

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

Jeff Smelser

Text: Ephesians 1:1-14

Introduction:

- I. Ephesians 1:1-14 sets the stage for the overall message of Ephesians.¹
 - A. In the first three chapters, and especially in the first two, Paul describes the riches of God's grace poured out in kindness upon the Gentiles, assures them that this was God's plan all along, and assures them that their status in the house of God is equal to that of all the saints.
 1. Chapter 1 is an exultant description of the blessings of God in Christ.
 2. Certain themes are established that will be emphasized and further developed in chapters 2 and 3.
 - B. Then in the last three chapters, Paul calls upon his readers to walk worthily of this calling, of being a holy temple, a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Body:

- I. The Greeting
 - A. The Typical Greeting of the Time
 1. In extant papyri from this time period, many letters began with the name of the sender, the name of the recipient, and the word *χαίρειν* (*greeting*). (Smelser, 66)
 - a. *Apollonios to Zenon, greeting* (Ἀπολλώνιος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν).²
 2. Especially in a less personal and more formal letter, something more descriptive was necessary.
 - a. *Athenagoras, the chief physician, to the priests of the stolistae at the Labyrinth and to the stolistae, greeting* (Ἀθηναγόρας ὁ ἀρχίατρος τοῖς ἱερεῦσι τῶν ἐν τῷ[ι] Λαβυρίνθωι στολιστῶν καὶ τοῖς στολ[ισ]ταῖς χαίρειν).³
 3. We see exactly this sort of greeting three times in the NT.
 - a. Acts 15:23: "*The apostles and the older brethren to the brethren of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, Greeting.*" (Οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἀδελφοὶ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς ἐξ ἔθνῶν χαίρειν.)
 - b. Acts 23:26: "*Claudius Lysias, to the excellent governor, Felix, Greeting.*" (Κλαύδιος Λυσίας τῷ κρατίστῳ ἡγεμόνι Φήλικι χαίρειν.)
 - c. James 1:1: "*James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are in the diaspora, Greeting*" (Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ χαίρειν.)
 - B. Paul's Modified Formula

¹ Much of the material in this outline is taken from my commentary on Ephesians without specific documentation.

² P. Cairo Zen. 59154

³ B.S.A.A. XIV p. 194, as reproduced in *Select Papyri, Vol. I, Non-Literary Papyri, Private Affairs*, translated by A.S. Hunt and C.C. Edgar, Loeb Classical Library, 1988, pp. 292-294.

1. Paul's formula is similar to the typical formula in that he first identifies himself, then his recipients, and offers a greeting.
2. But "Grace and peace" was a distinctively Christian greeting.
 - a. Grace
 - 1) It's a new take on the typical Greek greeting, χαίρειν (infinitive form), using χάρις (noun) instead.
 - 2) In substituting χάρις (*grace/favor*) for χαίρειν (*rejoice*), Paul (and also Peter in both his epistles) bring into view a higher joy, joy created by God's gracious love bestowed upon the recipients through Christ Jesus.
 - b. Peace
 - 1) Paul adds to this the typical oriental greeting, εἰρήνη, meaning "Peace."⁴
 - 2) A Greek representation of the Oriental greeting is seen in the Theodotian text of Daniel 4.1: "*Nebuchadnezzar the King to all the peoples, tribes, and tongues who dwell in all the land, May peace to you be multiplied (Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πληθυνθείη).*"
 - 3) In Paul's usage, the oriental greeting is now imbued with a greater, more profound meaning, *viz.* peace with God.

II. The Identity of the Recipients

- A. The letter was not written to Ephesus uniquely, but to Gentile Christians throughout a region that included Ephesus
 1. Manifestly written to Gentiles
 - a. Ephesians 2.11ff.
 - b. Ephesians 1.13
 - 1) The "you also" is in contrast to the "we who had previously hoped in Christ" (vs. 12) — that is, the Jews who for generations had hoped in a coming Messiah.
 - 2) If the "we" refers to Jews, then the "you also" refers to the Gentiles.
 - c. Ephesians 2.1ff, again Paul distinguishes between "you," i.e., the Gentiles, and "we also," i.e., the Jews.
 - d. Ephesians 2.17, Paul's readers are "you who were far off" (i.e., Gentiles), while the Jews are mentioned obliquely, "those who were near."
 - e. Ephesians 3.1 Paul addresses his audience as Gentiles and speaks of "the dispensation of the grace of God that has been given me toward you," a clear reference to his particular mission to preach to Gentiles.
 2. The idea that Ephesians was addressed uniquely to the church at Ephesus would be inconsistent with the letter's Gentile audience.
 - a. At its founding, the church at Ephesus consisted largely of Jews.
 - 1) There is no mention of Greeks, or even proselytes, among those who heard Paul when he first visited Ephesus. We read only that Paul entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews (Acts 18.19).

⁴ TDNT, vol. 9, p. 394.

