

Introduction to Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

Authorship, Intended readership and relationship with Colossians

The majority of contemporary New Testament scholars reject the Pauline authorship of Ephesians on the grounds that:

- i) The letter is written in an impersonal manner, hardly reflecting the relationship Paul enjoyed with the Christians at Ephesus.
- ii) The letter is clearly related to that to the Colossians. The author of Ephesians, it is argued, imitated Paul's letter to the Colossians.
- ii) Some of the theological emphases in Ephesians are different from those in other Pauline letters:
 - an emphasis upon Christ's exaltation rather than his death;
 - an emphasis upon salvation rather than justification;
 - a distinctive ecclesiology;
 - a realised eschatology.

In addition, it is argued that pseudonymity was common in first century literature¹.

All of these points are dealt with in detail by O'Brian in the introduction to his commentary on this Epistle in which he defends Pauline authorship. It is not my intention to go over the same ground in my brief introduction to this letter. Suffice it to say that the author of this letter demonstrates a profound understanding of the gospel and of Pauline theology such that, if the author were not Paul it would have to be someone else of similar stature. It is difficult to imagine that such a 'second Paul' would have escaped the notice of the early church which uniformly attributed this letter to Paul himself.

Why then is the letter so impersonal in style? A clue is perhaps provided in Ephesians 1:1 in which the phrase ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is omitted from a number of ancient manuscripts and citations (see notes in situ). This omission has led to the suggestion that the letter may have been produced originally as a general letter, intended for a number of churches in Asia Minor, the phrase ἐν Ἐφέσῳ being later inserted into the copy sent to or retained by that city. Acts 19:10 tells us that as a result of Paul's extended ministry in Ephesus "all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord." It is not unreasonable then to suppose that Paul, now in prison, wrote to encourage these scattered churches of Asia Minor, the fruit of his ministry in Ephesus, and that, Ephesus, the epicentre of this ministry was subsequently considered the primary recipient of the letter.

If 'Ephesians' is a letter written to the churches founded through Paul's Ephesian ministry it is hardly surprising that the letter to the Colossians is so similar in structure and content. It is sufficient to note that the church at Colossae was one of the churches formed at this period and that Paul's letter to this church is therefore a particularised form of the general epistle. In these notes we take no particular view on the priority of Ephesians or Colossians: whether Paul first wrote the specific letters to Colossians and Laodiceans before penning the more general letter we know as Ephesians or vice versa is impossible to determine² and of little practical relevance. It is our contention, however, that both Ephesians and Colossians were

¹ On this issue, see particularly Earle E. Ellis, "Pseudonymity and Canonicity of New Testament Documents", *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honour of Ralph P. Martin*, ed. M.J. Wilkins and T. Paige, Sheffield, Academic Press, 1992.

² See particularly Ernest Best, "Who used Whom?: The Relationship of Ephesians and Colossians", *New Testament Studies*, 43, 1997

written by the apostle Paul at much the same time during his imprisonment at Rome, in about 61-62 AD, and that they were intended for a similar readership³.

The Message of Ephesians

The central message of Ephesians is that Christ's work involves the reconciliation of all things to God (Eph 1:9-10). This reconciliation flows from the cross and is displayed in the church where the barrier between Jew and Gentile has been broken down (Eph 2:14-16). In the church, God's new-creation has appeared, a new creation which reflects his glory (Eph 1:18-19; 3:20-21), sharing the exalted glory of the risen Christ (Eph 2:6). The church is "God's pilot scheme for the reconciled universe of the future" (F.F.Bruce). But not all things are yet subject to God through Christ. There are still powers both heavenly and earthly which are opposed to him – powers which still hold men and women captive (Eph 2:4-7). Christ has won a decisive victory at the cross but these 'powers' continue to wage war against Christians who are urged to stand firm and resist them (Eph 6:10-20). But that resistance is not merely passive: God's people are also the means used of God to wage war on the realm of darkness and extend the kingdom of God and his Christ (see particularly Eph 6:15, 19-20).

We conclude this brief introduction with an extended quote from O'Brian:

The letter to the Ephesians is one of the most significant documents ever written...

Whether it is because of its magnificent sweep of God's saving purposes from election before the foundation of the world to his summing up of all things in Christ, the place of the exalted Christ within those purposes and believers' relationship to him, God's victory in Christ over the powers, the grand presentation of the church, its language of worship and prayer, or the scope and depth of its ethical teaching, Ephesians has had a profound influence on the life of many.

But the letter has not only had a significant impact on the lives of men and women in the past. It also speaks with great power to our contemporary situation. To a world that seems to have lost all sense of direction, and a society that for all its achievements is in a mess, the divine analysis of the human predicament along with God's gracious and comprehensive salvation, such as is found in Ephesians 2:1-7, ultimately provides the only hope for a world that stands under divine judgment. Klyne Snodgrass aptly remarks, 'The understanding of the gospel in Ephesians challenges and redefines the superficial understanding of the gospel prevalent in our day.'

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Ephesians

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| Beare, F.W. | <i>The Epistle to the Ephesians</i> (Interpreter's Bible), Nashville, Abingdon, 1953 |
| Eadie, John | <i>Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians</i> , Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1883 |
| O'Brian, Peter T. | <i>The Letter to the Ephesians</i> , Leicester, Apollos, 1999 |
| Stott, John | <i>God's New Society</i> (Bible Speaks Today Series), Leicester, IVP, 1979 |

³ O'Brian suggests that "Having addressed a specific problem in Colossians, Paul has remodelled his letter for a more general Christian readership."

Ephesians 1:1-2

"The repetition of the name of Christ in each of the three parts of the salutation foreshadows the manner in which the whole epistle will bring out the central significance of Christ for the life of the church in all its aspects. Christ commissions the apostle; he is the sphere of faith for the saints; and in unison with the Father he confers upon believers the divine gifts of grace and peace." Beare

Ephesians 1:1

Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν [ἐν Ἐφέσῳ] καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ· θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

Cf. Col 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1. "To speak of himself as an apostle of *Christ Jesus* not only signifies that he belongs to Christ, but also that he is a messenger who is fully authorised and sent by him. As an apostle he has the authority to proclaim the gospel in both oral and written form, as well as to establish and build up churches (see on 2:20 and 4:11). He has been called to this ministry 'through the will of God', an expression that appears four times in the space of a few verses (vv. 1,5,9,11...) and has particularly to do with God's saving plan, or some aspect of it. Paul's calling to be an apostle to the Gentiles fits within that gracious divine plan (cf. 3:1-13). He had not appointed himself to this position; God chose him. Hence the words *by the will of God* have overtones of God's unmerited grace, and emphasise that there was no personal merit on Paul's part either in becoming an apostle or in continuing as one." O'Brian.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated

τοῖς ἁγίοις members of the holy community of God's people. The term was formerly applied to Israel (2:19, see also Ex 19:6, Deut 7:6 and 1 Peter 2:9), but is now applied to Christians. "They are set apart for him and his service; as the people of his own possession they are the elect community of the end time whose lives are to be characterised by godly behaviour. Paul will expand on the implications of this term at 1:4, where holiness is the intended result of God's election, and at 5:26,27, where it is viewed as the effect of Christ's death on behalf of his church." O'Brian

οὖσιν Verb, pres ptc, m & n dat pl εἶμι

O'Brian sums up the textual evidence regarding ἐν Ἐφέσῳ saying, "ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ('in Ephesus') is omitted by p⁴⁶ & B 424^c 1739 Basil, Origen, apparently Marcion (who called the letter 'the epistle to the Laodiceans'), and Tertullian... p⁴⁶ differs slightly from the others in that it omits τοῖς ... before οὖσιν... The vast majority of manuscripts read τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ καὶ πιστοῖς... However, the combination of p⁴⁶ (which dates from the beginning of the third century and is the earliest manuscript we have of this letter), &, and B is strong external evidence for the omission of the place name from the original." He continues, "This is consistent with the internal evidence of the letter ... where little in the contents suggests that it was written to a church where Paul has ministered for the best part of three years. There is no mention of 'individuals or groups among the people addressed; there are no allusions to features or problems in the local situation'. The only personal reference, apart from Paul himself, is to Tychicus, whom the apostle is sending to the readers so that he might inform them of his personal circumstances (6:21-22)... We conclude that Ephesians was a general epistle sent to mainly Gentile believers in south-western Asia Minor, and that it was linked with Ephesus at an early stage, perhaps because of its being a strategic church or because it was one of the several cities to which the letter was sent."

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, believing

The term can mean either faithful, or believing (see Acts 10:45). Both seem to be implied here. O'Brian thinks the primary emphasis is upon them as 'believers.'

ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ a key expression in this epistle.

"To be 'in Christ' is to be personally and vitally united to Christ, as branches to the vine and members to the body and thereby also to Christ's people." John Stott, *God's New Society*

Ephesians 1:2

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

χαρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour
εἰρηνη, ης f peace

Cf. Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Phil 1:2; 2 Thess 1:2; Philem 3. "Instead of the standard Hellenistic greeting χαρειν, he employs the similar-sounding but theologically more profound χάρις ('grace'), together with the Greek rendering of the Jewish greeting for 'peace'." O'Brian

χαρις ... ειρηνη are also key themes of this epistle: χαρις 2:5,7,8; ειρηνη 2:14-17.

πατὴρ Noun, gen s πατήρ, πατρος m
father

και κυριου Ἰησου Χριστου The absence of a second ἀπο joins Father and Son together as a single source of grace and peace.

Ephesians 1:3-14

"A magnificent hymn of adoration, recounting the spiritual blessings which God bestows upon his people in Christ, culminating in the introduction of the central theme – the revelation of God's purpose to 'gather together in one all things in Christ' (1:10); and pointing to the progressive realisation of that purpose in the Jews (1:11-12), who now find their hope of Messiah fulfilled, and in the Gentiles (1:13-14) who hear the gospel of salvation and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Beare.

O'Brian says that these verses are a "typical Old Testament and Jewish style of extended eulogy or *berakah* ('Blessed be God, who has ...')." It consists of one long sentence (of 202 words), full of relative clauses.

Ephesians 1:3

Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ εὐλογήσας ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ,

εὐλογητος, η, ον blessed, praised

As in the LXX, so in the NT, this adjective is never applied to man. In the NT it is used only of God. He is pronounced blessed because he is the source of all blessing. As this verse makes clear, it is because of the blessing which he has bestowed upon us that we pronounce him to be blessed. "Paul's eulogies do not express a wish; they describe a fact (Blessed *is* God'), as he proclaims that God is the source of all blessing." O'Brian

ὁ θεος και Πατηρ του Κυριου Ἰησου Χριστου either 'God who is the Father of our Lord ...' or 'the God of, and Father of ...' (cf. Jn 20:17). When God appeared to Moses at the burning bush he announced himself as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (Ex 3:6). He is now pleased to be known as the 'God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' cf. Heb 1:1-2.

εὐλογεω speak well of, bless

εὐλογία, ας f blessing, praise

πνευματικος, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to the spirit

εὐλογία πνευματικη are the blessings which are ours in Christ and which are conveyed to us by the Holy Spirit. "The adjective does not primarily point to a contrast with what is material (e.g.. Deut 28:1-14), secular or worldly. Nor do Paul's words suggest simply the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:3-11." O'Brian

ἐπουρανιος, ον heavenly

The phrase occurs also in 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12, the first two of which shed light on its use here. Christ is now in the heavenly places and all of our blessings are to be found in him. As the Spirit conveys these blessings to us we are united with Christ and through that union enjoy the blessings which he has for us. More than that, the Spirit brings us into a new sphere of life (the life of the heavenly realm), which is marked not only by blessing in Christ but also by spiritual warfare (see the latter references above). "*In the heavenly realms* is bound up with the divine saving events and is to be understood within a Pauline eschatological perspective. In line with the Jewish two-age structure heaven is seen from the perspective of the age to come, which has now been inaugurated by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ." O'Brian

Stier suggests a contrast with the OT sphere of blessing which was 'in Canaan.'

Ephesians 1:4

καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ,

καθως as, inasmuch as

The sense here is that the blessings given us in Christ are precisely those which, in eternity past, God planned for those whom he would have to be his own.

ἐξελέξατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

ἐκλεγομαι choose, select

The pervasive use of the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ in this letter (and elsewhere in Paul) indicates that all God does for the salvation of his people he does in Christ. This applies not only to what has been done for us through Christ's earthly life, death and resurrection, but also to the eternal plans and purposes of God. These also were plans towards us *in Christ* in that Christ is the heart and focus of these plans and the one to whom they were and are entrusted. We are chosen in him. "He is the Chosen One par excellence (Luke 9:35; 23:35." O'Brian This election is both corporate and personal.

καταβολη, ης f beginning, creation

Cf. 1 Thess 1:4; 2:13, also Rom 8:29; 2 Tim 1:9. Christianity is no afterthought of God, no *ad hoc* response to the failure of Judaism. God's plans for his people in Christ, plans for Jew and Gentile, are plans determined before the foundation of the world and are plans which shape the entire Bible story – indeed, the whole of human history.
"To say that election took place before creation indicates that God's choice was due to his own free decision and love, which were not dependent upon temporal circumstances or human merit. The reasons for his election were rooted in the depths of his gracious, sovereign nature. To affirm this is to give Christians the assurance that God's purposes for them are of the highest good, and the appropriate response from those who are chosen in Christ from all eternity is to praise him who has so richly blessed us." O'Brian

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

an infinitive of design, 'that we should be ...'
Election is the ground of holiness. "Election does bring privilege, but it also carries with it responsibility. The divine purpose in our election was not simply to repair the damage done by sin but also to fulfil God's original intention for humankind, namely, to create for himself a people perfectly conformed to the likeness of his Son (Rom 8:29-30)." O'Brian

ἀμωμος, ον faultless; without blemish
κατενωπιον before, in the presence of

Cf. Col 1:22. "The two adjectives *holy and blameless* were used to describe the unblemished animals set apart for God as Old Testament sacrifices (Exod 29:37-38; cf. Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:19). But already within the Old Testament this language was employed to describe ethical purity (e.g., Ps 15[LXX 14]:2; 18:23 [17:24])." O'Brian

ἐν ἀγαπῇ To what do these words refer? The answer is linked with the way in which you punctuate these verses.

The AV and UBS Greek text treat these words as belonging with the words that precede them and therefore qualifying God's act of choosing his people – his election was motivated by love. The RSV and NIV understand these words to belong with what follows in verse 5: "In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons ..."

The proximity of the phrase ἐν ἀγαπῇ to προορισας and its distance from ἐξελεξατο would seem to favour the second view, though O'Brian favours the former, saying, "On balance it is preferable to attach 'in love' to what precedes so that it is viewed as part of the goal election is intended to achieve, namely, 'a life before God which is holy and blameless and lived in love'."

Ephesians 1:5

προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ,

προορίζω decide from the beginning,
predestine

The difference between this and election is that here the focus is upon the goal, the end which God had in mind.

"Believers praise God the Father because his purpose in choosing them was to bring them into a personal relationship with himself as his children." O'Brian

υἰοθεσια, ας f adoption, sonship

Adoption "was understood in Graeco-Roman law, as referring to the adoption as sons of those who were not so by birth. It signified entry into a privileged position. Paul applies this term from the Graeco-Roman world to the special relationship which believers have with God. This reference to adoption must also be understood against the background of Israel's relationship with the Lord as his 'firstborn son' (Exod 4:22; Isa 1:2), a relationship which was established at the Exodus: 'When Israel was a child I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son' (Hos 11:1). Paul asserts that adoption as sons was one of the particular privileges belonging to Israel (Rom 9:4). Now it belongs to Christians (cf. Rom 9:26; 2 Cor 6:18)." O'Brian. On adoption, see also Romans 8 and Galatians 4 where it is linked with the idea of being an 'heir,' cf. v.11 below.

διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Jesus is the mediator of this adoption. He is *the* Son of God, and it is only in and through him that we are made children of God.

εἰς αὐτόν for himself: it is God's purpose to bring us to himself.

εὐδοκία, ας f good will, pleasure

Adoption was not motivated by some need in God; he purposed to do this simply because it pleased him so to do. "... signifies not simply the purpose of God but also the delight that he takes in his plans... Consequently, as men and women break out into praise (vv. 3,6,12,14), their pleasure in God is a response to his delight in doing good to them." O'Brian

θελημα, ατος v.1

Ephesians 1:6

εις ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς
ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ,

ἔπαινος, ου m praise, commendation

Cf. vv. 12,14. God's ultimate purpose is to display the glory of his grace in saving a people for himself and, as a result, receive the praise both of those whom he has redeemed and of those who look on in the spiritual realms (cf 3:10,11).

χαριτω bestow on freely

ἡγαπημένῳ Verb, perf pass ptc, m/n dat s

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

'Beloved' is a frequent title of Christ, see Mt 3:17; 17:5; Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 4:9,10,11; Col 1:13. It was used in the OT of Israel as God's beloved people, see Deut 33:12; Isa 5:17; Jer 11:15; 12:7.

We are not adopted because God lacked a son upon whom he could lavish his love. "The term 'Beloved' here in v.6 shows that God's election of believers to be his sons and daughters is intimately related to their being in Christ the Chosen One (cf. v.5), and that the bounty which he lavishes on them 'consists in their being caught up into the love which subsists between the Father and the Son' [Caird] (cf. John 3:35; 5:20; 17:23,26)." O'Brian

Ephesians 1:7

ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος
αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων, κατὰ
τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ

ἀπολυτρωσις, εως f redemption,
deliverance, setting free

This word has both a Greek and Jewish background. Greek prisoners or slaves were redeemed by means of a payment. In the OT 'redemption' has three elements:

- i) Deliverance, particularly from the bondage of Egypt (Deut 7:8; 9:26; 13:5; 1 Chron 17:21 etc.);
- ii) The initiative of a Redeemer (goel);
- iii) The payment of a price (particularly for redemption from bond service).

