although Paul, who was an Apostle, declared that the Church should be 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone' (Eph. 2:20)- notwithstanding all of this, the office of Apostle, and certainly a Council of Twelve Apostles, is not found to my knowledge in other Christian churches."¹⁶

Elder Maxwell taught:

"The significant words directed by the Lord through the Apostle Paul tell us why Christ established the Church with its foundation of apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself as the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). The Church was established 'for the perfecting of the saints,' the very process of our becoming men and women of Christ. The Church is established 'for the work of the ministry' and for the 'edifying of the body of Christ,' the members of the Church. This was necessary too in order for us to have a 'unity of the faith' and also 'of the

¹⁶ Gordon B. Hinckley, "[Special Witnesses for Christ](#)," *Ensign*, May 1984.

knowledge of the son of God.' In addition we are urged to strive to progress 'unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' (Ephesians 4:12-13.)

"Without the Church and its Apostles and prophets we could, in fact, be severely 'tossed to and fro,' being 'carried about with every wind of doctrine.' We could be manipulated 'by the sleight of men' and their conspiracies and cunning craftiness (Ephesians 4:14).

"True Christianity thus requires real authority, real verity, real orthodoxy, and real unity! Then let the storms and the winds come, including the various 'winds of doctrine.'"¹⁷

D. The mystery of God's plan to unite Jews and Gentiles in Christ (Ephesians 3:1-13)

E. Paul's prayer for spiritual strength and understanding (Ephesians 3:14-21)

The Unity of the Church (Ephesians 4:1-6:20)

A. Exhortation to unity and living a worthy life in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16)

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4.5)

"Joseph Smith's criticisms of Christianity in the nineteenth century are remarkably like Christian self-criticisms of the twentieth. [Joseph Smith as a] youth was confused by multiplying churches and conflicting claims. Christian leaders in recent decades have also repeated their frustration at 'the scandal of the divided church.' After long inquiry young Joseph found no answers among quarreling leaders, so he turned to God alone. In past decades world councils and international committees have also sought the 'renewal of the spirit.' But the results are less than convincing. Creeds have softened, inter-faith negotiations continue, but competitive Christianity remains. Its tragedy is the confusion of human systems that inadequately direct the faith of innumerable men and women of great commitment. Early Christians were 'of one heart and of one soul' (Acts 4:32), but Christianity now better resembles the early world confounded after Babylonian pride 'that they may not understand one another's speech.' (Gen. 11:7.) Religious leaders can quote past prophets, but who can divinely lead God's people out of the bondage of confusion today?"¹⁸

B. Instructions on putting off the old self and putting on the new self (Ephesians 4:17-32)

C. Exhortation to imitate God and live in love (Ephesians 5:1-21)

γίνεσθε οὖν μιμηταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς τέκνα ἀγαπητά (Ephesians 5.1, Greek text). The KJV reads: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children."

My translation reads "Become imitators of God as beloved children."

D. Household Codes. Instructions for various relationships: husbands and wives, parents and children, slaves and masters (Ephesians 5:22-6:9)

¹⁷ Neal A. Maxwell, *Men and Women of Christ*, Bookcraft, 1991, p. 15.

¹⁸ Richard L. Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses*, Deseret Book, 1981, p. 1.

The section 5:21–6:9 addresses what we call “household codes”; ancients used such codes to express what their culture regarded as virtuous relations within the family. In Paul’s day, many Romans were troubled by the spread of “religions from the East” (e.g., Isis worship, Judaism and Christianity), which they thought could undermine traditional Roman family values. Members of these minority religions often tried to show their support for those values by using household codes, a standard form of exhortations developed by philosophers from Aristotle on. These exhortations about how the head of a household should deal with members of his family often break down into discussions of husband-wife, father-child and master-slave relationships. Paul borrows this form of discussion from standard Greco-Roman moral writing. Paul is probably concerned with outsiders’ views of Jesus’ movement (cf. 1 Tim 5:14; Tit 2:5). But unlike most ancient writers, Paul undermines a basic premise of these codes: the male head of the house’s assumption of absolute authority.¹⁹

“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord” (Eph. 5.22)

The preceding verse emphasizes that when Christians are called to unite and submit themselves to God, it is generally well-received without causing offense. However, when the concept of submission extends to fellow human beings, it becomes more challenging to comprehend. In today's society, the term "submit" often carries negative implications, as we are aware of the harm that can arise from individuals submitting to others in abusive circumstances. It is important to be sensitive to these concerns. In the context of marriage, the idea is not about one person exerting dominance or control over the other, but rather about wives willingly cooperating and working together with their husbands, sharing each other's burdens in a mutually supportive manner. This perspective also adopts the counsel God gave to Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail: “the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and... the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness... no power or authority can be maintained... only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned” (D&C 121.36–41).

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. **This is a great mystery** (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν): but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Eph. 5.28-32).

There is quite a bit going on here. On one level, Paul is simply stating that the Lord loves the church like a man loves his wife in an ideal marriage setting. On another level, Paul may be talking about the mysteries of Godliness and how this is associated with entering the divine presence. For more on these ideas, see Raphael Patai’s book [The Hebrew Goddess](#) and Eugene Seach’s work [A Great Mystery: The Secret of the Jerusalem Temple \(Deities and Angels of the Ancient World\)](#). Both of these works demonstrate that the idea of the union between husband and wife was deeply rooted in temple ritual and ideas associated with the mysteries of Godliness.

E. The armor of God and the spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:10-20)

¹⁹ Keener, [Background](#), p. 552.

“Real disciples absorb the fiery darts of the adversary by holding aloft the quenching shield of faith with one hand, while holding to the iron rod with the other (see Eph. 6:16; 1 Ne. 15:24; D&C 27:17). There should be no mistaking; it will take both hands!”²⁰

For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak (Eph. 6.20).

“In Ephesians [Paul] asks supporting prayers to help him speak boldly, for he is a gospel 'ambassador in bonds' (Eph. 6:19-20). Paul must have been in Rome (circa 61 AD)... He was under close guard and chained at least part of the time, for the Greek word for 'chain' is used in the above passage. Yet Paul regards his circumstances as a great opportunity to teach; he is providentially 'the prisoner of the Lord' (Eph. 4:1; also 13:1).”²¹

²⁰ Neal A. Maxwell, "[Overcome ... Even As I Also Overcame](#)," *Ensign*, May 1987.

²¹ Richard Lloyd Anderson, [Understanding Paul](#), Deseret Book, 1983, p. 260-261.