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- 2) When Paul departed, he left Aquila, a Jew, and his wife, Priscilla, there (Acts 18.19-21).
 - 3) Apollos, a Jew, visited Ephesus, teaching only the baptism of John until further instructed by Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18.24-26).
 - 4) When Paul returned, the “disciples” whom he found there were no doubt Jews inasmuch as they were men who surely had been influenced by Apollos’ teaching either directly or indirectly (Acts 19.1-7).
 - a) That Apollos was the source of the influence seems to be the reason Luke inserts the account of Apollos at Ephesus in his narrative prior to discussing Paul’s arrival.
 - b) Acts 19.2 may be interpreted as indicating that the twelve men were anticipating the pouring out of God’s Spirit in accordance with OT prophecies (Joel 2.28, Ezekiel 39.29, 36.27, 37.1-14) but were unaware that the Spirit had already come.
 - 5) After enlightening these men, Paul was teaching in the synagogue three months, and he and the rest of the disciples only separated themselves from the unbelieving Jews when the latter began to speak evil of the believing Jews (Acts 19.9).
 - 6) At this point, the church there seems to have consisted entirely or almost entirely of Jews.
- b. The references to Greeks in Acts 19 do not paint a picture of large numbers of Gentiles being converted in Ephesus itself.
- 1) Acts 19.10 mentions “both Jews and Greeks,” but this is in reference to the gospel being heard by “all that dwelt in Asia,” not just those in Ephesus.
 - 2) Acts 19.17 mentions “both Jews and Greeks that dwelt at Ephesus.”
 - a) It does not specifically tell us that both Jews and Greeks became disciples, but rather that the incident involving Sceva’s sons made an impression upon “both Jews and Greeks.”
 1. The result was that the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. It would be naïve to suppose no Gentiles were converted.
 2. Still we don’t see anything that would suggest the church at Ephesus had gone from being primarily Jewish to being primarily Gentile.
 - b) The interest in *peri erga* (“magical arts”), evidenced by the books that ended up being burned, is not necessarily evidence of Gentiles being converted. These practices were also popular among some Jews.
 1. Robertson described those who burned their books as “performers or *exorcists* (emphasis added, JS)” (Robertson, 319)
 2. Deissman referred to those who burned their books as “the Jewish exorcists.” (Deissman, 323)
 - 3) Gentiles came to be included among the saints at Ephesus, but it is unlikely that this church had come to consist almost entirely of Gentiles in a half dozen years.
 - a) Acts 19.26 does speak of people being “turned away” from idols, “not alone here at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia.”
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- b) Finally, Paul later describes his work at Ephesus and says he was “testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20.21)
- 3. The idea that Ephesians was addressed uniquely to the church at Ephesus is inconsistent with Paul’s habit.
 - a. Excluding the letter known as Ephesians, in every case where we have a known letter of Paul to a church that he had visited, we see allusions to his time there.
 - 1) See 1 Cor 1.14-16, 3.2, 3.2-15, 11.23, 15.1, 2 Cor 1.12, 2.1, 11.2-10 (verse 9, “even when I was present with you”) 12.11-14, 13.1-2, Gal 4.12-15, Phil 1.30, 2.12, 1 Th 1.5-6, 1.9, 2.1, 2.6-12, 2.17, 3.4, 2 Th 3.7-10.⁵
 - b. But in Ephesians, there is no mention of, indeed, no hint of, Paul’s visit to Ephesus.
 - c. Aside from the words, “in Ephesus,” there is nothing in the letter connecting it uniquely with the church at Ephesus nor with any single church.
- 4. The idea that Ephesians was addressed to a wide audience is supported by comparing it with and contrasting it to Colossians
 - a. First, note the similarity between the two letters
 - 1) Colossians largely follows the general outline of Ephesians

	Ephesians	Colossians
Greeting	1.1-2	1.1-2
What God Has Done for Us in Christ	1.3-3.21	1.1-2.5
All things are in Christ, who is the head of the body	1.3-2.10	1.9-2.5
Our prior condition	2.11-12	1.21
Our reconciliation through Christ	2.12-22	1.22-23
Paul’s role in proclaiming the reconciliation	3.1-21	1.24-2.5
How We Should Therefore Walk	4.1-6.20	2.6-4.6
The body is to be built up, free from error and doctrines of men	4.1-16	2.6-2.23
Put away sin; put on righteousness	4.17-5.21	3.1-17
Instructions to house hold members...	5.22-6.9	3.18-4.1
...to wives	5.22-24	3.18
...to husbands	5.25-33	3.19
...to children	6.1-3	3.20
...to fathers	6.4	3.21
...to servants	6.5-8	3.22-25
...to masters	6.9	4.1
Final exhortation, especially to pray, particularly on Paul’s behalf that he might speak as he ought	6.10-20	4.2-6

⁵ I am indebted to Scott Smelser for this observation.

b. Then notice the differences

1) Difference in the section concerning doctrinal error

- a) In Ephesians, Paul discussed the gifts God had bestowed on the church, that is, the apostles, prophets, *et al.*, from whom Gentiles would learn how to walk worthily of their calling, thus leading to a practical unity in the body of Christ (“no longer tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error”).
- b) But in the corresponding section of Colossians, Paul’s discussion of doctrinal error turns pointedly to Judaistic Gnosticism to such a degree that this becomes that for which that epistle is most readily remembered.

2) Difference in the Greeting

- a) When Paul wrote to the church at Colossae, Timothy was included as sender along with Paul.
- b) There is no mention of Timothy in Ephesians.
- c) Inasmuch as these two letters were written at the same time, the absence of Timothy’s name in one is significant.
 - 1. Apparently, Timothy’s name would be recognized by the church at Colossae
 - 2. The implication is that it was not known to all the recipients of the present letter we know as Ephesians.
 - 3. And yet Timothy’s name was known to the Ephesians.
 - a. Timothy had rejoined Paul at Corinth from whence Paul traveled to Ephesus the first time.
 - b. During Paul’s subsequent stay at Ephesus, it seems that Paul sent Timothy, along with Erastus, to Macedonia from Ephesus.
 - 4. This further supports our understanding that what we know as Ephesians was not written only to the church at Ephesus, but to a larger audience.
- 5. Colossians is a version, or variation, of Ephesians.
 - a. Ephesians is a general appeal to Gentile Christians to abandon the ways of the Gentile world.
 - b. Colossians is a similar appeal but adapted to give special attention to a particular doctrinal error in a particular location.
- 6. For a discussion of the words “in Ephesus,” see the Appendix.

III. Revisiting Familiar Language

A. Blessing

- 1. The verb εὐλογέω and the noun εὐλογία come from the two words εὖ λέγειν.
 - a. εὖ λέγειν could have the sense of *speak well* (do a good job of speaking).

- b. εὖ λέγειν could have the sense of *speak good* (of someone, that something good might come his way).
2. However, “Of few words in the NT is it so plain as of εὐλογέω and εὐλογία that they do not take their meaning from secular Greek but from the fact that they are the renderings of Hebrew words which acquired their religious significance in the OT and other Jewish writings.”⁶
- a. Think of Isaac’s blessing Jacob and Esau and Jacob’s blessing the sons of Joseph (Heb 11.20-21)
- b. “But even when Jacob blesses his son Joseph, he does so in the form of a prayer to God”⁷
- 1) This points to the blessing as a petition that God will act favorably toward the one who is the object of the blessing.
 - 2) God himself is the ultimate source of blessings
 - 3) εὐλογία can refer not only to the words themselves, but also to the favor in view.
 - a) Isaac and Jacob blessed “by faith,” presumably, at God’s direction.
 - b) When man seeks God’s blessing upon someone, the favor bestowed by God can be spoken of as a blessing.
 - c) In 2 Corinthians 9.5, Paul has sent some on ahead to Corinth to prepare the promised “bounty” (εὐλογία)
3. While the verbal adjective εὐλογητός is used of men in the LXX, in the NT it is only used of God.
- a. Mk 14.61, Lk 1.68, Rom 1.25, 9.5, 2 Cor 1.3, 11.31, Eph 1.3, 1 Pt 1.3.
- b. “We best bring out its religious significance along the lines of Luther that God is praised in Himself but that we pray here that He may be praised among us.”⁸
4. In Ephesians 1.3, we see the adjective εὐλογητός, the verb εὐλογέω and the noun εὐλογία, all three, “Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ.”