αἷμα, ατος f blood

ἄφεσις, εως f forgiveness, cancellation (of sins)

παραπτωμα, τος n sin, wrongdoing

"The apostle places the forgiveness of sins in apposition with redemption, not as its only element, but as a blessing immediate, characteristic and prominent." Eadie

"The 'forgiveness of sins' (lit. 'trespasses') does not occur frequently in Paul's writings. Normally he refers to 'sin' in the singular, as a power which entered the world through Adam's action (Rom 5:12) and since then has tyrannised men and women until that power was broken by Christ's death on the cross (Rom 8:3, etc). However, 'forgiveness of sins' is implicit in the great Pauline themes of justification (cf. Rom 4:5-8) and reconciliation, so too much should not be made of this 'omission'." O'Brian

κατα "The preposition which speaks of the norm that governs something (= 'in accordance with') at the same time provides the reason (= 'because') for that deliverance." O'Brian. I.e. the 'riches of his grace' are the ultimate cause of our redemption.

πλοῦτος, ου m & n riches, wealth

Ephesians 1:8

ἧς ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ
φρονήσει

περίσσευω abound; cause to abound

σοφία, ας f wisdom, insight, intelligence

φρονήσει Noun, dat s φρονησις, εως f
insight, wisdom, way of thinking

Eadie thinks this final phrase should be joined with what follows rather than with what precedes it (as AV and NIV).

Concerning this 'wisdom and understanding', many argue that it refers to the wisdom of God in redemption, but others (including Bengel, Meyer, Lloyd-Jones, O'Brian) believe it to be a reference to the wisdom and understanding given to the Christian to enable him/her to comprehend what God has done. O'Brian adds "God's lavish grace has bestowed on us not only redemption, but along with this all the necessary wisdom and insight by which we should live wisely (cf. 5:15), particularly in the light of his saving plan in Christ (which is developed in what follows)."

Ephesians 1:9

γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος
αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ ἣν προέθετο
ἐν αὐτῷ

γνωρίζω make known, disclose

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery (of something formerly unknown but now revealed)

In Paul's usage 'mystery' has nothing to do with the secret doctrine of the initiated, common in the mystery religions, but refers to God's disclosure of his redemptive purposes in Christ. These previously were only partly disclosed but now have been made fully known. O'Brian draws attention to its eschatological nuance – in Judaism it is used of an event that will be revealed at the end of history.

θελημα, ατος n see v.1

εὐδοκία, ας f see v.5

προέθετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

προτιθεμαι plan, purpose, intend; show openly

'In Him' Eadie argues that this is a reference to God himself rather than to Christ, but this does not seem to fit so well into the flow of Paul's argument. O'Brian quotes Lincoln, "God's carefully designed strategy to make known the mystery, like the mystery itself, has always had its focus in Christ."

Ephesians 1:10

εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· ἐν αὐτῷ,

οἰκονομία, ας f (divine) plan

A word used in the Greek of God's ordering and administration of the universe. It refers here to the manner in which God's purpose is being worked out in human history.

πληρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness

καιρος, ου m time (viewed as occasion), appointed/proper time

An apocalyptic phrase, cf. its use in Gal 4:4. Beare comments, "The abstract notion of 'time' as a continuous entity, an 'everflowing stream,' is scarcely to be found in the NT. We have instead the idea of a succession of seasons or world periods, each marked by decisive events which determine its character, and each contributing to the succeeding age and to the final issue. From this point of view the NT writers represent the Christian Era as the last in the series of ages, inaugurated by the saving acts of Christ – incarnation, Passion, Exaltation – and consummated by his manifestation in glory."

ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι Verb, aor midd infin

ἀνακεφαλαιοω sum up, bring together

Introducing an explanatory infinitive clause.

"The increasing consensus among modern scholars is that the unusual verb used here derives from a word meaning the 'main point', 'sum', or 'summary' (cf. Acts 22:28; Heb 8:1) rather than 'head', and that its basic meaning is 'to bring something to a main point', or 'to sum up'. In connection with Christ's eschatological relationship to a multitude of entities (including personal beings), the text suggests that God's 'summing up' of these entities in Christ is his act of 'bringing all things together in (and under) Christ, i.e. his unifying of them in some way in Christ' [Turner]... The mystery which God has graciously made known refers to the summing up and bringing together of the fragmented and alienated elements of the universe ('all things') in Christ as the focal point." O'Brian

γη, γης f earth

Cf. Rom 8:21. Carries the thought of the restoration of the whole of creation through Christ (see also 1 Cor 15:24; Col 1:16,20).

Ephesians 1:11

ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργούντος κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ,

ἐκκληρώθημεν Verb, aor pass indic, 1 pl
κληρωω choose

The verb means 'appoint or choose by lot.' ἐν ᾧ ἐκκληρώθημεν perhaps 'in whom we were chosen as God's own people.' O'Brian suggests, 'we were claimed by God as his portion' cf. Deut 32:8-9.

In context, the reference would seem to be to Paul and his fellow *Jewish* believers (so Beare, O'Brian). Verses 11 and 12 speak of Jewish believers before the transition to second person plural in v.13 shifts the focus to the Gentiles.

προορισθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
προορίζω see v.5

προθεσις, εως f purpose, plan, will

ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

βουλή, ης f purpose, intention, plan, decision

θελημα, ατος n see v.1

Ephesians 1:12

εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ τοὺς προηλπικότας ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ·

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἰμι

ἔπαινος, ου m see v.6

δοξα, ης f glory

"In v.5 the adoption of believers as God's sons and daughters, which was the purpose of their predestination, redounds to *the praise of his glorious grace*. Here also *the praise of his glory* is the object for which those who 'first hoped in Christ' were chosen as the Lord's portion." O'Brian

προηλπικότας Verb, perf act ptc, m acc pl
προελπιζω be the first to hope

Paul speaks of Jewish believers as the first to hope in Christ – first to hope in the Messiah.

Ephesians 1:13

ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ,

ὑμεῖς – the focus shifts to Gentile believers but the prefixed ἐν ᾧ καὶ emphasises that they are considered not as a separate group but along with and united with Jewish believers as one people in Christ.

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality
εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel
σωτηρια, ας f salvation

"The appositional expression, *the gospel of your salvation* (cf. Rom 1:16), with its emphatic personal pronoun *your* reminds the readers of their conversion, and draws attention to what this powerful message has accomplished for them." O'Brian

πιστεω believe (in), have faith (in)

Some (e.g. Lloyd-Jones) have argued for a two stage experience, first the believing and then later the sealing. But most commentators (Simpson, Dunn, Bruce, Lincoln, O'Brian) treat this is a 'coincident aorist participle', i.e. the believing led immediately and by way of consequence to the sealing (see NIV). O'Brian notes, "The participle does not here express antecedent action, as though the Gentiles believed and then *subsequently* were sealed with the Holy Spirit. Rather, the believing and being sealed were two sides of the one event."

ἐσφραγίσθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl
σφραγιζω seal, secure with a seal
ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised

"When Gentiles received the Spirit the Old Testament promise was fulfilled, as in Galatians 3:14 so here the Spirit is to be understood as the content of the promise. On the other hand, the expression has been taken to signify that the Holy Spirit brings the promise of glory yet to come (cf. Eph 4:30)." O'Brian

ἅγιος, α, ου see v.1

Is it the Holy Spirit who does the sealing or is it the Holy Spirit who constitutes the seal? On the former view, sealing is a subjective experience of some sort, such as assurance (e.g. Goodwin). The latter seems to fit better with Paul's theology of the Holy Spirit and with the following verse. The picture is both of a mark of ownership and also a protective seal. "God has made them his inviolable possession, the pledge of this is the Spirit of God in the heart." Fitzer.

Ephesians 1:14

ὃ ἐστὶν ἄρραβὸν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιουτήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

MSS evidence is divided between ὁ and ὅς. Metzger writes concerning the UBS text, "It is difficult to decide whether copyists altered ὅς to ὁ to make it agree with the gender of πνευμα, or whether ὁ became ὅς by attraction to the gender of the following ἄρραβων, according to a usual idiom. On the basis of what was taken to be a superior external attestation, a majority of the Committee preferred the reading ὁ."

ἄρραβων, ωνος m pledge, guarantee (of what is to come)

The Holy Spirit is a pledge or down payment (cf. 2 Cor 1:22). His presence marks the Christian out as belonging to God. He is also an eschatological gift imparting something of the blessings of the age to come (cf. 4:30).

κληρονομια, ας f inheritance, what is promised

ἀπολυτρωσις, εως f see v.7

περιουησις, εως f obtaining, gaining

Some think that the reference is to the inheritance *we* will gain – a possessing of *our* inheritance. But the reference is more probably to *us* as *God's* possession – he has redeemed us that we may be his. "In the Old Testament God's people, Israel, are called by Yahweh 'my own possession from among all peoples' (Exod 19:5; cf. Deut 14:2; 26:18, and especially Mal 3:17, 'They will be mine, says the Lord Almighty, in the day when I make up my treasured possession'). This term occurs in the same sense in 1 Peter 2:9, where believers are called 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for [God's own] *possession*'." O'Brian

εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ "The glory of *God* is the final aim of the whole unfolding salvation." O'Brian. Cf. Is 43:20-21.

Ephesians 1:15-23

"At the conclusion of this magnificent eulogy, Paul includes an introductory thanksgiving paragraph in which he gives thanks to God for his readers (vv. 15-16a), and then intercedes for them (vv. 16b-19). In the following verses (vv. 20-23), which are a continuation of the same sentence, God is praised for exercising his mighty power in raising Christ from the dead and exalting him to be head over all things for the church." O'Brian

Ephesians 1:15

Διὰ τοῦτο κἀγώ, ἀκούσας τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην τὴν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους,

δια τουτο links the thanksgiving back to the eulogy that precedes it, especially vv. 13-14.

καγω from και ἐγω and I, but I, I also πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief, the Christian faith

Some significant MSS omit την ἀγαπην (p⁴⁶ n* A B). Without these words 'faith' would include the sense 'faithfulness' since it is also towards 'the saints.' However, the longer reading is probably to be preferred. Metzger thinks the shorter to be due to an accident in transcription. Beare however prefers the shorter reading.

ἅγιος, α, ον see v.1

Ephesians 1:16

οὐ παύομαι εὐχαριστῶν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν μνησθῆναι ποιούμενος ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου,

πανω midd stop, cease, cease from εὐχαριστεω thank, give thanks μνησθαι, ας f remembrance, mention

Beare thinks that the phrase μνησθῆναι refers particularly to intercession.

Ephesians 1:17

ἵνα ὁ θεὸς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ πατὴρ τῆς δόξης, δώῃ ὑμῖν πνεῦμα σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει αὐτοῦ,

"Petitionary prayer is an essential weapon in his apostolic armoury." O'Brian.

πατηρ, πατρος m father
δοξα, ης f glory

Of the phrase πατηρ της δοξης Beare says it "invites us at once to approach him with the simple confidence and affection of a child, and to adore him as the sum and source of all perfection." The meaning is both that God is the 'glorious Father' and that he is the *source* of all true glory.

δωη Verb, aorist act opt, 3 s δίδωμι

Either:

- i) a receptive spirit, eager for the truth which God will reveal; or,
- ii) reference to the Holy Spirit, the source of wisdom and revelation in the believer.

The NIV (by its capitalisation) opts for the latter, which O'Brian also considers the more likely. On the content of this prayer, cf. vv. 8-9.

σοφια, ας f see v.8

Wisdom has to do with knowledge of God's will.

ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation

I.e. knowledge and understanding of his saving plan.

ἐπιγνωσις, εως f knowledge

"Knowledge is closely connected with *the knowledge of Christ and conformity to his holiness*, which, in turn, is the substance of *God's self-revelation*' [Moule]. Paul's use of this term here (cf. Col 2:2; 3:10) and its cognate noun (Eph 3:19; cf. Col 2:3) may stand over against the faulty notions of wisdom and knowledge circulating in Asia Minor. His prayer, then, is for the true knowledge of God. What this means is explained in the rest of the prayer in vv. 18-19." O'Brian.

Ephesians 1:18

πεφωτισμένους τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εἰδέναι ὑμᾶς τίς ἐστὶν ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς κλήσεως αὐτοῦ, τίς ὁ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις,

πεφωτισμένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc pl φωτιζω give light to, reveal, enlighten

Cf. 2 Cor 4:6. Once Paul's readers were darkened in their understanding, cf. 4:18.

τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας cf. Pss 13:3 [LXX 12:4]; 19:8 [18:9]. A prayer that they might see with the eyes of the heart.

εἰδέναι Verb, perf act infin οἶδα know, understand

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for

κλησις, εως f call, calling

Not 'hope of your calling,' i.e., the 'hope to which he has called you.' "This hope to which God has called them is linked with 'the summing up of all things in Christ', which is the final purpose of God's saving activity in his Son (1:10). Hope is what the Gentile readers did not have before they believed (2:12). Elsewhere Paul describes the hope to which God has called believers as that of sharing in the glory of God (Rom 5:2), the expectation of appearing with Christ in glory when he is revealed (Col 3:4)." O'Brian

πλουτος, ου m & n riches, wealth
κληρονομια, ας f inheritance, what is promised

Either or both:

- i) The inheritance to which he admits us among his holy ones; and,
- ii) The heritage which God is claiming for himself among his sanctified people.

O'Brian prefers the latter sense, cf. his comments on v.11. "That God should set such a high value on a community of sinners, rescued from perdition and still bearing too many traces of their former state, might well seem incredible were it not made clear that he sees them in Christ, as from the beginning he chose them in Christ' [Bruce]. As a consequence, then, Paul prays that his readers might appreciate the extraordinary value God places on them." O'Brian

Ephesians 1:19

καὶ τί τὸ ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ εἰς ἡμᾶς τοὺς πιστεύοντας κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ

ὑπερβαλλω surpass
μεγεθος, ους n greatness
πιστευω believe (in), have faith (in)

We must not lose sight of the fact that Paul is praying that they may understand the greatness of God's power *at work in them*. Paul's words may have been directed particularly to the needs of a people in western Asia Minor who may have been converted out of a background of magic, the Artemis cult and astrological beliefs and who were still engaged in a struggle with spiritual powers.

ἐνεργεια, ας f (supernatural) working, power
κρατος, ους n might, strength, power
ισχυς, υος f strength

The words expressing power are piled up one after another to underline the surpassing greatness of God's power.

Ephesians 1:20

ἦν ἐνήργηκεν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐγείρας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν, καὶ καθίσας ἐν δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις

ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)
ἐγειρω raise
νεκρος, α, ον dead

The supreme manifestation of the power of God is seen in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. His exultation is the guarantee that his people shall be exalted in and with him, cf. 1 Cor 6:14; 15:43; Phil 3:21. Fitzmeyer remarks that this resurrection power, "emanates from the Father, raises Jesus from the dead at the resurrection, endows him with new vitality, and finally proceeds from him as the life-giving, vitalising force of the 'new creation' and of the new life that Christians in union with Christ experience and live."

καθιζω sit down; trans cause to sit, set
δεξιος, α, ον right, δεξια right hand

Cf. Ps 110:1, and note Jesus own use of this Psalm when brought before the Sanhedrin, Matt 26:64; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:41-44. "To be at someone *right hand* is to be in the position of special honour and privilege (1 Kings 2:19). In the Old Testament the Lord's right hand is the position of favour (Ps 80:18; Jer 22:24), victory (Ps 20:6; 44:3; Isa 41:10), and power (Exod 15:6; Ps 89:13; Isa 48:13). For Christ, then, to be seated at God's right hand meant sharing the Father's throne (Rev 3:21)." O'Brian

ἐπουρανιος, ον heavenly, celestial

Ephesians 1:21

ὑπεράνω πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ κυριότητος καὶ παντὸς ὀνόματος ὀνομαζομένου οὐ μόνον ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι·

ὑπερανω prep with gen far above; above
ἀρχη, ης f beginning, power,
ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power

Cf. mention of ἐξουσίας καὶ δυνάμεως in 3:10 and 6:12 and also Col 1:16, 2:10, 15. For more on these terms, see O'Brian, "Principalities and Powers: Opponents of the Church" in *Biblical Interpretation and the Church*, Ed DA Carson, Paternoster, Exeter, 1984 pp. 110-150. O'Brian rejects the reductionist approach of Wink who thinks the powers are to be demythologised or collapsed into human rulers or political structures which oppress people.

κυριότης, ητος f (angelic) power (believed to have some control over human fate);
authority

ὄνομα, τος n name, title

ὀνομαζῶ name, call; pass be known

Paul seems here to be referring to supernatural powers (cf. 2:2; 3:10). The Gnostics and some Jewish groups had developed an elaborate categorisation of spiritual beings. Beare thinks that Paul's words 'every name that is named' contain an element of mockery of such schemes, as if he were saying "whatever else anyone likes to call them". O'Brian thinks "the context suggests that the powers were given their names by God, thus pointing to their inferiority to him." Note also the comment on possible background on v.19 above.

