

## *Distinctive Aspects of Ephesians*

Ephesians is different in certain ways from what are called Paul's "undisputed letters."

### **Distinctive Wording**

- It contains extremely long sentences (in Greek, 1:3–14 is one sentence, as are 1:15–23; 3:1–7).
- It makes repetitive use of adjectives and synonyms (1:19 uses four words for "power").
- It makes abundant use of the word "all" (about fifty times).
- It uses "devil" (4:27; 6:11) instead of "Satan" (Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:14; 12:7; 1 Thess. 2:18).
- It refers to Paul as "least of all the saints" (3:8) rather than as "least of the apostles" (1 Cor. 15:9).
- Christ (4:11) rather than God (1 Cor. 12:28) is the one who appoints apostles, prophets, and others in the church.
- The church is the body with Christ as head (1:22–23; cf. Col. 1:18) rather than being the whole body of Christ with the head as one of its members (1 Cor. 12:20–21, 27).
- Readers are told to imitate God (5:1) rather than Paul (1 Cor. 4:6; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; but cf. 1 Thess. 1:6).
- It uses "kingdom of Christ and of God" (5:5; cf. Col. 1:13) rather than "kingdom of God" (Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; 1 Thess. 2:12).
- People are "saved" by faith (2:5, 8) rather than "justified" by faith (Rom. 3:28; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; 3:24).
- It speaks of works as "good works" (2:9–10) rather than as "works of the law" (Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10, 12).
- It uses "church" for the universal church (1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32) rather than for a local congregation (e.g., Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 4:17; 14:23; but cf. 1 Cor. 10:32; 15:9).

- It refers to Christ as "the Beloved" (1:6), an expression not used for Christ in Paul's undisputed letters (but cf. Col. 1:13).
- It speaks of "the heavenly places" (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12) rather than simply "heaven" (1 Cor. 8:5; 2 Cor. 12:2; Phil. 3:20) or "the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1).
- The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ as cornerstone (2:19–20), rather than on the foundation of Christ alone (1 Cor. 3:10–11).

### **Distinctive Concepts**

- The second coming of Christ has faded in significance, since the power and glory of heaven are experienced now (1:3; 2:4–7; cf. Rom. 8:18–25; 2 Cor. 4:7–18).
- Jews and gentiles are merged equally into a new humanity (2:14–16) as opposed to gentiles being provisionally grafted into the tree of Israel (Rom. 11:13–21).
- Marriage is highly esteemed (5:21–23) rather than being merely allowed for the sake of controlling lust (1 Cor. 7:8–9).
- The law is said to have been abolished by Christ (2:15) rather than being described as something that the coming of faith has not overthrown (Rom. 3:31).
- The reconciliation of Jews and gentiles is depicted as an accomplished reality (2:11–18) rather than as a future hope (Rom. 11:25–32).
- Salvation is a present reality (2:7–10) rather than a future hope (Rom. 5:9–10; 10:9, 13; 1 Cor. 3:15; 5:5; but cf. Rom. 8:24; 1 Cor. 1:18; 15:2; 2 Cor. 2:15).
- Exaltation of believers to heaven is a present reality (2:6) rather than a future hope (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:16–17).