B. Redemption

1. Lying behind the language of redemption is the concept of freedom or liberation attained by virtue of a ransom price.
2. ἀπολύτρωσις belongs to the word group derived from λύω, “loose”
 - a. “λύτρον is formed from λύω with the ending –τρον. In the oldest stratum nouns formed thus denote a means.”⁹

⁶ TDNT, II p. 754.

⁷ Ibid., p. 756.

⁸ TDNT, II p. 754.

⁹ TDNT, IV p. 340.

- b. “In post-Homeric constructs the means usually has the sense of payment for something”¹⁰
 - c. “λύτρον is esp. the money paid to ransom prisoners of war, but it is then used for slaves, or for release from a bond.”¹¹
 - d. ἀπολυτρόω is “set free for a ransom”
 - e. ἀπολύτρωσις is originally “‘setting free for a ransom,’ and is used of prisoner of war, slaves, and criminals condemned to death.”¹²
 - 1) At times, use of ἀπολύτρωσις “may diverge freely from the orig. meaning.”¹³
 - 2) Daniel 4:34 is one LXX example of ἀπολύτρωσις where no ransom price is in view.
3. In Ephesians, our redemption has reference both to our present liberation from sin and our future resurrection.
- a. Redemption is further explained as “forgiveness” of our sins/trespasses in Eph 1.7 and Col 1.14.
 - 1) The idea of forgiveness as redemption is rooted in the concept of the vicarious suffering of Jesus.
 - 2) Mark 10.45, “to give his life a ransom (λύτρον) in the place of (ἀντὶ) many”
 - b. Redemption is used with reference to our future resurrection in Eph 4.30.
 - 1) cf. Rom 8.23
 - 2) This resurrection is assured by Jesus resurrection, which was only possible by virtue of his death.
 - c. The precise reference in Eph 1.14 (whether present forgiveness or future resurrection) is to me, ambiguous, but see the comments under “God’s Inheritance” and the subsection, “Contextual Considerations.”

IV. Elevated Themes in Ephesians

A. Riches

1. Some form of πλοῦτος (wealth) or a cognate occurs six times in Ephesians, all in the first three chapters (πλοῦτος in 1.7, 1.18, 2.7, 3.8, 3.16; πλούσιος in 2.4).
2. Twice, Paul speaks of the wealth of grace, and twice, the wealth of glory. Once he speaks of God being rich in mercy.
3. The thought being developed in the first three chapters is the exceeding generosity God has bestowed upon us who are Gentiles, and this thought is being developed with a purpose, namely, to motivate us to walk as he would have us walk, which will be the theme of chapters four through six.

B. Dispensation, or Stewardship, of these Riches

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 352.

¹³ *BDAG*, 117.

1. οἰκονομία is described in Xenophon's Oeconomicus. In response to Socrates' question concerning the nature of estate management (οἰκονομία), Crisobulus says, "The work of a good estate manager (οἰκονόμου) at least then seems to be to manage his own house well."¹⁴
2. Shebna, who was "in charge of the royal household" (Is 22.15), was warned that he was about to be deposed from his οἰκονομία, i.e., his office, his stewardship (Is 22.19, LXX).
3. Jesus speaks of the faithful οἰκονόμος whom the Lord puts over the service of dispensing appropriate food allowances (Lk 12.42).
4. An οἰκονομία is a responsibility for managing one's own or another's wealth and transactions, appropriately allocating and distributing resources (Lk 16.2-4; cf. 16.5-7).
5. Our English word economy, for which one meaning is "a system of producing, distributing, and consuming wealth," comes from οἰκονομία.
 - a. One may speak of the economy of a household, of a city (Erastus was the οἰκονόμος of the city of Corinth, Rom. 16.23), or of a country.
 - b. Josephus uses this word in describing the responsibility given to Joseph by Pharaoh.¹⁵
6. Paul uses this vocabulary to speak of the distribution of God's wealth to those of his household.
 - a. Elsewhere, Paul speaks of the stewardship of teachers (1 Tim 1.4) and overseers (Tit 1.7), who are responsible for distributing the wealth in God's house.
 - b. He also uses it in speaking of his own responsibility to preach the gospel (1 Cor 9.17).
 - c. But right here in Ephesians 1.10, if we are to think of a particular οἰκονόμος (steward) who is responsible for distributing the wealth, we should think of the Lord (whether specifically God the Father or Jesus himself).¹⁶
 - 1) It is He who makes available the aforementioned wealth of grace (1.7).
 - 2) The phrase "dispensation of the fulness of the times" brings into view a planned distribution that was to occur at the culmination of a defined time period. At the appointed time God's grace, which was planned in Christ, would be distributed.
 - 3) This anticipates the point Paul will more fully develop in Ephesians 3.1-11. There Paul will speak of his own οἰκονομία, namely, his privilege to preach even to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, thus making known what had previously been a mystery, although it was part of God's eternal purpose.

C. Heavens

¹⁴ Xenophon, The Oeconomicus 1.2.

¹⁵ *Ant.* 2, 89.

¹⁶ See MaGee's comments (138) wherein he distinguishes between God as the one in charge of the distribution in Eph 1.9-10 and Paul "as God's agent" who is the one making the distribution in 3.2-3.