μονον adv only, alone

αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order

μελλω (before an infin) be going; (ptc. without infin) coming, future

"Christ's rule is supreme over every name of renown whether belonging to *the present age* or *the one to come*, whether in the present or in the future. The distinction between 'this age' and 'the coming age' is drawn from Jewish apocalyptic. With the first coming of the Lord Jesus the new age has already broken in upon the present, so that the two ages now overlap. The age to come has now been inaugurated but not yet consummated, and it is in this future sense that Paul refers to it here." O'Brian

Ephesians 1:22

καὶ πάντα ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ, καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ,

ὑποτασσω subordinate, put in subjection
πόδας Noun, acc pl ποῦς, ποδος m foot

Cf. Ps 8:6. "The Psalmist recalls the language of Genesis 1:26-28 as he wonders in adoration at the honour which the Creator has bestowed on human beings by giving them dominion over the works of his hands. In the New Testament the words of the Psalm are applied to Christ as the last Adam (1 Cor 15:27; Heb 2:6-9). The 'everything' of the psalm, which refers to that part of creation below humankind in the hierarchy, now designates the whole universe, heaven and earth (cf. 1:10,23), and especially the spiritual powers which are subject to Christ. Although the complete fulfilment of these words will occur only when death is destroyed and God is all in all (1 Cor 15:27; Heb 2:8), Christ's present enthronement at God's right hand is 'assurance enough that this blessed consummation will come without fail' [Bruce]." O'Brian

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι

'given' is probably a Semitism reflecting the Hebrew יָן which can also mean 'appoint'.

κεφαλή, ης f head

"The term 'head' expresses his ruling authority." O'Brian

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church

O'Brian follows Banks (*Paul's Idea of Community*) in understanding such references to 'the church' not as references to some 'universal church' but "metaphorically of a *heavenly gathering* around Christ in which believers already participate (cf. Heb 12:22-24)." But he emphasises that "the dimension of the local congregation is also in view ... local congregations, as well as house-groups that meet in particular homes, are concrete, visible expressions of that new relationship which believers have with the Lord Jesus ... [and] earthly manifestations of that heavenly gathering around the risen Christ (cf. Heb 10:25)."

Ephesians 1:23

ἥτις ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ, τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου.

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι who, which
σῶμα, τος n body

"It is probably best to understand this coordination of head and body as a natural development from Paul's earlier letters, where the body terminology and its constituent parts refer to the mutual relations and obligations of church members (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:12-27). In Colossians and Ephesians there is an advance in the line of thought so that the relationship which the church, as the body of Christ, bears to Christ as head of the body is treated. The Pauline concept of the 'body of Christ' may have come from Paul's encounter with the exalted Christ on the Damascus road, where the risen Christ identified himself with his followers: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' (Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14). Further, the idea of the body of Christ can partly be explained in terms of the Old Testament concept of corporate personality where the movement between the one and the many can be expressed by the one term and yet have overtones of solidarity. For Paul, Christ as the Last Adam and second man is representative of the new humanity (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:22, 45-49), so that one is either 'in Adam' or 'in Christ'." O'Brian

πλήρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness

Is πλήρωμα active or passive, something that fills or something that is full?

Robinson and Beare argue that it is to be taken in an active sense, i.e. that the church fills Christ and completes his person in some way (see Col 1:24). But the thought of Christ filling the church is much more common in the NT. In Col 1, Christ is filled with God (he is the fulness of the divine Glory, cf. Ezek 44:4; Is 6:1; Jer 23:24; Hag 2:7) and in Col 2:10 we are to be filled with him. It is probably best therefore to understand πληρωμα passively (so O'Brian).

πληρωω fill, make full

"Christ pervades all things with his sovereign rule, directing all things to their appointed end (cf. Heb 1:3), and this entails his functioning as the powerful ruler over against the principalities (1:21) and giving grace and strength to his people, the church (4:13, 15-16)." O'Brian

Ephesians 2:1

Καὶ ὑμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν,

"The contrast of *your* (vv.1-2) with *we all* (v.3) again refers to the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, only to nullify it. Both are shown to have been alike guilty and equally in need of God's mercy." Beare

νεκρός, α, ον dead

Their previous condition outside of Christ was one of spiritual death even as he alone is the source of spiritual life.

παραπτωμα, τος n sin, wrongdoing
ἀμαρτια, ας f sin

Ephesians 2:2

ἐν αἷς ποτε περιπατήσατε κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, κατὰ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος, τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ νῦν ἐνεργοῦντος ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας·

ποτέ once, formerly, at one time

Draws a contrast with what they are now.

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

The ethical use of περιπατεω is a Hebrewism common to Paul and John.

αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order

Paul is drawing a contrast between the marks of the old age ('the age of this world' cf. Gal 1:4 'the present evil age'), and those of the age to come which has broken into history in Christ.

ἄρχων, οντος m ruler, official, authority
ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power
ἀηρ, ερος m air, space

'Ruler of the power of the air' does not mean that Satan has special control of the atmosphere about our planet. Paul uses this metaphor to indicate the pervading influence or surroundings in which an individual breathes and moves.

ἐνεργεω see 1:20

"Although the ruler of this world has been defeated by Christ at the cross (Col 2:14-15; cf. Heb 2:14-15; Eph 1:20-22), he does not surrender without a struggle and he continues to make his powerful influence felt. He is effectively at work in those who have not personally benefitted from God's deliverance in Christ, while he still poses a threat to believers (Rom 8:38-39; Eph 4:27), who must steadfastly resist him by God's power (Eph 6:10-20; cf. 1 Pet 5:8-9)." O'Brian

ἀπειθεια, ας f disobedience

υἱοις τῆς ἀπειθείας is a Hebrewism. "That of which they are sons is the source and spring of their lives, not merely an accidental quality belonging to them." Alford.

"The readers' former lifestyle, which characterises all who are outside of Christ, was not true freedom but evidence of a fearful bondage to forces over which they had no control." O'Brian

Ephesians 2:3

ἐν οἷς καὶ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἀνεστράφημέν ποτε ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν, ποιοῦντες τὰ θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν, καὶ ἡμεθα τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ·

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

"Paul's point is similar to the argument of Romans 1:18-3:20, where it is clear that Jews were no better off than Gentiles. Both alike were 'under sin' (3:9)." O'Brian

ἀνεστράφημέν Verb, 2 aor pass indic, 1 pl
ἀναστρεφω pass live, conduct oneself
ποτέ see v.2

ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, lust, passion

Not simply sexual, cf. Gal 5:20.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

Used here and elsewhere in Paul of the whole moral temperament as predisposed to evil and hostile to the Spirit of God (cf. Gal 5:16-24; Rom 8:5-13) – fallen, self-centred human nature.

θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

διανοια mind, thought, understanding

Paul utterly rejects the Greek notion that evil is rooted only in the lower passions and that moral excellence flows from the exercise of reason.

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants
φύσει Noun, dat s φύσις, εως f nature,
natural condition

As members of a fallen race.

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

"Paul and his fellow Jews were deserving of and liable to wrath just as much as the Gentiles were. This dreadful predicament has been inherited, according to Paul, from the one man through whom 'sin came into the world ... and so death spread to all because all sinned' (Rom 5:12)... *like the rest* signifies that the whole of humanity outside of Christ lies in this sinful condition with its consequences (cf. Rom 1:18-20)." O'Brian

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

Ephesians 2:4-7

"What prompted God to act so freely and mercifully on our behalf? Using four groups of words, the apostle shows that the origins of God's saving initiative are to be found in his *mercy* (v.4), his *great love* (v.4), his *rich grace* (vv. 5,7, and 8), and his *kindness* to us in Christ Jesus (v.7). The whole paragraph emphasises that he acted on our behalf simply because of his own gracious and merciful character." O'Brian

Ephesians 2:4

ὁ δὲ θεὸς πλούσιος ὢν ἐν ἐλέει, διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀγάπην αὐτοῦ ἦν ἡγάπησεν ἡμᾶς,

πλουσιος, α, ον rich

ἐλεος, ους n mercy, compassion

Cf. Ex 34:6; Ps 103:8; Jonah 4:2.

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου
much, many

Just as Paul cannot speak of God's mercy without qualifying it ('rich in mercy') so he cannot speak of God's love without emphasising its greatness.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

Ephesians 2:5

καὶ ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν
συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ Χριστῷ – χάριτί ἐστε
σεσωσμένοι –

A second participial clause contrasting with the one concerning God in the previous verse.

νεκρος, α, ον see v.1

παραπτωμα, τος n see v.1

Paul picks up the thought of verse 1, but the subject now is 'we' not 'you'.

Compare Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. Only the Spirit of God is able to give life to the dead.

συνζωοποιεω make alive together with

"The first of three verbs compounded with the preposition 'with' which point to the union between Christ and his followers (cf. 1:20)...

Paul's readers have come to life with Christ, who was dead and rose again; their new life then, is a sharing in the new life which he received when he rose from the dead." O'Brian

σεσωσμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
σωζω save

χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι "This joyful acclamation, in effect provides a summary of what God has already done in making them alive together with Christ, raising them up with him, and making them sit with him in heavenly places." O'Brian. Grace is a key theme in Ephesians.

σεσωσμένοι "In Paul's letters the 'salvation' word group is used only in connection with humankind's relations with God. The terms often have an eschatological orientation, so that negatively they refer to a deliverance from God's wrath at the final judgment (Rom 5:9-10; 1 Cor 3:15; 5:5; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9) and positively to that reinstatement in that glory of God which was lost through sin (Rom 8:18-30; 2 Thess 2:13-14). Here in Ephesians 2:5 (cf. v.8), however, salvation has already been accomplished and experienced. The verb to 'save' includes God's acts of making us alive, raising us up, and seating us with Christ. It describes a rescue from death, wrath, bondage and a transfer into the new dominion with its manifold blessings. The periphrastic perfect construction draws attention to the resulting state of salvation... Elsewhere in Paul salvation has a present dimension to it as well as a past." O'Brian

Ephesians 2:6

καὶ συνήγειρεν καὶ συνεκάθισεν ἐν τοῖς
ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,

συνήγειρεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

συνεγειρω raise together with

συγκαθίζω intrans sit together with; trans
seat with

On the stream of verbs compounded with συν Simpson writes, "The apostle is not merely framing an analogy between the experiences of the heirs of salvation and their Redeemer, but asserting a sublime fellowship in process of consummation." O'Brian writes, "What God did for Christ he did at the same time for believers."

ἐπουρανιος, ον see 1:20

Cf. Colossians 3:1-3, where believers are said to share Christ's risen life in the heavenly realm and on [that] basis ... are expected to seek the things above." O'Brian. Since they share in Christ's victory and reign they do not have to succumb to the evil one's designs. Cf. also Is 57:15.

Ephesians 2:7

ἵνα ἐνδείξῃται ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσιν τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις τὸ ὑπερβάλλον πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἐν χρηστότητι ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

ἐνδείξῃται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 s
ἐνδεικνυμαι show, give indication of
αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity
ἐπερχομαι come, come about

Some understand this as a reference to the Christian centuries yet to come, but it is better to understand it of eternity (so Bruce, O'Brian).

ὑπερβαλλω see 1:19
πλοῦτος, ου m & n riches, wealth

Cf v.4.

χρηστοτης, ητος f kindness, goodness, mercy

Ephesians 2:8

τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ πίστεως· καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον·

The definite article has the force, 'by *this* grace you are saved ...' It is the 'article of renewed mention,' pointing back to the grace spoken of in vv 5 and 7.

σεσωσμένοι see v.5

Note the force of the perfect tense – here a periphrastic perfect, cf. v.5.

πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

Faith saves "not by its own merit but by virtue of the peerless object it enclaps and holds." Simpson

τουτο "some have taken *this* to refer specifically to 'faith', which immediately precedes (Augustine, C. Hodge and E. K. Simpson). The point being made, then, is that the response of faith does not come from any human source but is God's gift. The interpretation is grammatically possible, assuming that the term denotes 'faith' and not Christ's 'faithfulness', and is consistent with Pauline teaching elsewhere (cf. Phil 1:29). However, the context demands that *this* be understood of salvation by grace as a whole, including the faith (or faithfulness) through which it is received." O'Brian

δωρον, ου n gift, offering

Ephesians 2:9

οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἵνα μὴ τις καυχῆσθαι.

ἔργον, ου n work, deed

Paul uses the expression 'works' rather than 'works of the law' because he is writing to predominantly Gentile readers; "'works' now stand for human effort in general." O'Brian

καυχαομαι boast, boast about

Rather quaintly, Gurnall comments, "When thou hast thy best suit on, Christian, remember who paid for it."

Ephesians 2:10

αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἐσμεν ποίημα, κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς οἷς προητοίμασεν ὁ θεὸς ἵνα ἐν αὐτοῖς περιπατήσωμεν.

"God's salvation has already been described in terms of a resurrection from the dead, a liberation from slavery, and a rescue from condemnation. Now it is spoken of as a new creation, and a further reason (*for*; cf. v.8) is given why this salvation is not of human origin and therefore cannot be the basis of human boasting. It is *God's* workmanship from first to last; believers *have been created* in Christ Jesus for good works. These 'good works' cannot be the ground of our salvation or the subject of our boasting since they are the *goal* of the new creation. They are the fruit of salvation, not its basis or cause." O'Brian

ποιημα, τος n what is created or made

A term often used in the LXX to denote creation as God's work, e.g., Ps 91:4; 142:5.

κτισθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
κτιζω create, make

"Christ Jesus is the 'sphere' of God's new creation, just as divine election (1:4) is in him." O'Brian

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

Cf. Col 1:10; Titus 3:8. "It is God's will that those who belong to the new creation should be characterised by a lifestyle which ultimately reflects his own character and action." O'Brian

προετομαζω prepare beforehand
περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

Cf. the previous *walk* in trespasses and sins (v.1).

Ephesians 2:11-22

Salvation is described in terms of reconciliation – in both vertical and horizontal terms.

- vv. 11-13 describe the pre-Christian past of Paul's Gentile readers in relation to Israel and their privileged position now in Jesus *the Christ*.
- vv 14-18 explain how this coming near was made possible through Christ's reconciling death.
- vv. 19-22 apply the truths of vv 14-18 to the readers' new privileged position in Christ

Ephesians 2:11

Διὸ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ποτὲ ὑμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί, οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου,

διο therefore, for this reason
μνημονεῦω remember, keep in mind
ποτε enclitic particle once, formerly, at one time

ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, οὐς n nation, people; τα ἔ. Gentiles
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature
ἀκροβυστία, ας f uncircumcision, non-Jews
περιτομή, ης f circumcision, those circumcised, Jews

"For Jews circumcision, which had been given by God to Abraham (Gen 17), was the physical sign of their covenant with the Lord, the God of all the earth. It pointed to the particular and exclusive relationship which Israel had with the God of the covenant. The uncircumcision of Gentiles was evidence of their estrangement from God, which in Jewish eyes could only be dealt with if a Gentile became a proselyte to the Jewish faith." O'Brian

χειροποίητος, ον made by human hands

I.e. it was a human act, in contrast with salvation which is the work of God. Paul's phraseology here implies that real circumcision is a matter of the heart (cf Rom 2:29; Gal 5:6; Col 2:11; Phil 3:3 – see also Deut 10:16; 30:6 and Jer. 4:4).

Ephesians 2:12

ὅτι ἦτε τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

καιρος, ου m time
ἐκεινος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that
χωρὶς without, apart from

Beare considers that the remainder of the verse is an exposition of what it means to be χωρὶς Χριστοῦ. O'Brian, however, sees the main thrust of Paul's argument to be that the Gentiles were outside the bounds of God's covenant blessings which belonged to Israel. To be 'without Christ' in these terms means to have no part in the hope of the coming Messiah.

ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι Verb, perf pass dep ptc, m nom pl ἀπαλλοτριομαι be a stranger to, have no connection with

πολιτεία, ας f citizenship, state, people

O'Brian thinks the term here signifies 'commonwealth.'

ξενος, η, ον strange, foreign
διαθηκη, ης covenant, will, testament
ἐπαγγελία, ας f promise, what is promised

"Here the plural covenants suggests a series of covenants with Abraham (Gen 15:7-21; 17:1-21), Isaac (Gen 26:2-5), Jacob (Gen 28:13-15), Israel (Exod 24:1-8), and David (2 Sam 7), while the genitive 'of the promise' probably refers to the foundation promise made by God to Abraham. The Gentiles' exclusion from the community of God's people meant that they had no share in the covenants which promised the messianic salvation (note especially Rom 9:4)." O'Brian

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of

'Hope' is used here in an objective sense – they were outside the sphere of God's promises, they did not share the hope of Israel.

ἄθεος, ον without God

This was a charge made against Christians because they did not have any idols and, so it seemed, had no gods. Paul turns the accusation back against the Greek and Roman world – they lacked the living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They were God-forsaken.

Ephesians 2:13

νυνὶ δὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς οἳ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγενήθητε ἐγγὺς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

νυνι (originally an emphatic form of νυν)
now

"The words *in Christ Jesus* are not to be interpreted predictively, meaning '[But now] you *are* in Christ Jesus'. Instead, they are connected with 'you have come near'. It was not that the readers were in Christ prior to their approach; rather, their being in Christ was the immediate consequence of this coming near. They were brought near to God in him, and the means by which this approach occurred is spelled out in the concluding phrase – it was through Christ's sacrificial death. And, as noted above, Gentiles who had no part in 'Christ', the Messiah through whom God's saving purposes were being worked out, had come to know Christ *Jesus*. The Christ in whom they had been incorporated was none other than the historic person, Jesus." O'Brian
μακρὰν far, far off, at some distance

Cf. Is 57:19, also v.17 below.

ἐγγύς adv near

ἐγενήθητε ἐγγύς The aorist suggests the final decisive act of admission to the divine presence. "The ideal redemption ... once for all accomplished by Christ's victorious passion." Westcott

αἷμα, αὐτός f blood

O'Brian suggests that Paul deliberately echoes the language concerning the acceptance of proselytes into Judaism who were spoken of as being 'brought near.' But that with Paul "this language undergoes a transformation. First, it is applied to Gentiles, not simply to proselytes coming into Jerusalem. Secondly, they do not become members of the commonwealth of Israel, but of a newly created community which transcends Israel and its privileges and where Gentiles, along with Jews, are on an equal footing. They are 'in Christ Jesus' and members together of his one body (cf. 2:19-22; 3:6). Further, their coming near means access to God himself, and this reconciliation has been brought about through Christ's sacrificial death (see on 1:7). There are no prerequisites such as fulfilling the Torah for entry into this privileged relationship."

Ephesians 2:14

αὐτὸς γὰρ ἔστιν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν, ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφοτέρα ἐν καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ,

Note the emphatic αὐτός 'he himself'.

εἰρήνη, ἡς f peace

"The term 'peace' in both Old and New Testaments came to denote well-being in the widest sense, including salvation, the source and giver of which is God alone. 'Peace' was used for harmony among people (Acts 7:26; Gal 5:22; Eph 4:3; Jas 3:18) and especially for the messianic salvation (Luke 1:79; 2:14; 19:42). The term could describe the content and goal of all Christian preaching, the message itself being called 'the gospel of peace' (Eph 6:15; cf. Acts 10:36; Eph 2:17). The biblical concept of peace has to do with wholeness, particularly with reference to personal relationships. Peace describes an order established by the God of peace (1 Cor 14:33; cf. Rom 15:33; 16:20; Phil 4:9). Christ himself is the mediator of that peace (Rom 5:1; Col 1:20). He gives peace to believers (2 Thess 3:16); indeed, he himself is that peace." O'Brian.

He is more than the author of our peace, he is our peace.

The affirmation 'he is our peace' forms a title to the section. It is followed by a series of three participles describing what he has done: 'made', v.14; 'destroyed', v.14; 'abolished', v.15. This is followed by purpose clauses: 'to create', v.15; 'to reconcile', v. 16. Vv 18-19 describe the Gospel proceeding from Christ, effecting what he accomplished – making peace.

ἀμφοτέροι, αἱ, α both, all

εἰς, μίαν, ἐν γενέσει ἑνός, μίαν, ἑνός one

The primary focus here is not on peace with God but on the relation between Jew and Gentile.

μεσότοιχον, οὗ n dividing wall

Josephus uses the separate words ὁ μεσὸς τοῖχος for the inner wall of the Temple. The allusion here seems to be to the barrier placed in the Temple which separated the court of the Gentiles from the inner courts. O'Brian, however, questions whether Gentiles in Asia Minor would have picked up this allusion. He considers the real barrier to have been the Mosaic law, of which the barrier in the Temple was a symbol.

φραγμός, οὗ m fence, wall, hedge

A genitive of apposition, 'dividing wall that constituted a fence.' The law was considered a fence around Judaism.

λυῶν loose, set aside

ἐχθρὰ, ἧς f enmity, hostility, hatred

σαρξ, σαρκὸς f see v.11

Cf. Gal 4:4; Heb 2:14. σαρξ is here shorthand for the human life of Jesus and for his death, cf. Col 1:22.

Ephesians 2:15

τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν
καταργήσας, ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς
ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ποιῶν εἰρήνην,

νομος, ου m law
ἐντολη, ης f command, order
δογμα, τος n rule, law, decree

The Mosaic ordinances, viewed as statutory code. The source or cause of the ἐχθρα (vv. 14,16). "The 'law' that had been 'abolished' is the Mosaic law, the Torah. The genitive 'of the commandments' indicates the contents of the law, while the phrase 'in ordinances, decrees' suggests the essential form in which the commands are given. The three nouns convey 'a sense of the oppressiveness of all the law's commandments' (Lincoln)." O'Brian. O'Brian argues that it is the law *as such* which has been abolished, not just the ceremonial law.

Quoting D.J.Moo he writes "the text suggests that it is the law itself which Christ has nullified. It has been 'rendered powerless', and thus 'ceases to stand as an immediate authority for God's people.'" That is not to say it is of no relevance, O'Brian continues, "Perhaps it may help to say that what is abolished is the 'law-covenant', that is, the law as a whole conceived as a covenant. It is then replaced by a new covenant for Jews *and* Gentiles. The relationship between the stipulations of the old covenant and those of the new covenant still need to be worked out. But because the old *Torah* as such, that is, the law-covenant, has gone, it can no longer serve as the great barrier between Jew and Gentile."

καταργεω render ineffective, cancel, do
away with

δύο gen & acc δύο dat δυοιν two
κτίσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s κτιζω create,
make

εἰς, μια, ἐν v.14
καινος, η, ον new

ἓνα καινον ἄνθρωπον is first Christ himself in the newness of his resurrection life and then the church – Jew and Gentile – which is in him, his body (v.16, cf. Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17; Col 3:10). This is the 'new creation' (cf. 2:10). "Nothing less than a new creation, an entirely new entity, was needed to transcend the deep rift between the two. It was effected through Christ's death, and the result is not an amalgam of the best elements of the two, but a 'new person' who transcends them both. The new humanity is not achieved by transforming Gentiles into Jews, or vice versa. And by this new creation Christ truly 'makes peace'." O'Brian

εἰρηνη, ης f v.14

Ephesians 2:16

καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἐνὶ
σώματι τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἀποκτείνας
τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ·

"In the preceding verses Paul's focus has been on the horizontal dimension, namely, Christ's removal of the enmity between Jew and Gentile. Now the vertical dimension is explicitly coupled with this, as the issue of reconciliation with God is introduced. By his death Christ has done away with the law, in order not only to make Jew and Gentile into 'one new person' (v.15b), but also to reconcile them both in one body to God." O'Brian

ἀποκαταλλάξῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s
ἀποκαταλλάσσω reconcile

Cf. Col 1:20,22 for this uniquely Pauline
compound of the verb with ἀπο

ἀμφοτεροι, αι, α both, all
σωμα, τος n body

The reference here is to the church as the new
humanity, one body in Christ.

τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ... τῷ θεῷ suggests that Jews
also, along with Gentiles, were alienated from
God (cf. the transition from *you* to *we* in vv.1-3
of this chapter).

σταυρος, ου m cross
ἀποκτείνας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
ἀποκτεινω and ἀποκτενω, -νωω kill,
put to death
ἐχθρα, ας f v. 14

The enmity was not merely between Jew and Gentile, more seriously it was between God and man. O'Brian argues that the aorist participle here expresses coincidental action with the aorist subjunctive earlier. "It was *in his reconciliation* of Jew and Gentile in one body to God that Christ *killed* the enmity. The same event is described from two perspectives, first in positive terms (reconciliation), then in negative categories (removal of the enmity). Paul is speaking of a twofold alienation, the rift between Jews and Gentiles and the hostility between both of them and God, that has been removed... This does not mean, however, that the whole human race has been united and reconciled. There is a further stage in Christ's work which the apostle now mentions."

Ephesians 2:17

καὶ ἔλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς
μακρὰν καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς·

Cf. Is 57:19; 52:7.

καὶ ἔλθων the reference would seem to be to the proclamation of the exalted Christ speaking by his Spirit in his messengers (cf. Acts 1:1). "Christ himself is the evangelist, the herald of good tidings from Isaiah, and his announcement, which is based on his death on the cross, is a royal proclamation that hostilities are at an end." O'Brian

εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the good news

μακρὰν see v.13

ἐγγύς see v.13

I.e. Gentiles and Jews.

Ephesians 2:18

ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ ἀμφοτέροι ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.

προσαγωγή, ης f freedom or right to enter

Cf. Rom 5:1-2. "The word with its cultic associations pointed to a free entry into the sanctuary as the place of God's presence [cf. Lev 1:3; 3:3; 4:14]." O'Brian

ἀμφοτέροι, αι, α v.16

Implies, 'we both *alike*' or 'we both *together*.'

ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι "The unity of the Body is a living unity, created and sustained by the one Spirit." Thornton

πατήρ, πατρός m father

Note the involvement of each member of the Trinity in salvation and in prayer.

Ephesians 2:19

ἄρα οὖν οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι, ἀλλὰ ἐστὲ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ,

οὐκέτι adv no longer, no more

ξένος, η, ον v.12

παροικος, ου m stranger, exile

To the Jew, *παροικος* might suggest a proselyte from among the Gentiles. Paul's point is that Gentiles are made members *on equal terms*.

συμπολίτης, ου m fellow-citizen

ἅγιος, α, ον holy; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

οἰκεῖος, ου m member of the household

A more intimate picture – children together in God's family. "The household terminology which appears in the Pauline corpus sheds light on the relations which God's people have with one another and with their heavenly Father. In the Pastorals the notion of the household is applied to the church in order to encourage appropriate and responsible behaviour (1 Tim 3:15; 2 Tim 2:20, 21). Here in Ephesians 2 Paul makes a slightly different point. In the Roman world of the day to be a 'member of a household meant refuge and protection, at least as much as the master was able to provide. It also meant identity and gave the security that comes with a sense of belonging' (Towner). It is this assurance that the apostle wishes to engender among Gentile readers here in v.19 when he tells them that they are members of God's household (cf. Gal 6:10)." O'Brian

Ephesians 2:20

ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ,

Paul now alters the imagery to that of a new temple. It is a natural transition from the picture of a household to a temple as the 'house of God.'

ἐποικοδομηθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl ἐποικοδομεῶ build on, build up
θεμελιος, ου m (also θεμελιον, ου n)
foundation, foundation stone
προφήτης, ου m prophet

Cf 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28. These are New Testament prophets, not Old Testament prophets. "Together with the apostles, prophets were the first authoritative recipients and proclaimers of God's revelation in Christ. If the single article before the two nouns 'apostles' and 'prophets' does not indicate an identity, then it may focus on a certain unity. The apostles and Christian prophets are both seen as those to whom God made known the revelation of the gospel' (K.O.Sandnes) and who were the first proclaimers of it. To assert, then, that these Gentile believers are built upon the apostles and prophets is to state that their membership in God's people rests on the normative teaching that arises from divine revelation. They have the right foundation. None may question their membership in God's new community." O'Brian

ἀκρογωνιαίος, α, ον corner stone, keystone

Cf. 1 Pet 2:6 quoting Is 28:16, but also Ps 118:22. There is debate as to whether this is the cornerstone from which the whole building is marked out and built or the keystone placed at the summit of the edifice as its crown and completion. O'Brian says that much of the extra-biblical evidence for the idea of this as the crowning stone is quite late, "while the imagery of the *cornerstone* makes better sense in the immediate context, especially the relationship of Christ to the apostles, and the picture of a growing and unfinished building. The preeminence, both in dignity and in time, accorded to Christ in the letter is enhanced rather than diminished, by understanding this imagery of the cornerstone... Christ is the vital cornerstone on whom the whole building is constructed. The foundation and position of all the other stones in the superstructure were determined by him. He is 'the one from whom the rest of the foundation is built outwards along the line of the proposed walls'. Accordingly, the temple is built out and up from the revelation given in Christ, with the apostles and prophets elaborating and explaining the mystery, which has been made known to them by the Holy Spirit (3:4-11, esp. v.5). 'But all is built on Christ, supported by Christ, and the lie or shape of the continuing building is determined by Christ, the cornerstone (Turner)'." O'Brian

Ephesians 2:21

ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη αὐξεῖ εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ,

ἐν ᾧ both verses 21 and 22 begin with this phrase which obviously refers to Jesus Christ.

οἰκοδομεῶ build, build up, encourage

πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ 'all the building' "is the entire construction – cornerstone, foundation and superstructure – which forms a complete whole." O'Brian

συναρμολογεῖσθαι be joined together, fit together

"The cornerstone unites the building 'because it is organically as well as structurally bound to it'. So to speak of the building being *joined together* refers not simply to the union of one stone with another, but also to the union of the whole structure with (and in) the cornerstone." O'Brian

αὐξάνω and αὐξέω spread, increase, reach full growth

Cf. 4:15-16. The building is still under construction.

ναός, οὐ μ temple, sanctuary, inner part of Jewish Temple

"According to Old Testament prophecy the temple at Jerusalem was to be the place where all nations at the end of time would come to worship and pray to the living God (Isa 66:18-20; cf. Isa 2:1-5; Mic 4:1-5). The temple imagery here is to be understood in fulfilment of these promises. Now through Christ Gentiles have been brought near to God, and along with Jews they have become a new temple, the place where God's presence dwells." O'Brian

ἐν κυρίῳ echoes ἐν ᾧ at the beginning of the verse and is a reference again to Christ. "The building functions only in relation to him." O'Brian

Ephesians 2:22

ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι.

συναικοδομεῶ build together

κατοικητήριον, οὐ μ house, home

"What a magnificent change has occurred in the readers' situation. In contrast to what they once were – separated from the Messiah, outside the covenant community, without God and without hope (vv. 11,12) – now they are being built into the dwelling place of God himself." O'Brian

Ephesians 3:1

Τούτου χάριν ἐγὼ Παῦλος ὁ δέσμιος τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν τῶν ἐθνῶν –

χαριν prep with gen for the sake of, because of

The *τουτο χαριν* looks back to all that Paul has said about the Gentiles becoming fellow heirs of the Kingdom.

δεσμιός, οὐ μ prisoner

ἔθνος, οὐς n nation, people; τα ἔ. Gentiles

Paul's move into intercessory prayer is here interrupted by a digression concerning the nature of his own commission and ministry before resuming in verse 14.

Ephesians 3:2

εἰ γε ἠκούσατε τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς·

γε enclitic particle adding emphasis to the word with which it is associated

Several commentators think the εἰ γε means 'seeing that' and that it does not imply any uncertainty. O'Brian says the phrase εἴ γε ἠκούσατε means 'surely you have heard.' Nevertheless, Simpson, Bruce and O'Brian think this phrase is an indication that Ephesians was originally a circular letter. If it had been intended only for his friends at Ephesus Paul would probably have written 'you know'.

οἰκονομία, ας f task, responsibility

The term is used of God's plan and its divine administration (cf. 1:10; 3:9) but also here of Paul's work. Col 1:25 sheds light on Paul's meaning. The sense there is 'I am a minister according to the plan of God, the execution of which has been conferred upon me in that which concerns you.'

δοθείσης Verb, aor pass ptc, f gen s δίδωμι

Ephesians 3:3

κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν ἐγνωρίσθη μοι τὸ μυστήριον, καθὼς προέγραψα ἐν ὀλίγῳ,

ἀποκαλύψις, εως f revelation

ἐγνωρίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s γνωρίζω
make known, disclose

Cf. Acts 22:6-21; Gal 1:12, 15-16.

μυστήριον, ου n secret, mystery (of something formerly unknown but now revealed)

Cf. 1:9-10; Rom 16:25.

προγράψω write beforehand
ὀλιγος, η, ον little, small

The reference is probably back to the summary statements in 1:9,10 and 2:11-22.

Ephesians 3:4

πρὸς ὃ δύνασθε ἀναγινώσκοντες νοῆσαι τὴν σύνεσίν μου ἐν τῷ μυστηρίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

ἀναγινώσκω read, read in public worship

Hort understands this reference to be broader than simply the reading of Paul's letter. He writes, "the recipients of the Epistle were to perceive St Paul's understanding in the mystery of Christ not simply by reading his exposition, but by keeping it in mind when they read the ancient prophecy, comparing the one with the other."

νοεω understand, perceive, discern
συνεσις, εως f understanding, insight

The 'mystery' is now defined as τῷ μυστηρίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ. It is in Christ that God's purposes are revealed – the content of the mystery is Christ.

Ephesians 3:5

ὁ ἕτερος γενεαῖς οὐκ ἐγνωρίσθη τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὡς νῦν ἀπεκαλύφθη τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ προφήταις ἐν πνεύματι,

ἕτερος, α, ον other, different

γενεα, ας f generation

Cf. Rom 16:25-27.

ἐγνωρίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s γνωρίζω
see v.3

This does not mean that the gospel is an innovation. It was witnessed to by the law and the prophets. Much of Paul's exposition of the gospel consisted of an exposition of the OT Scriptures. The gospel was even preached beforehand to Abraham (Gal 3:8).

ἀπεκαλύφθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

ἀποκαλύπτω reveal, disclose

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ A few MSS omit ἀποστόλοις (cf. Col 1:26). Some editors put a comma after ἁγίοις, but this is not a very natural reading. Holy is here probably used in its basic sense of separated. The phrase has been used by some to suggest that Paul could not have been the author of the letter – it reflects, they suppose, a later veneration of the apostles.

προφητης, ου m prophet

The prophets referred to here are NT prophets since they are mentioned after the apostles (cf. 2:20). The apostles "represent the authority of primary witness to the Gospel facts, while prophets represent the living guidance of the Spirit by which the facts were apprehended in ever fuller meaning and scope." Bruce

ἐν πνεύματι qualifies both apostles and prophets.