1. ἐπουράνιος is an adjective related to οὐρανός (sky/heaven).
2. In 2 Maccabees 3.39 ἐπουράνιος characterizes the dwelling place of God (ὁ τὴν κατοικίαν ἐπουράνιον ἔχων, the one who has a heavenly dwelling).
3. In Ephesians, ἐπουράνιος is used as a substantive, that is, essentially, as a noun.
 - a. In English we sometimes use adjectives without an explicit noun, the noun being implied.
 - 1) E.g., “I’ll have a large,” in response to the question, “what size drink do you want?”
 - 2) Essentially, the adjective functions as a noun, or a “substantive.”
 - b. In Greek, this is far more common.
 - c. In translation, we could supply a noun, “heavenly realms” or “heavenly places.”
 - d. But this is unnecessary—as a substantive, ἐπουράνιος can be synonymous with οὐρανός.
 - e. Paul’s declaration that Christ has been seated at the right hand of God in the ἐπουρανίοις (Eph 1.20) means simply “in the heavens.”
4. The language speaks of the things of the spiritual realms in contrast to the things of this earth.
 - a. Think of “the things above” in Colossians 3:2 in contrast to “the things upon the earth.”
 - b. God causes his sun to shine on the evil and the good and gives rain to the righteous and the unrighteous, but the blessings in the heavens, i.e., the spiritual blessings (being made holy and blameless, adoption, being graced with grace, redemption, forgiveness of our trespasses), are in Christ.
5. The language speaks of exalted things.
 - a. Some have sought significance in the use of ἐπουράνιος rather than οὐρανός
 - 1) Some seeing a reference to Gnosticism
 - 2) Some perceiving a reference to a particular one of the several heavens identified in Rabbinic writings
 - b. But the point is probably simply exaltation.
 - 1) David wrote, “For as high as the heavens are above the earth,¹⁷ so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him” (Ps 103.11).
 - 2) And again, God’s “lovingkindness is great to the heavens” (Ps 57.10).
 - 3) Is this really a very different idea than “Thy lovingkindness, O Lord is in the heavens”¹⁸ (Ps 36.5), which the NAS translates as “extends to the heavens”?
 - a) In the Septuagint, the parallel phrase is “Your truth is unto the clouds” (ἡ ἀλήθειά σου ἕως τῶν νεφελῶν).

¹⁷ LXX (Ps 102.11) has ὅτι κατὰ τὸ ὕψος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, “because according to the height of the sky/heaven from the earth.”

¹⁸ LXX (Ps 35.6) has κύριε, ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ τὸ ἔλεός σου, “Lord, in the sky/heaven is your mercy”

- b) There is no distinction to be sought between ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ (in the sky) and ἕως τῶν νεφελῶν (unto the clouds).
 - c) Whether “clouds” or “sky,” the point is exalted height, and whether “unto” or “in,” the point is that God’s kindness and truth belong to an exalted realm.
6. In Ephesians 2:7, Paul says God has made us to “sit with Christ in the heavenlies” or simply, “in the heavens,” while we yet walk this earth.
- a. This evokes the notion of a conquering people who through their victorious king reign with him (Dan 7.27, Rev 5.10).
 - b. Those who have been made alive have been exalted and, through Christ, presently sit in a position of glory and honor and power.
 - c. This is all part of Paul’s effort to instill in his readers an appreciation for the exalted state they have attained in Christ, with a view to motivating them to walk worthily of this great calling.

V. In Christ

A. Chose us in Him before the foundation of the world

1. Paul will return to this idea in 3:11 as he assures Gentile Christians that their inclusion is not an afterthought but is in accordance with God’s eternal purpose.
2. In that context, it is manifestly clear that Paul’s point is not individual predestination, but rather it is Paul’s aim to assure his readers that God’s plan all along was for Gentiles to be included among his people.

B. Chose us in Him...that we should be holy and blameless

1. WH had a comma after κόσμου (*world*) as if the thought had been completed in merely saying that the choosing was before the foundation of the world
2. The Nestle Aland text, through the 25th edition, retained the comma.
3. But in the 26th and successive editions, the comma was rightly removed
 - a. Paul’s thought continues and explains what God chose us to be.
 - b. Before the foundation of the world, God’s plan was to accomplish this in Christ, namely, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love.
 - c. God did not merely choose people to be saved, but he predetermined that they would be holy and blameless.

VI. God’s Inheritance

A. The force of the passive ἐκληρώθημεν is the question that needs attention in 1.11

1. Does Paul speak of God’s people as receiving something, an inheritance (as in the KJV, NAS, ESV, NLT)?
2. Or does Paul speak of God’s people as being something God receives, as being God’s inheritance (as in the ASV, NIV, NET)?
3. I believe ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν should be translated *in whom also we were allotted*.

B. Semantic and Syntactic Considerations

1. κληρώ is assign by lot, or simply, allot. ἐκληρώθημεν is a passive form of this verb.

2. The passive voice would seem to mean *be assigned by lot*. The first person plural ἐκληρώθημεν would mean *we were allotted*, not meaning something was allotted to us, but rather meaning we are the thing that was allotted.¹⁹ That is, God inherited us by lot.
3. Paul explains the result of our being allotted in verse 12, εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ, unto our being for the praise of his glory. Alford rightly observes that inasmuch as the result is our “being” something, we have confirmation that ἐκληρώθημεν should be understood in “the strict passive sense,” and concluded that the meaning is “we were made an (God’s) inheritance.”²⁰

C. Old Testament Precedent for the concept

1. The language is reminiscent of the OT language wherein God’s people are his *nahalah*, (inheritance). Dt 4.20, 9.26, 29, 1 Sam 10.1, 1 Ki 8.51, 53, 2 Ki 21.14, Ps 33.12, 68.10 (68.9 in English), 106.5, Is 19.25, Mic 7.18, *et al.*
2. Representation of *nahalah* generally in the LXX
 - a. It is usually translated by κληρονομία (inheritance).
 - b. But it is represented by κλῆρος (lot) in more than three dozen instances.
3. Representation of *nahalah* specifically in contexts where the word is used of Israel
 - a. Most often the LXX has κληρονομία.
 - b. But in two instances (Dt 9.26, 29), the word κλῆρος is used,²¹ and in one instance (Dt 4.20), ἔγκληρον is used.
 - c. So, there is precedent for using κληρο- for that which God inherits.