Ephesians 3:6

εἶναι τὰ ἔθνη συγκληρονόμα καὶ σύσσωμα καὶ συμμετοχα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου,

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, ους n see v.1

συγκληρονομος, ον heirs together, sharing together God's blessings

Cf. Rom 8:17. "Earlier in Ephesians the notion of 'inheritance' pointed to the certain hope of participating in the future glory, the enjoyment of which has already begun through the Spirit who is the guarantee of that future possession (cf. 1:14; 5:5)." O'Brian

συσσωμος, ον member of the same body

As part of his string of συν compounded adjectives, Paul seems to have coined this term to "express [this] revolutionary ... concept [of] the inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God on the same footing as Jews." Bruce

συμμετοχος, ον sharer, participant
ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised

Cf. 2:12 but also 1:13 which speaks of the 'promised Holy Spirit.' For a similar relationship between being heirs of the covenants (of promise) and possessing the Spirit, cf. Gal 3:14 and its extended exposition in 3:15-4:7.

εὐαγγέλιον, ον n good news, gospel

"Each of these marvellous blessings in which Gentiles participate is said to be *in Christ Jesus* and *through the gospel* (v.6). The former phrase qualifies all three nouns ('fellow-heirs', 'members together', and 'joint partakers'), not simply the last. It is not to be understood instrumentally as 'through Christ', rather, it signifies that Christ Jesus is the *sphere* in which this incorporation of the Gentiles occurs. It is in Christ, that is, Israel's Messiah, and in him alone, that Gentiles inherit the promises made to Abraham. Further, all this occurs through the instrumentality of the gospel. It declares the basis on which Gentiles, along with Jews, become sons and receive the promised Holy Spirit. That basis is Christ's death and resurrection, which are part of the apostolic announcement. As the gospel is proclaimed, Gentile men and women, who hear its message and appropriate it for themselves, are united with the Lord Jesus in his death and resurrection. Thus, the gospel not only declares what is God's gracious plan, announcing the content of the mystery of Christ; it is also the instrument by which God achieves his purpose of bringing Gentiles to faith and incorporating them into his Son. It is through the active proclamation of the gospel that God draws men and women to himself (cf. 2 Thess 2:14)." O'Brian

Ephesians 3:7

οὗ ἐγενήθην διάκονος κατὰ τὴν δωρεὰν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ –

ἐγενήθην Verb, aor midd dep indic, 1 s
γίνομαι

διάκονος, ον m & f servant, minister

δωρεα, ας f gift

δοθείσης see v.2

ἐνεργεια, ας f (supernatural) working,
power, activity

"It was not only in God's initial call but also in the subsequent enabling that he knows of the divine power operating mightily within him." O'Brian. Cf. 1 Cor 15:10. Paul is saying that everything achieved in his apostolic mission is "not his own doing, but the result of God's grace – God's choice of him, God's call to him, God's enabling power." Mitton

Ephesians 3:8

ἐμοὶ τῷ ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ πάντων ἁγίων ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις αὕτη – τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εὐαγγελίσασθαι τὸ ἀνεξιχνίαστον πλοῦτος τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

ἐλαχιστοτερος, α, ον less than the least

An ungrammatical comparative of ἐλαχιστος which is itself the superlative of μικρος. The term appears to have been coined by Paul.

ἅγιος, α, ον see v.5

This deprecating description of Paul conflicts with the view of some that this is not a genuine letter of Paul but a "panegyric on Paul and his interpretation of the Gospel." O'Brian says, "Using a very striking expression in which he neither indulges in hypocrisy nor grovels in self-deprecation, he indicates how deeply conscious he is of his own unworthiness and of Christ's overflowing grace to him." Cf. 1 Cor 15:9; 1 Tim 1:15.

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s διδομι

Paul's understanding of grace exalts the work and office given him while robbing him of any possibility of pride in himself.

ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἔθνος, ος n nation,
people; τα ἑ. Gentiles

εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the
good news

ἀνεξιχνίαστος, ον untraceable, i.e.

impossible of understanding by human
minds, unfathomable

πλοῦτος, ον m & n riches, wealth

Paul's proclamation is "about the wealth of divine grace and glory which Christ possesses in himself and which he lavishly gives to others." O'Brian. The adjective "suggests a treasure house of grace, vast beyond all conceiving, so that no matter how far we penetrate there are rooms and corridors opening out in endless vistas, far beyond our capacity of apprehension or of vision." Beare. Cf. Rom 11:33.

Ephesians 3:9

καὶ φωτίσαι πάντας τίς ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ ἀποκεκρυμμένου ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων ἐν τῷ θεῷ τῷ πάντα κτίσαντι,

φωτιζω give light to, bring to light,

Here meaning 'bring to light,' 'reveal' or 'illuminate' cf. 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Tim 1:10.

πάντας is omitted by \aleph^* A and in some Patristic citations. O'Brian writes, "The shorter reading ... is stating that through the apostles' ministry God's secret is revealed and shines in its own light. The majority text (which includes πάντας, 'all'), on the other hand, emphasises that the administration of the mystery is made plain to all (not simply Gentiles, as Barth suggests). The shorter reading may have been a scribal error, while the flow of the argument in chap. 3:1-13 is from 'the revealed secret itself to the many beneficiaries of God's grace'; so Barth... Cf. Lincoln ... who argues cogently for the inclusion of πάντας."

οικονομία, ας f see v.2

μυστήριον, ου n see v.3

"The content of what is enlightened is *the administration of this mystery*, that is, how God chose to accomplish his purpose." O'Brian

ἀποκεκρυμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n gen s ἀποκρυπτω hide, keep secret
αἰώνων Noun, gen pl αἰών, αἰώνας m age, world order, eternity
κτίσαντι Verb, aor act ptc, m dat s κτιζω create, make

"God has not changed; nor is he abandoning his first creation by forming a new creation in Christ. Salvation and the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ have always been his purpose (see on 1:9-10); his creation of heaven and earth was an important step in the fulfilment of that plan. And he who *created* all things in the beginning with this goal in mind will consummate his work of *re-creation* on the final day when he brings all things together in unity in his Son, the Lord Jesus (1:10)." O'Brian

Ephesians 3:10

ἵνα γνωρισθῆ νῦν ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐξουσίαις ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις διὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἡ πολυποικίλος σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ,

γνωρισθῆ see v.5

ἀρχη, ης f beginning, power

ἐξουσία, ας f authority, right, power

ἐπουρανιος, ου heavenly, celestial

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church

"The term here ... should probably be taken as the heavenly gathering that is assembled about Christ *and* as a local congregation of Christians, in which Jews and Gentiles are fellow-members of the body of Christ...

Through the church signifies that the very existence of this new multiracial community in which Jews and Gentiles have been brought together in unity in one body is the manifestation of God's richly diverse wisdom." O'Brian.

The Lamb's bride "is not only emblazoned as a signal trophy of divine counsel, but is discerned to be such by a galaxy of higher intelligences who mark the unfolding of her destiny."

πολυποικίλος, ου in varied forms

"The compound adjective meaning 'manifold, variegated, very many sided' was poetic in origin, referring to an intricately embroidered pattern of 'many-coloured cloaks' or the manifold hues of 'a garland of flowers.' It is used here in a figurative sense of the *richly diversified nature* of the divine wisdom... In our present context, this variegated wisdom has particular reference to God's richly diverse ways of working which led to a multiracial, multicultural community being united as fellow-members in the body of Christ" O'Brian

σοφία, ας f wisdom, insight, intelligence

Ephesians 3:11

κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων ἦν ἐποίησεν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν,

προθεσις, εως f purpose, plan, will

αἰώνων see v.9

What God planned before all ages he has now accomplished in Christ.

Ephesians 3:12

ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ προσαγωγήν ἐν πεποιθήσει διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ.

ἐν ᾧ The centrality of Christ is to the fore.

παρρησία, ας f openness, boldness, assurance

προσαγωγή, ης f freedom or right to enter

πεποιθησις, εως f confidence

"We have bold and confident access', or 'we have the boldness to enter confidently.'" Paul has gone out of his way to make this declaration of assurance as strong as possible for his readers. They need to know that this privileged and certain access to the Father is theirs." O'Brian

πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

Ephesians 3:13

διὸ αἰτοῦμαι μὴ ἐγκακεῖν ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσίν μου ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἥτις ἐστὶν δόξα ὑμῶν.

διὸ therefore, for this reason

αἰτεῶ ask, midd ask for oneself, request

διὸ αἰτοῦμαι μὴ ἐγκακεῖν could be either:

- i) I ask you not to lose heart, or;
- ii) I pray (God) that you may not lose heart, or;
- iii) I ask (God) that I may not lose heart.

The first or second of these make most sense in context.

ἐγκακεῶ become discouraged, tire of
θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering
ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅτι who, which
δοξα, ης f glory

His sufferings serve to bring glory to God, a glory in which believers have a share now, (cf. 1:18) and fully at the last day (cf. 2:7). On this link between Paul's sufferings and the blessings of the gospel flowing to others, cf. 2 Tim 2:10.

Ephesians 3:14-19

The prayer in vv 14-19 picks up some of the main themes of 1:15-19 and is one long sentence in the Greek.

Ephesians 3:14

Τούτου χάριν κάμπτω τὰ γόνατά μου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα,

χαριν see v.1

"With the opening words, 'for this reason' Paul takes up and completes the sentence begun in v.1 and leads into petitionary prayer." O'Brian

κάμπτω trans & intrans bend, bow (of the knee)

γόνυ, γονατος n knee

"Paul's language suggests that he may be echoing the words of Isaiah 45:23 (cf. Rom 14:11; Phil 2:10), where the bowing of the knee was a sign of homage to the universal King." O'Brian

πατερα later MSS read πατερα του κυριου ἡμων Ἰησου Χριστου, a gloss suggested by 1:3.

Ephesians 3:15

ἐξ ὧ πάντα πατριά ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομάζεται,

πατρια, ας f family, nation, people

γη, γης f earth

ὀνομάζω name, call; pass be known

This phrase is the cause of some difficulty.

Hodge thinks that the reference is to the church in heaven and on earth (so also NIV text), but this is hardly a natural sense for *παντα πατρια*. Beare is probably correct in stating, "the thought is not that God is the Father of all, but that he is the prototype of all fatherhood. His relation to his own children (and, we might add, firstly to his Son) is the pattern of all other social relationships." (This is the sense given in the NIV footnote.)

O'Brian thinks that the emphasis is upon God as creator of all things – in heaven as well as earth – and his authority over all. "His greatness and thus his sovereign power and authority in both heaven and earth is stressed. The readers, then, who fear the threat of hostile powers, would be further reassured that God is indeed able to fulfil the petitions addressed by the apostle on their behalf."

Ephesians 3:16

ἵνα δῶ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον,

δῶ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s διδωμι

κατα signifies not simply source, 'out of' but also scale, 'in accordance with'.

πλοῦτος, ου see v.8

δοξα, ης f glory

God's resources available to fulfil Paul's request are limitless.

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμις

κραταιωθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin κραταιωω
be strong, become strong

Notice again the Trinitarian nature of this prayer (cf. 2:18). The *Father* strengthens us inwardly *through his Spirit* and sends *Christ* his Son to dwell in our hearts (v.17).

ἔσω inside, within, inner

Ὁν τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον cf. Rom 7:22; 2 Cor 4:16. This is not a higher human faculty but the regenerate being of the Christian (so Beare), or the very centre of our being, "the seat of personal consciousness ... [and] of our moral being." Fee (so also O'Brian).

Ephesians 3:17

κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν ἐν ἀγάπῃ· ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ τεθεμελιωμένοι,

O'Brian argues that the infinitive does not express purpose here but that, "The language of the two clauses is parallel, and the experience of the Spirit's strengthening activity is the same as that of Christ's indwelling (cf. 1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 3:17; Rom 8:9,10; Gal 4:6)... To be empowered by the Spirit in the inner person means that Christ himself dwells in their hearts." (so also Westcott)

κατοικεω live, settle, inhabit

'heart' is equivalent to 'inner man.'

ἐν ἀγάπῃ can be taken with the preceding clause, though it would then leave 'rooted and grounded' without an object.

ἐρριζωμένοι Verb, perf pass dep ptc, m nom pl
ρίζομαι be firmly rooted
τεθεμελιωμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
θεμελιω found; establish firmly

The two perfect passive participles depict the notion of progress and resulting state. "Love is the soil in which believers are rooted and will grow, the foundation upon which they are built." O'Brian

O'Brian interprets the words 'you being rooted and established in love' "as expressing the contemplated result of the two previous infinitives, which in turn provides the condition for the next request. Through the strengthening of the inner person by God's Spirit and Christ's indwelling in their hearts, the readers are to be established in love so that they will comprehend the greatness of the love of Christ."

Ephesians 3:18

ἵνα ἐξιχύσητε καταλαβέσθαι σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις τί τὸ πλάτος καὶ μήκος καὶ ὕψος καὶ βάθος,

ἐξιχύσητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl ἐξιχυω
be fully able, be empowered
καταλαβέσθαι Verb, 2nd aor midd infin
καταλαμβάνω obtain; midd. realize,
understand

Paul does not restrict knowledge to an inner circle of initiates but prays that it may be the possession of all.

πλάτος, οὗς n breadth, width
μήκος, οὗς n length
ὑψος, οὗς n height, heaven, high position
βάθος, οὗς n depth, greatness

Some try to find various meanings for the 'four dimensions' mentioned here, but Beare says that Paul (or 'the author' in Beare's view) "is simply trying to express with rhetorical fulness the magnitude of the vision which opens before Christian faith as it seeks to comprehend the ways of God."

These four dimensions are given no object and are variously thought to refer to:

- i) The mighty power of God, e.g. Arnold;
- ii) The mystery of salvation, e.g. Schnackenburg;
- iii) The manifold wisdom of God (cf. Job 11:8-9), e.g. Bruce;
- iv) The matchless love of Christ, e.g. Calvin, Caird, Mitton, Best, Lincoln and O'Brian.

Ephesians 3:19

γινῶναί τε τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγάπην τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα πληρωθῆτε εἰς πᾶν τὸ πλῆρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ.

"This petition is remarkable, for although the apostle has said much in chapters 1-3 about his readers being in Christ, he assumes that they do not adequately appreciate Christ's love. Also God's almighty power is needed to grasp its dimensions; hence he prays for *power* to enable them to understand how immense it is. This is not a petition that they might love Christ more, however important that might be; rather that they might understand Christ's love for them. Further, their grasping this cannot be simply a mental exercise. Clearly, it is personal knowledge, and, although it undoubtedly includes insight into the significance of God's love in the plan of redemption, it cannot be reduced simply to intellectual reflection. Paul wants them to be empowered so as to grasp the dimensions of that love in their own experience." O'Brian

γινῶναί Verb, 2 aor act infin γινωσκω
τε enclitic particle and, and so
ὑπερβαλλω surpass
γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

Simpson considers this call to know the unknowable to be a prayer that they may *begin* to understand the love which in all its depths passes all comprehension – "it is so great that one can never know it fully." O'Brian

πληρωθῆτε Verb, aor pass subj, 2 pl πληρωω
fill, make full

πλῆρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness

Cf. 4:13 and also 1:23 for the tension between the already and not yet.

Ephesians 3:20-21

"Doxologies such as this are short, spontaneous ascriptions of praise to God which frequently appear as concluding formulas to prayers, hymnic expressions, and sections in Paul's letters. Their basic structure is threefold: first, the person to whom praise is ascribed is mentioned (e.g., 'to him who is able to do immeasurably more ...' 3:20). Then follows the word of praise, usually 'glory' (v.21, or an equivalent), and, finally, the doxology concludes with a temporal description, normally an eternity formula ('for ever and ever', v.21). In most cases the doxology is followed by 'Amen'." O'Brian

Ephesians 3:20

Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑπὲρ πάντα ποιῆσαι ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ὧν αἰτούμεθα ἢ νοοῦμεν κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἡμῖν,

"Armitage Robinson writes of this [the preceding] petition: 'No prayer that has ever been framed has uttered a bolder request'. Has the apostle, then, 'gone over the top'? No, for it is impossible to ask for too much since the Father's giving exceeds their capacity for asking or even imagining." O'Brian

Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ 'to the one who is powerful'

ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιῶ
ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ i) adv. with all earnestness, exceedingly; ii) prep. with gen. far beyond, so much more than

This comparison of a rare compound adverb is best rendered 'infinitely more than'. "There is no limit to what God can do." O'Brian

αἰτέω ask; midd ask for oneself, request ἢ or

νοεῶ understand, consider, imagine ἐνεργεῶ work, be at work (in)

ἐνεργουμένην is probably best understood as middle voice, 'the power that works', rather than passive 'the power that is worked'

Ephesians 3:21

αὐτῷ ἢ δόξα ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

δοξα, ης f glory

"To give God glory is not to add something to him; rather, it is an active acknowledgement or extolling of who he is or what he has already done (Ps 29:2; 96:8)." O'Brian

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

Cf. John 17:1-4. "God's glory *in the church* cannot be separated from his glory *in Christ Jesus*." O'Brian

γενεα, ας f generation

αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order, eternity

"The 'Amen' makes it clear that the ascription of praise is not simply a matter of the lips, but is the spontaneous response of the whole congregation." O'Brian

Ephesians 4-6

"The readers have been reminded of the high destiny to which God has called them, and now they are shown that the hope of this calling requires them to live lives in keeping with it. 'Behaviour is thus seen in Ephesians as both response to what God has done in Christ, and as proper accompaniment to the praise of God, the two themes present in chapters 1-3' (Best)." O'Brian

4:1 is the 'topic sentence' for the rest of the epistle. Vv 2-6 form a call to unity on the basis of what they are – one people in Christ.

Verses 7-16 then introduce the note of diversity while emphasising that the diverse gifts and ministries are "to build the whole body so as to enable it to attain maturity and unity (v.13), a unity in which there is an integral role for the individual (v.16)." O'Brian

Ephesians 4:1

Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ ὁ δεσμιος ἐν κυρίῳ ἀξίως περιπατῆσαι τῆς κλήσεως ἧς ἐκλήθητε, παρακαλεῶ exhort, encourage, urge

Characteristically introduces the exhortatory section of Paul's letters, cf. 1 Thess 4:1; Romans 12:1.

δεσμιος, ου m prisoner

ἀξίως adv (from ἀξιος) worthily περιπατεῶ walk, walk about, live

Cf. 2:10. "God's gracious calling not only bestows great privileges on them; it also carries with it solemn responsibilities. His election and predestination of them for adoption into his family (1:4,5), together with his preparing good works beforehand for them to walk in (2:10), do not remove the responsibility of their heeding the apostolic injunction. They are expected to respond to the divine initiatives, and God's calling establishes the norm or criterion to which their conduct should conform." O'Brian

κλησις, εως f call, calling

The primary effect of the resident power of God is the altered life of the Christian.

Ephesians 4:2

μετὰ πάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης καὶ πραΰτητος,
μετὰ μακροθυμίας, ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων ἐν
ἀγάπῃ,

"Significantly, relationships within the body of Christ, especially conduct characterised by harmony, are the first issue Paul addresses as an essential element of their living consistently with this calling." O'Brian. The quality of the Christian life is to be seen primarily in the life of Christians *together*.

ταπεινοφροσυνη, ης f humility

"'Humility, lowliness', as is well known, occurred in Greek literature generally only on a few occasions, and then usually in the derogatory sense of servility, weakness, or a shameful lowliness. In the Old Testament, however, the adjective 'lowly or humble' and its cognates occur more than 250 times, often in contexts which speak of the Lord bringing down the proud and the arrogant, and exalting the lowly or poor whose trust is in him. In the New Testament the noun signifies the 'lowliness' with which one serves the Lord as Paul did when his ministry was conducted among the Ephesians 'with great humility' (Acts 20:19), or is submissive to other Christians (Phil 2:3; Col 3:12; 1 Pet 5:5). The pattern or model is Jesus, who invited people to come to him as the one who was 'meek and lowly in heart' (Matt 11:29)." O'Brian

πραυτης, ητος f gentleness, humility

Slow to insist on own rights. "'Gentleness' or 'meekness', in its adjectival form, designated the poor and oppressed in the Old Testament, who in their deep need humility sought help from the Lord... It is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23), standing in lists of graces as a concrete expression of Christian love (cf. 1 Tim 6:11; 1 Pet 3:4). This gentleness is not to be confused with weakness (as contemporary Graeco-Roman thought regarded it), but has to do with consideration for others and a willingness to waive one's own rights." O'Brian

μακροθυμια, ας f longsuffering, patience

Used especially of God's patience with his people, Ex 34:6.

ἀνεχομαι endure, be patient with

The series of participles function as imperatives.

ἀλλήλων, οις, ους reciprocal pronoun one another

For comment on the love that is patient, forbearing with others, see 1 Cor 13.

Ephesians 4:3

σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ
πνεύματος ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης·

σπουδαζω do one's best, work hard at, be
eager

Expresses a sense of urgency, 'do it now'.

τηρεω keep, maintain

ἐνοτης, ητος f unity

Christian unity is created by the Spirit of God who calls us into fellowship with Christ and with each other. Nevertheless, visible maintenance of this unity requires active and diligent work on our part to ensure that the spiritual reality is reflected in the practicalities of day-to-day relationships.

συνδεσμος, ου m that which binds
together, bond, chain, ligament

ειρηνη, ης f peace

It is peace which binds Christians together even as it is strife which tears them apart.

Ephesians 4:4-6

Verses 4-6 consist of a series of seven acclamations in which the readers are reminded of the fundamental unities on which the Christian faith and life are based.

Ephesians 4:4

ἐν σῶμα καὶ ἐν πνεῦμα, καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν
μῇ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν·

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

"This *body* is the church, Christ's body (1:23), which comprises Jewish and Gentile believers alike. It is the heavenly gathering assembled around Christ, in which believers now participate. That body of Christ is, by definition, *one*. Each congregation is a local manifestation of this heavenly entity, not a part of it. So although the apostle is writing about the *one body* which is in heaven, all that he says applies also to each local congregation, for it is here that the unity of the body is visible... Believers are members of the body by virtue of the work of the Holy Spirit. And as there is only one body, so also there is only one Spirit." O'Brian

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope

"When God calls believers into a relationship with himself he calls them to a particular hope (Eph 1:18) which is sure and certain since it rests on his faithfulness – previously the Gentile readers had been separated from Christ and had no real hope (Eph 2:12). It is sometimes called 'the hope of the gospel' (Col 1:23) because it is held out in the saving message of the gospel, and 'the hope of glory' (1:27; Rom 5:2), the expectation of appearing with Christ in glory when he is revealed (Col 3:4) and of sharing in his glory." O'Brian.

κλησις, εως see v.1

Ephesians 4:5

εἰς κύριος, μία πίστις, ἐν βάπτισμα·

"This may have been a traditional baptismal affirmation, given the mention of baptism as the third member, and because faith in Jesus Christ as the one Lord was usually the focus of baptismal confession (e.g., Acts 2:34-39; 19:5). However, one should not assume that such a confession was confined to this occasion." O'Brian

'One Lord' is a remarkable affirmation given that 'Lord' is the substitute for Yahweh in the Old Testament and the title of Jesus Christ in the New.

πιστις, εως f faith, belief, the Christian faith

Commentators differ as to whether faith here is objective (the Christian faith), or subjective (trust in Christ). O'Brian thinks that it is probably objective, as later in this chapter (v.18, cf Jude 3).

"In baptism lies the evidence that all sorts of people (cf. Gal 3:28), without any discrimination, share in the grace of Christ." Ridderbos. "There is only *one baptism* because there is only one Lord Jesus Christ in whom believers are united, one body into which all Christians are incorporated." O'Brian.

Ephesians 4:6

εἰς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων, ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν.

Cf. 1 Cor 8:6, a Christian version of the Shema of Deut 6:8.

πατηρ, πατρος m father

Is the 'all' masculine, meaning all people, or neuter meaning all things? O'Brian says that "a cosmic understanding of 'all' makes good sense in this context... On this interpretation Paul is affirming that God is supremely transcendent 'over everything' and that his immanence is all-pervasive: he works 'through all and in all'. If this latter understanding is correct, then God's universal sovereignty and presence are set forth as the climactic ground for the unity of the Spirit that believers are to maintain. His universal rule is being exercised to fulfil his ultimate purpose of unifying all things in Christ. The unity of the church is the means by which the manifold wisdom of God is being displayed to the universe. The church is the eschatological outpost, the pilot project of God's purposes, and his people are the expression of this unity that displays to the universe his final goal." O'Brian

Ephesians 4:7

Ἐνὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

The focus now shifts to diversity, a diversity which enriches the unity.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

"Christ sovereignly distributes his gifts to all the members of his body. The recipients are not limited to some special group, such as the ministers of v.11. *Each one of us* is to be understood comprehensively since it includes Paul and all his readers (it is thus the counterpart to 1 Cor 12:7,11). None misses out on Christ's bounty." O'Brian

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δίδωμι

"Grace is viewed in terms of its outworking in a variety of ways in the lives of individuals, and thus comes to signify much the same as *charisma* does in the parallel passages in Paul (1 Cor 12:4; Rom 12:6). Perhaps the use of *charis* here, rather than *charisma*, is to stress the source of divine grace in providing the gifts." O'Brian. Unity does mean uniformity

μετρον, ου n measure, degree, quantity
δωρεα, ας f gift

Ephesians 4:8

διὸ λέγει· Ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, διὸ therefore, for this reason

The quotation is from Ps 68:18. "In its original context Psalm 68 is a call to God to come and rescue his people (vv. 1-3). He is to be praised (vv. 4-6) for his past acts of deliverance and provision for his people. After the exodus he went in triumph before them (v. 7), so that Mount Sinai shook (v.8) and kings were scattered (vv. 11-14). The Lord desired Mount Zion as his dwelling (v.16), so he came from Sinai to his holy place (v.17), and ascended the high mount leading captives in his train. The 'you' in v.18 refers to God's ascent of Zion, probably in the person of the victorious king (or perhaps in reference to the establishment of the ark, which symbolised the invisible presence of God in Israel, on Zion). He led his captives in triumphal procession as they made their way up the temple mount.

"Paul applies this picture to Christ's ascension, not because there was some vague analogy between the two events, but because he saw in Jesus' exultation a further fulfilment of this triumph of God. The original wording of the Psalm, which addresses the Lord directly after his triumphant ascent of Mount Zion, 'when you ascended on high,' is understood of Christ's exaltation, an event of momentous theological significance, as Ephesians 1:20-22 makes plain." O'Brian

ἀναβαινω go up, come up, ascend
 ὕψος, οὐς n height, heaven, high position
 αἰχμαλωτίζω make captive, take prisoner
 αἰχμαλωσία, ας f captivity; group of captives

Cf. Col 2:15 & 2 Cor 2:14

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι
 δομα, τος n gift

The Hebrew and LXX text of Psalm 68 read '[you] *received* gifts' but both the Syriac Peshitta and a paraphrase of Psalm 68 in the Aramaic Targum read 'you have *given* gifts.' "Accordingly, it has been claimed that Paul has taken over the textual tradition as reflected in the Targum ('you gave'), and employed a common technique of early Jewish hermeneutics, known as *midrash pesher*, in which his exposition of the text in the light of its fulfilment in Christ is integrated into the actual quotation. This procedure, which appears elsewhere in the New Testament's use of the Old, would account for the differences present in Ephesians 4:8." O'Brian. The Targum applies the Psalm to Moses' ascent of Mount Sinai to receive the law from God and give it to the people. Accordingly Stott writes, "As Moses received the law and gave it to Israel, so Christ received the Spirit and gave him to his people in order to write God's law in their hearts and through the pastors he appointed (v.11) to teach them the truth."

Ephesians 4:9

τὸ δὲ Ἀνάβη τί ἐστὶν εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς;

ἀνάβη Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀναβαινω see v.8

καταβαινω come or go down, descend
 κατώτερος, α, ον lower
 μέρος, οὐς n part, piece
 γη, γῆς f earth

τα κατώτερα [μερη] τῆς γῆς Could be "lower parts, namely the earth." Eadie considers many possible interpretations of this phrase, including a reference to Christ's descent into hell, and concludes "with the majority of expositors" that the words simply refer to the earth. O'Brian suggests it should be understood to mean 'the earth below'. Quoting Calvin he says, "Paul's contrast is 'not between one part of the earth and another, but between the whole earth and heaven'." The phrase refers to Christ's incarnation. Hendriksen views this phrase as a metaphor for Christ's deep humiliation – a deliberate contrast with his ascent 'higher than the heavens'.

Ephesians 4:10

ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα.

ἀναβαινω see v.8

ὑπερανῶ prep with gen far above; above, over

He has ascended to the highest place, cf. 1:20-21.

πληρωω fill, make full, fulfill

Hendriksen surveys the various views of what is meant by Christ 'filling all things' and concludes that he fills the universe with the blessings or gifts which have been gained as a result of his atoning work. O'Brian thinks the phrase is best understood of his mighty rule over all things – filling is used of his sovereign rule, cf. Jer 23:24.

Ephesians 4:11

καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους,

"The building of the body is inextricably linked with the intention of filling the universe with his rule." O'Brian

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι

The various 'offices' or 'officers' in the church are all gifts from Christ. For similar lists, cf. Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30; 1 Peter 4:10-11. The gifts here are people.

προφήτης, ου m prophet

Cf. 2:20; 3:5.

εὐαγγελιστής, ου m one who preaches the good news, evangelist

Cf. Acts 21:8; 2 Tim 4:5. The term probably "covers a range of activities from primary evangelism and planting of churches to the ongoing building of Christians and the establishment of settled congregations (cf. Rom 1:11-15)." O'Brian

ποιμην, ενος m shepherd

"Leaders in the church are exhorted to be 'shepherds of God's flock' (1 Pet 5:2; Acts 20:28) who pattern their pastoral ministry after Christ's example." O'Brian

διδασκαλος, ου m teacher

Opinion is divided as to whether 'pastors and teachers' refers to two groups or to one. O'Brian writes, "The *pastors* and *teachers* are linked here by a single definite article in the Greek, which suggests a close association of functions between two kinds of ministers who operate within the one congregation (cf. 2:20). Although it has often been held that the two groups are identical (i.e. 'pastors who teach'), it is more likely that the terms describe overlapping functions (cf. 1 Cor 12:28-29 and Gal 6:6, where 'teachers' are a distinct group). All pastors teach (since teaching is an essential part of pastoral ministry), but not all teachers are also pastors. The latter exercise their leadership role by feeding God's flock with his word." O'Brian

Teaching is exposition and application of Scripture (Acts 15:35; 18:11,25; Rom 2:20,21; Col 3:16; Heb 5:12) or an explanation and reiteration of apostolic instructions (1 Cor 4:17; Rom 16:7; 2 Thess 2:15; 2 Tim 2:2; 3:10).

Ephesians 4:12

πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

καταρτισμος, ου m training, equipping
διακονια, ας f ministry, service
οικοδομη, ης f upbuilding, encouragement
σωμα, τος n body

The purpose of the particular offices or tasks mentioned above is to enable the whole church to be active in ministry which results in the church being built up, so O'Brian (though Lincoln and other commentators prefer to understand all three phrases as co-ordinate and referring to the work of those offices listed above – as per AV, RSV).

Ephesians 4:13

μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

μεχρι and μεχρις until
καταστήσωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl
καταταω come, arrive, reach, attain

"The verb employed here is used figuratively and means to 'attain or arrive at a particular state', with the focus on the end point. Significantly, Christian growth or progress does not occur in isolation, for Paul's language here envisages God's people *collectively* (*we all*) as *en route* to this vital destination." O'Brian

ἐνοτης, ητος f unity
πιστις, εως f faith, trust, the Christian faith

"The eschatological tension is evident in the first element – the unity of the *faith*. This *faith* has already been given (v.5), yet its oneness is still to be fully appreciated... It is best understood here in terms of its objective content rather than readers' activity of believing. The point being made, then, is that God's people are moving towards the goal of appropriating all that is included in the one *faith*." O'Brian

ἐπιγνωσις, εως f knowledge
ἄνδρα Noun, acc s ἄνηρ, ἄνδρος m man

εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον 'to mature manhood'. "This description to which all believers are headed is understood as a corporate entity: it is not described in individual terms, but refers to the totality of believers as the body of Christ (cf. v.12), in an expression that is akin to 'the one new man' of 2:15. The phrase 'mature man' is somewhat unusual since the term for an adult male or full-grown man is used, rather than the generic word for man or human. The adjective has the sense of 'mature' (cf. 1 Cor 2:6; 14:20; Heb 5:14) rather than 'perfect', and focusses on the mature adult person in contrast with the infants of v.14 who are immature and unstable, like a storm-tossed boat blown in all directions by the winds of false teaching." O'Brian. The picture is of the church as the body of Christ growing up to manhood – transcending childishness (v.14f)

τέλειος, α, ον complete, perfect, mature
 μετρον, ου n measure, degree
 ἡλικια, ας f age, years; stature, maturity
 πληρωμα, τος n fullness

"The maturity of this growth is measured by nothing less than Christ's full stature. The glorified Christ provides the standard at which his people are to aim: the corporate Christ cannot be content to fall short of the perfection of the personal Christ' (Bruce)." O'Brian

Ephesians 4:14

ἵνα μηκέτι ὄμεν νήπιοι, κλυδωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν πανουργίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδεῖαν τῆς πλάνης,

μηκετι no longer
 ὄμεν Verb, pres subj, 1 pl εἶμι
 νηπιος, α, ον baby, infant, child

"The contrast between 'the mature person' of v.13 and the 'children' here is pointed. Not only do the latter's ignorance and instability stand over against the knowledge of the *mature* adult (cf. 1 Cor 2:6; 3:1; Heb 5:13,14), but also the use of the plural 'children' (with its implications of individualism) stands in contrast to the *one* 'mature person' who is a corporate unity." O'Brian

κλυδωνιζομαι be tossed by the sea
 περιφερω carry about
 ἀνεμος, ου m wind

"Like small rudderless boats they are *tossed back and forth by the waves* and driven this way and that by the prevailing wind." O'Brian

διδασκαλια, ας f teaching; act of teaching

"Various religious philosophies which threatened to undermine or dilute the apostolic gospel." O'Brian

κυβεια, ας f trickery, cunning

πανουργια, ας f deceit, craftiness

Means, literally, a 'readiness to do anything', "and here signifies the malicious deception by which the false teachers seek to lead the unstable astray." O'Brian

μεθοδεια, ας f trickery; pl tricks

"Denotes a 'crafty scheming with the intent to deceive' that describes the intrigues of the devil (Eph 6:11). Satan's machinations have 'method'; his aim is to *mislead* the immature who are not grounded on apostolic doctrine." O'Brian

πλανη, ης f error, deceit, deception

Ephesians 4:15

ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ, Χριστός,

ἀληθευω speak the truth, be honest

"*Speaking the truth in love* lays out a twofold contrast with the false teachers: the latter were presenting *false* doctrine in a *deceptive* manner, but over against this God's people are to grow through proclaiming the *truth* in *love*... Accordingly, the apostle is not exhorting his readers to truthfulness in general or speaking honestly with one another, however appropriate or important this may be. Rather, he wants all of them to be members of a 'confessing' church, with the content of their testimony to be 'the word of truth', the gospel of their salvation (1:13)... *In love* describes the sphere of the Christian life and spells out the manner in which the ministry of all is to occur. Its juxtaposition with truth is no accident. The claims of the two should not be held in tension. The truth as proclaimed should not be dissociated from love or promoted at the expense of love, while a life of love should embody the truth of the gospel." O'Brian

αὐξήσωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 s αὐξανω
 grow, reach full growth

κεφαλη, ης f head

Ephesians 4:16

ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβασόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους τὴν αὐξῆσιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ.