D. Contextual Considerations

1. In verse 18, we will see Paul speak of God’s “inheritance in the saints.” We who are God’s people comprise an allotment, an inheritance, something designated as belonging to God, having been so foreordained.
 - a. God had been deprived of this allotment because of our sin.
 - b. However, in Christ, God has redeemed his possession, regained it.
2. The concept of God’s inheritance is closely related to the concept of God’s possession.
 - a. At the end of verse 14, Paul will speak of the redemption of the περιποιήσεως.
 - 1) The word περιποιήσεως might refer to the act of acquiring or to the thing acquired, a possession (see comments on verse 14).

¹⁹ Aristot. *Const. Ath.* 43.2, Demosthenes; *Against Timocrates*, 24.89; Lucian, *De Luctu* 2.

²⁰ Meyer argued that just as πιστεύομαι may mean *I trust* rather than *I am believed*, so also ἐκληρώθημεν may mean *we inherited* rather than *we were inherited*. He argued this must be the meaning because to be chosen by lot is to be chosen by chance, and of course, we were not chosen merely by chance, but by God’s will. And so, Meyer concluded the meaning is “we inherited,” or “we were made partakers of the inheritance.” Meyer cited two passages, Pind. Ol. viii.19 and Thuc. vi. 42, in support of construing the passive voice in this manner. Alford contradicted Meyer. Acknowledging only the Pindar passage, Alford disputed Meyer’s use of it and dismissed its relevance, and then concluded that the true meaning is “we were made an inheritance.”

²¹ On the relationship between κλῆρος (*lot*) and κληρονομία (*inheritance*) in the LXX, see the discussion in TDNT, vol. 3, p. 759.

- 2) If we take ἐκληρώθημεν in verse 11 to mean “we were allotted” and περιποίησεως in verse 14 to mean “possession” or “acquisition,”²² we see a continuity in the metaphor.
- b. Unto redemption of the possession unto praise of his glory (εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ) The noun περιποίησις (possession) can refer to...
- 1) The act of preserving, as in Heb 10.39.
 - a) This meaning makes no sense in the present context.
 - 2) The act of acquiring, as in 1 Th 5.9 and 2 Th 2.14.
 - a) If this were the meaning Paul had in mind, we would understand ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως as “redemption of the acquiring,” which fails to make sense in this context.
 - 3) Or it may be a name for the thing that is acquired, as in 1 Pt 2.9.
 - a) It suits the context very well to understand ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως as “redemption of the acquisition,” namely that acquisition that belongs to God.
- c. This idea is derived from the OT (Ex 19.5, Dt 7.6, 14.2, 26.18, Ps 135.4, Mal 3.17).
- 1) In these passages where God speaks of defining a people for his own possession, the word *segullah* (possession, valued property, peculiar treasure) is usually represented by περιούσιος in the LXX (περιουσιασμόν at Ps 134.4).
 - 2) But at Malachi 3.17 (‘And they will be Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘on the day that I prepare My own possession’), the Greek is περιποίησιν, the word that Peter uses (1 Pt 2.9) as he alludes to those OT passages, and the word that Paul uses here in Ephesians with the same meaning.
 - 3) So, then εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως is “*unto redemption of the possession.*”
 - a) We who are God’s people comprise an allotment, something designated as belonging to God.
 - b) God had been deprived of this allotment because of our sin, but in Christ, God has redeemed his possession, regained it.
3. The verb cognate is used in Acts 20.28 where the church is that which the Lord acquired (περιεποιήσατο).

E. A Sealed Inheritance

1. There are at least three ideas associated with the language of sealing.
 - a. Identification
 - 1) Something is sealed with a mark indicating to whom it belongs.
 - 2) If a decree was sealed, the seal served as an authenticating signature (1 Ki 21.8, Neh 10.1, Est 3.10, 8.8, 8.10, *et al.*).

²² So *BDAG*, 804.

- 3) The seal was formed by means of a cylinder that was rolled on a clay surface leaving an impression, or by means of a ring that was pressed into the surface.
- b. Protection
 - 1) Sealing refers to something that has been so marked consequently spared some coming destruction (Rev 7.3f).
 - 2) Such securing by sealing was not always connected with a literal identifying seal, even though the words used in the various contexts are the same (Hebrew noun *hotam* and verb *hatam*, and Greek noun σφραγίς and verb σφραγίζω).
 - c. Closing
 - 1) As Fitzner noted, “The fact that the contents of a sealed vessel or purse were inaccessible gave σφραγίζω the further sense ‘to close.’”²³
 - 2) So, we see Jesus’ tomb being sealed (Mt 27.66).
 - 3) Compare Job 14.17, Deuteronomy 32.34, and Daniel 12.4.
2. It is the first of these ideas, the idea of identification, that is prominent in Ephesians 1.13.
 - a. This is consistent with the language of possession (περιποίησις) and inheritance (κληρονομία).
 - b. God has identified the saints from among the Gentiles as part of the possession that constitutes his inheritance, or as Peter says, “a people for God’s own possession (περιποίησιν)...you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God” (1 Pt 2.9f).
 3. But the idea of protection is not far behind inasmuch as the sealing results in the redemption of those sealed (vs. 14, cf. 2 Cor 5.4-5).
 - a. So also, at 2 Timothy 2.19, the seal identifies those who belong to the Lord, but the result is that the firm foundation of God stands.
 - b. This is the point Paul is making in Ephesians 1.13. His readers have been identified as belonging to God, sealed by the promised Holy Spirit.
 - c. Much of the attention given to this phrase seems to derive from the notion that Paul is talking about the Spirit doing something in us giving assurance *to us* of our salvation. But the point of this passage is that God’s inheritance in the saints is assured *to him*, that he has assured it to himself, having sealed it such that “the Lord knows them that are his” (2 Tim 2.19).²⁴

²³ TDNT, 7:945. After discussing the wide variety of uses of the word group, Fitzner summarized: “The seal thus yields a complex nexus of relations. Mixed in it are the motifs of power and authorisation, of legal validity and reliability, of the inviolate, closed and secret, of the costly and valuable.” (946).