"Christ is not only the goal of the body's growth (v.15); as the head who rules over the body he is the ultimate source (*from him*) of its growth, for he supplies all that is necessary for its well-being, including its unity, nourishment and progress." O'Brian.

σωμα, τος n body

"Paul's focus is on the growth of the body as a whole, not on the need for individuals to become mature in Christ, however necessary this may be." O'Brian

συναρμολογεομαι be joined together, fit together

Cf. 2:21.

συμβιβάζω bring together, hold together

"The two verbs are virtually synonymous and indicate that there is an ongoing, unified growth to the body. It is 'not shapeless', but is 'ordered and united, ... fitly framed and knit together' (Best)." O'Brian

ἀφῆ, ἡς f ligament

Lincoln thinks "what is being highlighted is the role of the ministers in the whole body ruled and nourished by Christ and that, just as in v.11 the giving of Christ was embodied in particular persons, so ... [in this phrase of] v.16 the growth from Christ is mediated by particular persons." O'Brian follows this line but also emphasises that "the importance of each members' active contribution to the growth of the whole body is asserted in the words *as each part does its work*, which recall the language of v.7... In the light of God's dynamic enabling through Christ believers should eagerly exercise their ministry for the good of the whole. The presence of gifted persons within the body makes us dependent on one another, and as every Christian fully utilises his or her gifts for the growth of the body, divine fulness will be experienced." "Just as the human body, when properly supported and held together, experiences natural growth, so also the church, when each of its members supports and maintains loving contact with the others and above all with Christ, will, under the sustaining care of God (or of *Christ...*) proceed from grace to grace and from glory to glory." Hendriksen.

ἐπιχορηγία, ας f supply, support, help
ἐνεργεια, ας f working, power, activity
μετρον, ου n see v.7

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one
ἐκαστος, η, ον each, every
μερος, ους n see v.9

ἑνος ἐκαστου μερους each and every member

αὐξησις, εως f growth

σωμα, τος n body

οικοδομη, ης f see v.11

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

"Love ... becomes the criterion for the assessment of the church's true growth. Even the fullest demonstration of gifts has no spiritual value if love is lacking (cf. 1 Cor 13)." O'Brian.

Ephesians 4:17ff.

"Ephesians 4:1-16 has set the stage for the exhortatory material that follows in 4:17-6:20, and serves as the introductory framework for the rest of the paranesis. What follows consists of a series of paragraphs which spell out in detail how local congregations and Christian households should heed the exhortation of 4:1-3." O'Brian

Ephesians 4:17

Τοῦτο οὖν λέγω καὶ μαρτύρομαι ἐν κυρίῳ, μηκέτι ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καθὼς καὶ τὰ ἔθνη περιπατεῖ ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν,

μαρτυρεω act and midd bear witness

μαρτυρομαι ἐν κυρίῳ He exhorts them with the authority of the Lord Jesus.

μηκετι no longer

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, ους n
nation, people; τα ἐ. Gentiles

ματαιοτης, ητος f worthlessness, futility

Cf. LXX Eccles 1:2,14; 2:1,11,15,17 etc.

νοους, νοος, νοι, νουν m mind, thought,
reason, purpose, understanding

Cf. Rom 1:18-32.

"Just as there is a typical Christian life, so there is a typical pagan life. When each life is true to its own principles, the one is fundamentally opposed to the other." Stott

Ephesians 4:18

ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντες, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ θεοῦ, διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν τὴν οὖσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς, διὰ τὴν πάρωσιν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν,

Stott says that vv 18 & 19 depict the "downward path of evil".

ἐσκοτωμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
σκοτιζομαι be or become darkened
διανοια mind, thought, understanding,
intentions

Cf. Romans 1:21.

ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι Verb, perf pass dep ptc, m
nom pl ἀπαλλοτριομαι be a stranger
to, have no connection with

Alienated, cf. 2:12.

ζωη, ης f life

ἄγνοια, ας f ignorance, unawareness

"It is noteworthy that the apostle goes out of his way to emphasise the perceptive and mental dimension in the human estrangement from God. The Gentiles' mind-set has been drastically affected (v.17b), their thinking has become darkened so that they are blind to the truth, and their alienation from God is *because of the ignorance within them*." O'Brian

πωρωσις, εως f stubbornness, lack of feeling

Ephesians 4:19

οἵτινες ἀπηληγότες ἑαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν τῇ ἀσελγείᾳ εἰς ἐργασίαν ἀκαθαρσίας πάσης ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ.

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἡτις, ὁ τι who, which

ἀπηληγότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl ἀπαλγω lose all feeling, become insensitive

"A vivid classical term which literally could refer to skin that had become callous and no longer felt pain. Here it means to 'lose the capacity to feel shame or embarrassment', while the perfect tense describes a state of affairs that led to (or else accompanied) the loss of all self-control. Because of their lack of moral feeling and discernment there were no restraints to their plunging into all kinds of degrading activities." O'Brian

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself
παραδιδωμι hand or give over, commit
ἀσελγεια, ας f sensuality, vice

Cf. Gal 5:19. Includes the thought of throwing off every restraint.

ἐργασια, ας f gain, profit, business
ἀκαθαρσια, ας f impurity, immorality, uncleanness

"This term, which has a wide range of meanings and encompasses riotous and excessive living, can refer to unrestrained sexual behaviour. Although the latter may be particularly in view, the reference here cannot be restricted to this, since the text speaks of 'every kind of impurity.'" O'Brian

πλεονεξια, ας f greed, covetousness

"Although it is possible to understand 'greed' as a third vice, alongside debauchery and impurity, the prepositional expression 'with covetousness' suggests that the indecent conduct already described was practiced *with a continual lust for more*. The pagan way of life was characterised by an insatiable desire to participate in more and more forms of immorality. 'Ultimately, it becomes a vicious circle because new perversions must be sought to replace the old' (Patzia)." O'Brian

Ephesians 4:20

ὁμοίως δὲ οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν,

"over against the heathen hardness, darkness and recklessness, Paul sets the whole process of Christian education." Stott continues by pointing out that:

- i) Christ is the substance of Christian teaching – just as evangelists 'preach Christ' so their hearers are to learn Christ;
- ii) Christ is also the teacher – 'you heard him';
- iii) Christ is also the context or classroom for instruction, 'taught in him'.

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. thus, in this way
ἐμάθετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl μανθανω learn, find out

"The formulation, 'You did not *learn* Christ that way', is without parallel. The phrase 'to learn a person' appears nowhere else in the Greek Bible, and to date it has not been traced in any pre-biblical Greek document... Christ himself is the content of the teaching which the readers learned." O'Brian

Ephesians 4:21

εἰ γε αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε, καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ,

γε enclitic particle adding emphasis to the word with which it is associated

NIV 'surely'

"Although the first expression has been rendered 'you heard him' and taken to mean that Christ had instructed the readers through the voice of their Christian teachers, the Greek construction suggests that he was the one about whom they heard." O'Brian.

διδασκω teach

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality; ἐν ἄ. truly

"Just as heathen darkness leads to reckless hardness, the truth in Christ sets Christians free and leads to righteousness. It is the truth about the new creation, the new life which is in him (vv22-24)." Stott

Ephesians 4:22

ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν φθειρόμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης,

"The infinitive, denoting the substance of what they had been taught, should not be rendered as a formal imperative." Eadie. "It seems best to treat them [the three infinitives] as expegetic and therefore as spelling out three fundamental aspects of the gospel tradition which had been passed on to them." O'Brian – so NIV

ἀποθέσθαι Verb, 2 aor midd infin ἀποτιθημι
throw off, be done with, take off
(clothes)

Cf. Gal 3:27.

πρωτερος, α, ον adj former, earlier, past
ἀναστροφή, ης f manner of life, conduct
παλαιος, α, ον old, former

"The 'old person' here, as in Romans 6:6 and Colossians 3:9, designates the whole personality of a person when he is ruled by sin." O'Brian

φθειρω corrupt, ruin, destroy

"The verb 'corrupt', which in the active signifies to 'ruin or destroy something', is here used in the passive to refer to the ongoing moral corruption of the 'old person', a process of decay and ruin that finally ends in death (cf. Rom 8:21; Gal 6:8)." O'Brian

ἐπιθυμία, ας f desire, longing, lust,
passion
ἀπατη, ης f deception

Ephesians 4:23

ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν,
ἀνανεοῦσθαι Verb, pres pass infin ἀνανεωω
renew

"This verb is a present infinitive, in distinction to those of verses 22 & 24 which are aorists, it indicates that, in addition to the decisive rejection of the old and the assumption of the new, implicit in conversion, a daily – indeed continuous – inward renewal of our old outlook is involved in being a Christian." Stott. Cf. Rom 12:2.

νοῦς, νοος, νοι, νουν m see v.17

τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς another expression signifying one's inmost being.

Ephesians 4:24

καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας.

ἐνδύσασθαι Verb, aor midd infin ἐνδυω
dress, clothe; midd put on, wear

"This third infinitive, *to put on*, like the previous two, has an implied imperative force, not in the sense that they were to continue putting on the new man, but that they should conduct their lives in the light of the mighty change God had effected." O'Brian

καινος, η, ον new

Cf. 2:15

κτισθέντα Verb, aor pass ptc, m acc s κτιζω
create, make

"As the old person is under the rule of this present evil age, so the new person is part of the new creation and the life of the age to come." O'Brian

κατὰ θεὸν Created after this pattern – to be like God. The qualities that follow are therefore characteristic of God himself.

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness
ὁσιότητι Noun, dat s ὁσιότης, ητος f
holiness

ἀληθεια, ας f see v.21

The truth stands over against false teaching and all forms of trickery.

Ephesians 4:25 ff.

O'Brian argues that 4:25-5:2 is one unit of paranesis containing a series of exhortatory sentences providing rules for the conduct of daily life. Stott says that when prisoners are released from custody they throw off their prison clothes and must also abandon their former conduct. "So also with the Christian. Since by a new creation we have put off the old humanity and put on the new, we must also put away the old standards and adopt new ones. Our new role will mean new clothing, our new life a new ethical lifestyle."

Ephesians 4:25

Διὸ ἀποθέμενοι τὸ ψεῦδος λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη.

διὸ therefore, for this reason

ἀποθέμενοι Verb, 2 aor midd ptc, m nom pl
ἀποτιθημι see v.22

"There are conscious links with the preceding paragraph: the verb 'put off' has already been used in v.22 with reference to laying aside the old person, while the key notion of 'truth' is picked up from the concluding phrase of v.24 (cf. vv. 15,21). The readers had been taught to put aside the 'old person' which was being corrupted by deceitful desires (v.22). Let them now 'put off' all falsehood, which characterised their old manner of life with its harmful and deceitful ways." O'Brian

ψεῦδος, ος n lie, untruth

λαλεω speak, talk

ἀληθεια, ας f see v.24

"They have put on 'the new person' which has been created in God's likeness. Accordingly, *the truth*, which comes from God himself (v.24) and is found in Jesus (v.21), should be the distinguishing mark of their speech." O'Brian

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

πλησιον i) prep with gen near; ii) ὁ π.
neighbour, fellow man.

Cf. Zech 8:16. Picking up themes from the chapter regarding the community of God's people and the character of God's new city. "What is predicated of the eschatological future of God's people in terms of new Jerusalem language in the Old Testament passage is picked up by Paul in relation to the 'new person', God's new community in Christ, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. The salvation-historical and typological connections between the two communities, and thus the accompanying practical exhortations, are patent." O'Brian

ἄλληλων, οἰς, οὐς reciprocal pronoun one another
μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μέρος, οὐς n member, bodily part

Ephesians 4:26

ὀργίζεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε· ὁ ἥλιος μὴ ἐπιδυέτω ἐπὶ παροργισμῶ ὑμῶν,
ὀργίζομαι be furious, be angry
ἁμαρτανῶ sin, commit sin

Cf. Ps. 4:4. The force is 'if you are angry do not sin' or 'in your anger do not sin'. Cf. Jas 1:19-20.

ἥλιος, οὐ m the sun
ἐπιδυῶ set (of the sun)
παροργισμός, οὐ m anger

A proverbial saying. Paul places this constraint on anger to prevent it degenerating into sin.

Ephesians 4:27

μηδὲ δίδοτε τόπον τῷ διαβόλῳ.
μηδε negative particle nor, and not
τοπος, οὐ m place, opportunity
διαβολος, οὐ m the devil

'Do not give the devil a chance to exert his influence.' Cf. Rom 19:19.

Verses 26-27 provide an example of the spiritual warfare that is to be waged by the Christian.

Ephesians 4:28

ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω, μᾶλλον δὲ κοπιᾶτω ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἵνα ἔχη μεταδιδόναι τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι.
κλεπτο steal

"Some have argued that stealing is mentioned here in Ephesians simply because it was a traditional topic in parenetic material. But it is likely that this exhortation informs us about the kind of people who became Christians in the first century, not least in Asia Minor, and indicates 'how difficult they found it to break away from the ethical norms of the society from which they had been converted.'" O'Brian

μηκετι no longer
μαλλον rather, instead
κοπιαω work, work
ἐργαζομαι work, do

"Paul supported his missionary activity through his work as an artisan, making tents from leather, and he exhorted his congregations to work with their hands as well (1 Thess 4:11,12; 2 Thess 3:6-12)." O'Brian

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

There are numerous textual variants for this brief clause ταῖς [ἰδίαις] χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν involving both word order and the omission of ἰδιαις (also replaced in a couple of MSS by αὐτου).

χειρ, χειρος f hand
ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting
μεταδιδόναι Verb, pres act infin μεταδιδωμι
share, give, impart
χρεια, ας f need, want

A transformed life: in place of taking from others, giving to others.

Ephesians 4:29

πᾶς λόγος σαπρὸς ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν μὴ ἐκπορευέσθω, ἀλλὰ εἴ τις ἀγαθὸς πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας, ἵνα δῶ χάριν τοῖς ἀκούουσιν.

"Believers are to achieve what is good with their mouths as well as with their hands, and this good is described in terms of what is beneficial to others." O'Brian

σαπρος, α, ον bad, rotten, harmful

Language that is 'harmful' or 'unwholesome'. "What is prohibited, then, is harmful speech of any kind (cf. Col 3:8; Eph 5:4), whether it be abusive language, vulgar speech, or slander and contemptuous talk. Lips given to this kind of utterance not only defile the speaker (Matt 15:11) but are also destructive of communal life. Our Lord had already warned that people would have to render account on the final day for every careless word they speak (Matt 12:36)." O'Brian

στομα, τος n mouth
ἐκπορευομαι go or come out
ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful
οικοδομη, ης f upbuilding, encouragement

χρεια, ας f need, want
 δῶ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s δίδωμι
 χαρις, ιτος f grace

Ephesians 4:30

καὶ μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐν
 ᾧ ἐσφραγίσθητε εἰς ἡμέραν ἀπολυτρώσεως.

A motivation for the preceding exhortations.

λυπεω pain, grieve

Cf. Is 63:10. "In Isaiah 63, which looks back to the exodus, Yahweh is presented as the Saviour of Israel, who *redeemed* his people from Egypt, brought them into a covenant relationship with himself, led them by his own personal presence (i.e., his Holy Spirit) through the wilderness, and gave them rest. For its part, Israel the covenant people had rebelled against the Lord 'and grieved his Holy Spirit' (v.10). In Ephesians Paul addresses the new covenant community, 'the one new man' (2:15) comprising Jews and Gentiles who have been *redeemed* (1:7) and reconciled to God through the cross of Christ (2:14-18). They have become a holy temple in the Lord, the place where *God himself* dwells by his Spirit (2:21,22). Using the language of Isaiah 63:10, Paul issues a warning to this new community not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, 'as Israel had done' in the wilderness (cf. 1 Cor 10:1-11), the more so since they have been sealed by that same Holy Spirit until the day of *redemption* (4:30)... Anything incompatible with the unity or purity of the church is inconsistent with the Spirit's own nature and therefore grieves him." O'Brian

ἐσφραγίσθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl
 σφραγιζω seal, secure with a seal;
 mark with a seal
 ἀπολυτρώσις, εως f redemption,
 deliverance

"By sealing believers with his Spirit, whether Gentile or Jewish, God has stamped them with his own character and guaranteed to protect them (see on 1:13) until he takes final possession of them on 'the day of redemption'. How ungrateful would they be if they now behave in a manner which grieves the very Spirit by whom they have been marked as God's own." O'Brian

Ephesians 4:31

πᾶσα πικρία καὶ θυμὸς καὶ ὀργὴ καὶ κραυγὴ
 καὶ βλασφημία ἀρθήτω ἀφ' ὑμῶν σὺν πάσῃ
 κακίᾳ.

πικρία, ας f bitterness, spite, bitter feeling
 θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury
 ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger
 κραυγη, ης f shout, cry

βλασφημία, ας f slander, blasphemy

"Paul's list appears to be climactic, progressing from an inner resentful attitude, through its indignant outburst and seething rage, to public shouting and abusive language or cursing. Although v.26 recognises that in exceptional circumstances one may be angry without sinning, so great are the dangers of this passion that on all other occasions it is to be rooted out comprehensively." O'Brian

ἀρθήτω Verb, aor pass imperat, 3 s αἰρω
 take away, set aside, raise
 κακία, ας evil, wickedness

Ephesians 4:32

γίνεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους χρηστοί, εὐσπλαγχοί,
 χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς καθὼς καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν
 Χριστῷ ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν.