²⁴ With this understanding in mind, an intriguing alternate translation possibility arises. While it seems most likely that τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ means *by the Holy Spirit of promise*, is it possible that τῷ ἁγίῳ is not an attributive modifier of τῷ πνεύματι but is rather a true dative, the indirect object of ἐσφραγίσθητε, such that we should translate ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ as *you were sealed by the Spirit of promise to the Holy One?*

4. The words τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (of the promise) should be understood in light of Ezekiel 36.27, 37.14, 39.29, Joel 2.28, Matthew 3.11, Luke 3.16, John 7.38f, 20.22, Acts 1.4f, 2.16f, 33, 38.
 - a. From the days of the OT prophets, God's people had anticipated a pouring out of God's Spirit that would accompany the restoration of the kingdom.
 - b. For this reason, when Jesus spoke of the promise of the Father, telling the apostles they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit "not many days hence," Peter responded, "Do you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" While Peter may have misunderstood the nature of the restored kingdom, he was right to connect the promise of the Spirit with the restoration of the kingdom.
 - c. In the messianic kingdom, God's people are identified as his inasmuch as they are led by his Spirit. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the Sons of God" (Rom 8.14).
5. Does verse 14, *which is a seal of our inheritance* (ὃ ἐστὶν ἀρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν), speak of something we inherit?
 - a. Were we to construe genitive ἡμῶν subjectively as indicating possession (our inheritance) it would seem that in the middle of talking about God's inheritance (vs. 11, 18), also described as God's acquisition in the very next phrase after the words "our inheritance," Paul would have interjected an unrelated and unexplained reference to a different inheritance, something *we* inherit.
 - b. But the genitive case need not be construed as indicating possession.
 - 1) In general, the genitive is the case of kind, and possession is only one way of describing kind.
 - 2) Here we probably do better to understand the genitive case as being objective, specifying content and thus describing the kind of inheritance.
 - a) It is God's inheritance, an inheritance of us, just as a man may have an inheritance of money. The money does not inherit. The man inherits the money.
 - b) So also κληρονομίας ἡμῶν (inheritance of us) does not mean we inherit. God inherits us.
 - c) Counterarguments
 1. To be sure, in every other NT passage where κληρονομία is associated with a genitive personal pronoun, the genitive is to be understood subjectively (Mt 21.38, Mk 12.7, Lk 20.14, Eph 1.18).
 - a. But three of these are parallel accounts of one incident
 - b. The other, Ephesians 1.18, serves to confirm that in the present context, Paul is not talking about something we inherit, but about us as God's inheritance.
 2. We may also acknowledge that in the LXX a genitive associated with κληρονομία is almost always subjective.
 - a. But at Psalm 110.6 (111.6 in MT) κληρονομίαν ἐθνῶν means the inheritance that consists of the nations.
 - b. Isaiah 49.8 has κληρονομίαν ἐρήμου which means an inheritance of desolation, or a desolate inheritance.

- c. The use of a genitive personal pronoun to describe the content of the inheritance is unusual, but not because it is genitive. It is the personal pronoun as the content that is unusual.
- 1) People inherit more often than people are inherited.
 - 2) But clearly in Ephesians 1, the context has to do with people who are inherited, which is incontrovertibly shown by 1.18.
6. ἀρραβών is a Hebrew loanword.
- a. The Hebrew *'arabown* is used in Genesis 38 (vss. 17, 18, 20) for the collateral Judah provided to Tamar, assuring payment would be forthcoming.
 - b. In many extra-biblical contexts, the Greek ἀρραβών is an initial payment, a down payment constituting a part of the full payment. In this sense, it is explained as “πρόδομα. καὶ ἄγκιστρον,”²⁵ i.e., “something given in advance,” and “a fish-hook.”
 - c. The cognate verb is *'arab*, used a number of times in the OT.
 - 1) e.g., Gen. 43:9, where Judah recounts how he told his father, “I will be *surety*” for Benjamin.
 - 2) e.g., Prov. 6:1, “if *you have become surety* for your neighbor”
 - d. Whether the ἀρραβών is part of the final payment or not, its purpose is to provide assurance.
 - e. Paul uses this word of the Holy Spirit, in whom or by whom God’s people are sealed, i.e., authoritatively identified as belonging to God. Or we could say, God’s inheritance is marked as belonging to Him.
 - 1) Practically, the idea is not dissimilar to that of Romans 8:14-16
 - 2) Although in Romans 8:14ff, Paul’s discussion of the work of the Spirit in the Christian leads him to talk about us as heirs, whereas in Ephesians, Paul is talking about us as God’s inheritance.
 - 3) **So, then Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as that whereby God has sealed, i.e., identified and secured, his inheritance to himself.**
- F. The profound thought is that Gentiles, who were without God, have been made a part of God’s inheritance in Christ.
- G. Relevance to the Calvinistic view of Ephesians 1.
1. The emphasis on God’s inheritance rather than on what we inherit runs counter to the Calvinistic view of particular predestination.
 2. Paul’s message is not so much about what each individual gets as it is about the exalted identity of God’s inheritance in Christ, of which Gentiles have been made a part.

Conclusion:

- I. Ephesians is a general appeal to Gentile Christians to abandon the ways of the Gentile world.
- II. In chapters 1 through 3, Paul reminds his readers of what God has done for them.
 - A. In chapter 1:3-14...

²⁵ HESYCHII ALEXANDRINI.

1. Paul begins by emphasizing the riches of God's grace in Christ poured out upon his readers
2. He assures them that they, along with believing Jews, have been made a part of God's own possession, God's inheritance.
3. Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as that whereby God has sealed, *i.e.*, identified and secured, his inheritance to himself.

Jeff Smelser
953 Churchtown Rd.
Narvon, PA 17555
jeffsmelser@ntgreek.net

Appendix: “In Ephesus”

- I. Paul had specific readers in mind within a specific geographical area.
 - A. Tychicus, Paul’s courier, would make “all things” known to the readers.
 - B. This only makes sense if the letter was intended to go to sufficiently defined readers such that Tychicus could visit them.
- II. Ephesians 1:1 was meant to indicate some Geographic Destination
 - A. In the phrase τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν... (*to the saints the ones being...*) We should understand οὖσιν (*being*) to anticipate some location because of the pattern we see Paul’s greetings in other epistles.
 1. Philippians is addressed to “all the saints in Christ Jesus τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις.”
 2. 1 Corinthians was addressed to “the church of God τῇ οὖσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ.”
 3. In 2 Corinthians 1.1 the participle being occurs twice, once in the singular and once in the plural: “to the church of God τῇ οὖσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ with all the saints τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ.”
 4. Similarly, Romans was addressed to πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ.
 5. And besides the greetings, we should note 1 Thessalonians 2.14, τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὖσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.
 6. Galatians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians all include a mention of the location of the recipients in the greeting, though without the participle being.
 7. We may say that, excluding the letters to individuals, all of Paul’s letters include a mention of the location of the recipients, unless this letter labeled Ephesians is the sole exception.
 8. We must, therefore, expect that the greeting provides an answer to the question, “being where?”
 - B. There have been attempts to explain Ephesians 1:1 assuming no geographical destination was intended.
 1. However, without the words “in Ephesus” (or something similar), Paul’s greeting would be a little awkward and more importantly, out of character.

<p>τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ to the saints the being in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus</p> <p style="text-align: center;">absent the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, we are left with...</p> <p>τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ to the saints the being and faithful in Christ Jesus</p>

- a. Possible translations would be “to those being saints and faithful in Christ Jesus,” or “to the saints, the ones who are being also faithful in Christ Jesus.”
 - 1) οὖσιν is indeed used of a person or persons being (or not being) characterized by some trait
 - a) e.g., being Romans (Ac 16.21).

- b) being called (Rom 8.28).
- c) not being gods (Gal 4.8).
- 2) But such would not be in keeping with Paul's usual greeting.
 - a) Schnackenburger concedes this is not in keeping with Paul's usual greeting, but he believes the letter was written by a pseudonymous author. (Schnackenburger, 41)
- b. Origen (third century) took a different tack.
 - 1) Origen appears to have been unaware of a text that included the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ
 - 2) In order to explain the text as he had it, Origen reasoned that just as God's name was *the one who is* (Ex 3.14), perhaps so also those who partake of his being become *the ones who are*.
 - 3) An absolute use of the participle is certainly possible in some contexts. We see it in 1 Cor. 1.28, τὰ μὴ ὄντα... τὰ ὄντα, "*the things that are not...the things that are.*"
 - 4) But again, Paul's formulaic greetings argue against understanding the participle in such an absolute sense in Eph. 1.1.

III. Manuscript and Patristic Evidence Strongly supports authenticity of "In Ephesus".

A. Patristics

1. In the early centuries, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria,²⁶ and Basil all recognized the letter as having been addressed to the Ephesians.
2. Irenaeus referred to it as the "epistle to the Ephesians" three times²⁷ and once cited a passage from the letter as what "the apostle says to the Ephesians."²⁸
3. Only the speculation of Marcion, that it was written to the Laodiceans, comes down to us as an opposing view.

B. Manuscripts

1. Some manuscripts, very few to be sure, omit the words "in Ephesus" in Ephesians 1.1.
2. But ninety-nine percent of the manuscripts that include verse one have "in Ephesus."²⁹
 - a. Approximately 580 manuscripts have τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ
 - b. Another eighteen have variations of this phrase, all of which include the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ.³⁰

²⁶ Strom. IV.8 (64.1-GCS II, P. 277), Paed. i.5 (18.3= GCS I, p. 100).

²⁷ *Adv. Her.* v.2.3, v.8.1, v.24.4.

²⁸ *Adv. Her.* v.14.3.

²⁹ This statement is derived from Kurt Aland's tally of MSS readings for Eph. 1:1 in *Text und Textwert der Griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*, 2, *Die Paulinischen Briefe*, Band 3: Galaterbrief Bis Philipperbrief, p. 356f, Walter De Gruyter:Berlin, 1991.

³⁰ This tally is based on Kurt Aland's collation of MSS readings for Eph. 1.1 in *Text und Textwert der Griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*, Vol. 2 *Die Paulinischen Briefe*, Band 3: Galaterbrief Bis Philipperbrief, p. 356f, Walter De Gruyter:Berlin, 1991.

- c. Five manuscripts in their original form lacked the words ἐν Ἐφῆσῳ, and in a sixth, the words were marked as inauthentic.³¹

IV. Historical Evidence supports the view that some 1st Generation MSS did not say “in Ephesus”

- A. Among all manuscripts extant today that include Ephesians 1.1, those that lack the words ἐν Ἐφῆσῳ are the three oldest.³²
- B. In the third and fourth centuries it was supposed that the original reading of the text lacked the words ἐν Ἐφῆσῳ.
1. In the 3rd century, Origen seemed to be unaware of manuscripts that included the words.
 2. In the 4th century, Basil thought the true reading was found in old manuscripts that did not have a geographical destination indicated
 - a. Even though Basil believed the letter was written to the Ephesians, he cited a version of Ephesians 1.1 which he said was found in the old manuscripts “To the saints who are, and are faithful in Christ Jesus.”
 - b. Basil commented, “For thus also those before us have handed it down, and thus we have found it in the old samples of the copies.”³³
 3. In the 4th century Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus were produced, both of which originally lacked the words ἐν Ἐφῆσῳ at Ephesians 1.1.³⁴

V. There is evidence that an alternative reading was “in Laodicea” rather than “in Ephesus.”

- A. Paul told the Colossians that they should “read the epistle from Laodicea,” not meaning a letter written by the Laodiceans, but meaning a letter that the Colossians could obtain from the Laodiceans.³⁵
- B. If we grant that “from Laodicea” refers to the location of the letter and not to the writers of the letter, we are compelled to understand this to be a letter sent by Paul.
1. If Paul did not have in mind a letter that he himself was sending to Laodicea by the hand of Tychicus, how was it that Paul, nearly a thousand miles away in Rome, knew at the time he was writing Colossians that when Tychicus would arrive in Colossae, there would be a letter at Laodicea which the Colossian saints should also read?
 2. Even if he had been made aware of some letter already in the possession of the Laodicean saints but suitable for circulating, how could he know it would still be in their possession weeks later when Tychicus would arrive in Colossae?

³¹ The five are the very early P⁴⁶ (c. AD 200), the fourth century uncials Sinaiticus and Vaticanus (both of which have the words added in the margin by a later hand), the sixth century Claromontanus, and the tenth century minuscule 1739. A corrector of the eleventh century minuscule 424 marked the words as inauthentic.

³² P⁴⁶ (c. AD 200), and the fourth century uncials Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both of which have ἐν Ἐφῆσῳ added in the margin by a later hand.

³³ *Adv. Eunomius*.

³⁴ In both codices, the words ἐν Ἐφῆσῳ are added in the margin.

³⁵ Col 4.16. For a thorough discussion of the various theories that have been proposed for the identity of the letter “from Laodicea,” see J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, a Revised Text*, 274-300.

3. Paul's certainty that the letter from the Laodiceans would be available to the Colossians when Tychicus arrived is a strong indication that the letter "from the Laodiceans" was one he himself was sending to the Laodiceans by Tychicus.
- C. Heretic though he was, in the 2nd century Marcion averred that what we know as Ephesians was actually written to the Laodiceans.
- VI. A Theory that Accounts both for the Dominance of the reading "in Ephesus" and also for the existence of manuscripts that omit "in Ephesus."
- A. The letter was an encyclical, as noted above.
1. Paul's letter was carried by Tychicus (6.21-22).
 - a. The letter to the church at Colossae was also carried by Tychicus (4.7-8).
 - b. Accompanied by Onesimus (Col 4.7-9), Tychicus also carried the letter to Philemon at this time.
 2. Ephesus would have been a natural jumping off point for Tychicus.
 - a. Tychicus was a native of Asia.
 - b. He was mentioned in connection with Trophimus who was an Ephesian, suggesting the possibility that Tychicus also was from Ephesus.
 - c. It may also be noted that Paul would later send Tychicus to Ephesus again, not merely en route to other places, but as a destination (2 Tim 4.12).
 - d. Ephesus would have been a likely jumping off point to begin his travel across the Anatolian peninsula, and all the more so if he were indeed a native Ephesian.
 3. Copies of the letter left at Ephesus, with the words "in Ephesus," could have been made and circulated among churches in Western Asia before Tychicus reached Colossae 100 miles to the east.
 - a. This could have included churches in Magnesia, Tralles, Miletus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia
 - b. Arriving at Laodicea, Tychicus must have left a copy of Paul's letter, this one apparently addressed "the saints at Laodicea."
 - 1) Marcion was from Sinope in Pontus. Copies of the letter left at Laodicea could have reached Sinope rather than copies of the identical letter (other than the greeting) left at Ephesus, thus accounting for Macion's insistence that the letter we know as Ephesians was addressed to the Laodiceans.
 - 2) Basil was from Cappodocia to the east.
 - a) While copies with the words "in Ephesus" dominated the western part of Asia, in the east scribes were familiar with variations in the greeting.
 - b) Perhaps for this reason, copies in the east were made leaving out the geographical destination altogether.
- B. Possible explanations for the dominance of manuscripts with the reading "in Ephesus" and for the letter's identification with Ephesus even among those who had manuscripts lacking the geographical identification in verse 1.
1. Prevalence of copies disseminated from Ephesus
 - a. If Tychicus followed the route suggested above, the saints at Ephesus would have become the first recipients of the letter.

- b. Word of the letter's existence and contents would have spread from Ephesus before Tychicus had even delivered copies to some other cities.
 - c. As Tychicus continued along 100 mile route to Colossae, scribes would have already been busy making copies of the original letter left at Ephesus, and these copies could easily have been disseminated to churches in the western part of Asia, bearing the name of Ephesus, the city of the saints addressed in the original.
 - 1) Thus, even though Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia did not lay along Tychicus' route, churches in those cities could have received copies containing the words "in Ephesus."
 - 2) All these cities were closer to Ephesus than was Laodicea.
 - d. So then very early on, even before Tychicus had completed his trip, a version of this letter with the words "in Ephesus" could have become widespread.
2. Tychicus' association with Ephesus
 - a. Perhaps Tychicus was indeed from Ephesus as suggested earlier.
 - b. If he ultimately returned to Ephesus after Paul's death, his close relationship with Paul and his part in the dissemination of the letter could have enhanced the standing of the version of the letter that went to the church there.
 3. Extraordinary Preservation at Ephesus
 - a. There is the 7th century claim (whether credible or not, who knows) that at that time, the church in Ephesus still held the autograph of the gospel of John.³⁶
 - b. If what Tychicus had delivered remained at Ephesus for some centuries, conceivably this too could have enhanced the standing of the reading, ἐν Ἐφέσῳ.
 4. Political standing of Ephesus
 - a. Ephesus had been designated the capital of proconsular Asia during the reign of Augustus
 - b. It is possible that the copy that went to the capital city, more so than any other copy circulated among the intended audience at least in Asia, would on that account be the copy to which later generations would appeal.
 5. Religious standing of Ephesus
 - a. Already in the second century the church at Ephesus was reckoned as famous in its own right. Ignatius referred to the church there as "famous unto all the ages."³⁷
 - b. In the early centuries, in the face of gnostic heresy there was a conscious effort to hold up certain churches as being the standard bearers of orthodoxy. The church at Ephesus was among these churches.
 - 1) Late in the second century, in his effort to undermine the influence of gnostic teachers, Irenaeus wrote, "Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question among us, should we not have recourse to the most

³⁶ *Chronicon Paschale*, vol. 1 ed. Ludwig August Dindorf, Impensis ed. Weberi:Bonae 1832.

³⁷ *To the Ephesians*, 8.

ancient Churches with which the apostles had constant intercourse, and learn from them what is certain and clear in regard to the present question?"³⁸

- 2) Churches so regarded were those that had come to be recognized as "apostolic mother churches," namely, the churches in Jerusalem, Antioch of Syria, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth and Rome.³⁹
- 3) Of all the churches in Asia Minor that might have been original recipients of a copy of the letter we know as Ephesians, only the church at Ephesus attained the dubious distinction of being an "apostolic mother church."
6. It is not surprising then that a letter originally sent in various forms, each with a different city identified in the greeting, would eventually be preserved for posterity in the form containing the name of Ephesus.
7. It is not surprising that even in those few existing manuscripts where the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ are absent in Paul's greeting, the title nonetheless says "Ephesians"?
8. The evidence indicates that Paul intended something, some phrase indicating the intended audience, to follow τοῖς οὖσιν. The evidence also indicates that it was not necessarily Ephesus. But the evidence for ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is very strong, even compelling. So, what could account for all of this evidence? The foregoing explanation accounts for all of this, as well as Paul's reference in Ephesians 3.4 to a previous letter.

³⁸ *Adv. Her.* III.iv.1

³⁹ Schaff, 2:153.

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