Cf. Col 3:12-13.

ἀλλήλων, ος, ους reciprocal pronoun one
 another

χρηστος, η, ον kind, loving, good, merciful
 εὐσπλαγχος, ον tender-hearted, kind

Sympathetic to the needs of others.

χαριζομαι give, be gracious to, forgive
 ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

"This statement is part of the New Testament's 'conformity' pattern, in which God or Christ's saving activity, especially Christ's sacrifice on the cross, is set forth as a paradigm of the lifestyle to which believers are to 'conform'. The introductory 'just as also' has both comparative and causal force (cf. 5:2, 25, 29): what God has done 'in Christ' for believers, which has been so fully set forth in chapters 1-3, provides both the paradigm of and the grounds for their behaviour. Here God's forgiveness of them is the model of their forgiveness of one another." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:1

γίνεσθε οὖν μιμηταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς τέκνα
 ἀγαπητά,

Summarises the preceding admonitions of
 4:25-32.

μιμητης, ου m imitator
 τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants
 ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

The basis on which the demand to be imitators is made – they should reproduce the family likeness.

This is the only NT reference to being imitators *of God*, though cf. Lk 6:35-36; Matt 5:44-48.

Ephesians 5:2

καὶ περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὄσμην εὐωδίας.

The particular aspect of imitation is now defined more specifically.

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

Cf. 4:1,17 also 5:8,15.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for
παραδίδωμι hand over, deliver up

Cf. Gal 2:20. "The model and ground for their living a *life of love* is Christ's love and sacrificial offering of himself... Costly, sacrificial love, then, is to characterise believers in their relationships with one another." O'Brian

προσφορα, ας f offering, sacrifice
θυσια, ας f sacrifice, victim
ὄσμη, ης f fragrance
εὐωδια, ας f sweet smell, fragrant aroma

Cf. Ps 40:6 (LXX 39:7). The phrase indicates that the offering is well pleasing to God – as is our service when following Christ.

Ephesians 5:3

Πορνεία δὲ καὶ ἀκαθαρσία πᾶσα ἢ πλεονεξία μηδὲ ὀνομαζέσθω ἐν ὑμῖν, καθὼς πρέπει ἁγίοις,

"Paul begins a fresh series of warnings against behaviour that is completely alien to a Christian lifestyle, returning to the contrast between the Christian community and outsiders found in the earlier exhortatory material of 4:17-24." O'Brian

πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality

"The term denotes any kind of illegitimate sexual intercourse, especially adultery and sexual relations with prostitutes. One who surrenders to sexual immorality indicates ultimately that he or she has broken from God. In contrast to the loose living that prevailed in the Hellenistic world, New Testament (and in particular Pauline) teaching required unconditional obedience to the prohibition against 'fornication' (note Paul's warnings to the Corinthians: 1 Cor 5:1; 6:12-20; 7:2; 10:8; 2 Cor 12:21)." O'Brian

ἀκαθαρσια, ας f impurity, immorality
ἢ or

πλεονεξια, ας f greed, covetousness
μηδε see 4:27

Here has the force, 'not even'.

ὀνομαζω name, call; pass be known
πρέπει impers verb it is fitting, it is proper

They are called to be a holy people.

Ephesians 5:4

καὶ αἰσχρότης καὶ μωρολογία ἢ εὐτραπεία, ἃ οὐκ ἀνήκεν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εὐχαριστία.

αἰσχροτης, ητος f indecent behaviour

In context here means disgraceful speech, obscenity.

μωρολογια, ας f foolish talk

The root meaning is wittiness or jesting. The meaning here is therefore something like 'coarse joking'

εὐτραπεια, ας f vulgar or dirty talk

All three of these terms appear here only in the New Testament. "All three terms refer to a dirty mind expressing itself in vulgar conversation. This kind of language must be avoided as utterly inappropriate among those whom God has set apart as holy." O'Brian

ἀνήκεν Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s
ἀνηκει impers. verb it is proper, right
μᾶλλον see 4:28

εὐχαριστια, ας f thanksgiving

"Whereas sexual impurity and covetousness both express self-centred acquisitiveness, thanksgiving is the exact opposite, and so the antidote required; it is the recognition of God's generosity' (Houlden). Thanksgiving is almost a synonym for the Christian life. It is the response of gratitude to God's saving activity in creation and redemption, and thus a recognition that he is the ultimate source of every blessing." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:5

τοῦτο γὰρ ἵστε γινώσκοντες ὅτι πᾶς πόρνος ἢ ἀκάθαρτος ἢ πλεονέκτης, ὃ ἐστιν εἰδωλολάτρης, οὐκ ἔχει κληρονομίαν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ.

ἵστε Verb, indic or imperat 2 pl οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning)
know, understand

"The opening words of the Greek are an unusual periphrastic construction, though the general sense is clear enough. They may be taken as an imperative and rendered, 'be sure of this' (NRSV; lit. 'know, knowing'), or as an indicative and interpreted as an affirmation, *For of this you can be sure* (lit. 'you know, knowing'). Either way Paul is drawing attention to a certainty: persistent sinners are excluded from God's kingdom." O'Brian

πορνος, ου m man who practices sexual immorality

ἀκαθαρτος, ον unclean

πλεονεκτης, ου m one who is grasping or greedy

εἰδωλολατρης, ου m idolater

"Along with greed for riches and power, sexual lust is an idolatrous obsession; it places self-gratification or another person at the centre of one's existence, and thus is the worship of the creature rather than the Creator (Rom 1:25)."

O'Brian

κληρονομια, ας f inheritance, what is promised

"There is a tendency in Paul's letters to distinguish two phases of the heavenly kingdom, reserving the expression 'the kingdom of God' for its future and eternal aspect (1 Cor 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal 5:21), while 'the kingdom of Christ' denotes the present phase of God's rule (1 Cor 15:24; Col 1:13; cf also Eph 2:6; 2 Tim 4:1,18), which is destined to merge with the future. So in 1 Corinthians 15:24 Christ, after reigning until all things are put under his feet, delivers up the kingdom to God the Father. Thus the double formulation, *the kingdom of Christ and of God* signifies the divine kingdom in both its present and future aspects, from which those who have given themselves over to immorality, impurity and greed are excluded." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:6

Μηδεις υμας απαταω κενοις λογοις, δια ταυτα γαρ ερχεται η οργη του θεου επι τους υιουοις της απειθειας.

μηδεις, μηδεμα, μηδεν no one, nothing
απαταω deceive, lead astray

"It is all too easy for believers to be influenced by the surrounding world and to succumb to its ways of thinking and behaving. The result is that what is acceptable to the culture of the day becomes acceptable to the church. This is particularly true in contemporary Western society in the area of sexual morality." O'Brian

κενος, η, ον empty, to no purpose,
senseless

οργη, ης f wrath, anger
απειθεια, ας f disobedience

υιουοις της απειθειας people whose lives are characterised by disobedience.

Ephesians 5:7

μη ουν γινεσθε συμμετοχοι αυτων.

συμμετοχος, ον sharer, participant

This is not prohibiting contact but rather partnership in their activities. To share in their lifestyle is to share in their fate.

Ephesians 5:8

ητε γαρ ποτε σκοτοο, νυν δε φωο εν κυριω· ωο τεκνα φωτοο περιπατεητε.

ποτε enclitic particle once, formerly, at one time

σκοτοο, οοο n darkness, evil
φωο, φωτοο n light

"In Ephesians darkness represents ignorance, error, and evil (cf. 4:18), and in particular comes to signify immorality as the way of life of those who are separated from God. Light, on the other hand, stands for truth, knowledge (cf. 1:18), and now holiness, all of which come from God.

"Surprisingly, the readers are not presented simply as having been in the realm of darkness and being now in the sphere of light, although this would have been true enough (cf. John 8:12; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 John 1:5-7; 2:9). It is not their environment or the surroundings in which they and the rest of humanity live that is in view. Rather, they themselves were once *darkness*, but now they are *light in the Lord*. Those ruled by the dominion of *darkness* or of *light* represent that dominion in their own persons. So, when they were converted, it was their lives, not their surroundings, that were changed from darkness to light. This radical transformation had taken place *in the Lord*. He is the one who has made the decisive difference, and it is through their union with him that they have entered a new dominion and become *light*." O'Brian

τεκνον, οο n child

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

Ephesians 5:9

ο γαρ καρποο του φωτοο εν παση αγαθωοσυνη και δικαιοοσυνη και αληθεια.

καρποο, οο m fruit, harvest, outcome

In contrast with the 'unfruitful works of darkness' v.11.

Several MSS (including p⁴⁶ D^c Ψ 88 104) read 'fruit of the Spirit', which appears to have been influenced by Gal 5:22.

αγαθωοσυνη, ης f goodness

Can also carry the sense, 'generosity'.

δικαιοοσυνη, ης f righteousness
αληθεια, ας f truth, reality

Ephesians 5:10

δοκιμαζοντεο τι εοτιν ευαρεοοτον τω κυριω.

δοκιμαζω test, prove, discern

ευαρεοοτοο, οο acceptable, pleasing

The Christians' overarching goal is to please Christ in all circumstances (cf. Rom 12:2; 14:18; 2 Cor 5:9; Phil 4:18; Col 3:20).

Ephesians 5:11

καὶ μὴ συγκοινωνεῖτε τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς ἀκάρποις τοῦ σκότους, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ἐλέγχετε,

συγκοινωνεω take part in, participate in
ἀκαρπος, ον barren, unfruitful
σκοτος, ους see v.8

The people that carry out these actions are described as *darkness*, cf. v.8.

μᾶλλον adv more; rather, instead
ἐλέγχω show (someone his) fault, convince (someone of his) error

"Since the object of this reproving activity, both here and in v.13, is the 'unfruitful works' rather than the people themselves, it is preferable to understand the verb in the sense of 'bringing to light or exposing' these deeds, rather than convincing or convicting those engaged in such activities. Both the flow of the argument and the context of darkness suggest that the fruitless deeds which are exposed are the sins of unbelievers. The conduct of the children of light will shine as a beacon to others, revealing evil deeds for what they are. To interpret the verb along these lines of exposing sin for what it is does not imply that Christians should remain silent or fail to speak out against evil. But the particular point being made here is that of living a godly lifestyle and showing evil to be evil." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:12

τὰ γὰρ κρυφῆ γινόμενα ὑπ' αὐτῶν αἰσχρόν ἐστιν καὶ λέγειν·

κρυφῆ adv in secret, secretly
αἰσχρος, α, ον disgraceful, shameful

The καὶ has the force 'it is shameful *even* to speak of them' i.e. let alone do them.

Ephesians 5:13

τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐλεγχόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ φωτὸς φανεροῦται,

φανερωω make evident

Ephesians 5:14

πάν γὰρ τὸ φανερούμενον φῶς ἐστίν. διὸ λέγει· Ἐγειρε, ὁ καθεύδων, καὶ ἀνάστα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἐπιφάσει σοι ὁ Χριστός.

"Paul's language is compressed, but the logic appears to be that the light not only exposes; it also transforms (cf. 2 Cor 4:6). The disclosure of people's sins effected through believers' lives enables men and women to see the nature of their deeds. Some abandon the darkness of sin and respond to the light so that they become light themselves. This understanding is confirmed by v.8, which speaks of the transformation that had taken place in the readers' experience, and by the confession of v.14b. Furthermore, it is in line with John 3:19-21, which refers, on the one hand, to the failure of a person in darkness to come to the light, lest his or her deeds be exposed, and, on the other hand, of the person who does the truth and comes to the light in order that his or her deeds might be revealed for what they are. J.B. Phillips's oft quoted rendering brings the force of v.14a out well: 'It is even possible (after all it happened to you!) for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also'. The light thus has a twofold effect on the prevailing darkness: it makes visible and transforms." O'Brian

διὸ therefore, for this reason

ἐγειρω raise

καθευδω sleep, be dead

ἀνίστημι rise, stand up, come back to life

νεκρος, α, ον dead

ἐπιφάσει Verb, fut act indic, 3s ἐπιθαυσκο

shine (on), give light (to)

These words could reflect Is 60:1,2 and perhaps also Is 26:19. However, "Most recent scholars reject the notion that v. 14b is an altered quotation from the Old Testament, and prefer to understand it as a fragment of an early Christian hymn that was originally associated with baptism. The readers would be reminded of the summons to awake and of the promise they received at their baptism. As a result, they are now urged to live in the light of that life-changing experience." O'Brian. O'Brian follows Maritz in thinking that this is an early Christian hymn (perhaps even of Paul's own composition) but that it is influenced by, or based on the Isaiah passages – not just the bare verses themselves but their contexts.

"Paul adopts no defeatist attitude towards the society around him. Christ is the light who has summoned the readers to wake up and rise from the dead. He has shone upon them so that they have become light in the Lord. As children of light their lives are to shine as a beacon, exposing the darkness around for what it really is. Some who sit in darkness may be attracted to the light and even choose to enter it." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:15-21

A summary climax of the parenthesis of chapters 4-6. "The passage further explains what it means to *live a life worthy of the calling you have received* (4:1), the opening admonition and 'topic sentence' of the lengthy exhortatory material that extends from 4:1 to 6:9... The first exhortation, *Be careful, then, how you live* (v. 15), which stands like a heading, is explained by three antitheses, 'not ... but', in the following clauses: (i) not as unwise, but as wise (v.15b); (ii) not foolish, but understanding the Lord's will (v.17); (iii) not drunk with wine, but filled by the Spirit (v.18)." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:15

Βλέπετε οὖν ἀκριβῶς πῶς περιπατεῖτε, μὴ ὡς ἄσοφοι ἀλλ' ὡς σοφοί,

βλεπω see, beware of, see that
ἀκριβῶς accurately, with care

"Although some texts read πῶς ἀκριβῶς, so associating 'carefully' with 'walking' rather than 'watching', the external evidence favours ἀκριβῶς πῶς, with the adverb modifying the watching." O'Brian

περιπατεω see v.8

ἄσοφος, ον senseless, foolish

On wisdom, cf. 1:8-9, 17-19; 3:10. To be 'wise' is to understand God's plan of salvation in Christ and to live in conformity with it.

σοφος, η, ον wise, experienced

Ephesians 5:16

ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν, ὅτι αἱ ἡμέραι πονηραὶ εἰσιν.

ἐξαγοραζω redeem; midd make the most of

καιρος, ον m time

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

"The notion that 'the days are evil' appears to be similar to the idea of 'this present evil age' in Galatians 1:4 (cf. 'the *evil* day', Eph 6:13). These 'evil' days are under the control of the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), who is opposed to God and his purposes. He exercises effective and compelling authority over men and women outside of Christ, keeping them in terrible bondage (2:1-3). But the Ephesian Christians have already participated in the world to come, the powers of the new age have broken in upon them, and they have become 'light in the Lord' (5:8). Although they live in the midst of these evil days as they await their final redemption, they are neither to avoid them nor to fear them. Rather, they are to live wisely, taking advantage of every opportunity in this fallen world to conduct themselves in a manner that is pleasing to God." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:17

διὰ τοῦτο μὴ γίνεσθε ἄφρονες, ἀλλὰ συνίετε τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου·

ἄφρων, ον gen ονος fool, foolish,
senseless, ignorant

Like the call to be wise (v.15), this term also has its roots in the wisdom tradition of the Old Testament.

συνημι and συνιω understand,
comprehend

θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

"In our contemporary context, the 'Lord's will' is frequently understood by Christians to refer to matters of personal guidance, and thus to God's immediate plans for their future. But the divine will in the Pauline letters, particularly in Ephesians, has a different focus, without neglecting the personal dimension. The 'will of God' is closely related to, even identified with, God's gracious saving plan and, as a significant element of this, the formation of a people into the likeness of Christ who will be pure and blameless on the final day. These priorities are presupposed in the apostolic injunction of v.17. The contemporary preoccupation with personal guidance is wrongly directed if it is not understood first of all within this framework of God's gracious saving purposes for his world. Personalised concerns about 'guidance' may, in fact, be evidence of a *folly* which stands in contrast to, and needs to be corrected by, a true understanding of the Lord's will." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:18

καὶ μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνω, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν ἄσωτία, ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι,

μεθυσκομαι get drunk

οἶνος, οὐ m wine

Cf. Prov 23:31. Drunkenness epitomises the ways of darkness (cf. 1 Thess 5:6-8; Rom 13:12,13) and may also have formed part of pagan religious practices at Ephesus. It leads to sexual excess and debauchery.

ἀσωτία, ας f dissipation, reckless living
πληρω fill, make full

Note the continuous present tense – 'go on being filled'.

"There is no greater secret of holiness than the infilling of him whose very nature and name are 'holy' ... Excessive alcohol dehumanises, turning a human into a beast, the fulness of the Spirit makes us more human, for he makes us like Christ." Stott

O'Brian argues that syntactically the phrase means 'be filled by the Spirit' rather than *with* the Spirit; "the content of the filling is not specifically mentioned." However, in the light of earlier references to 'fulness' in Ephesians 1:23; 3:19 and 4:13 he concludes "that the *content* with which believers have been (are now being) filled is the fulness of (the triune) God or of Christ... To be admonished, 'Be filled by the Spirit', then, means that Paul's readers are urged to let the Spirit change them more and more into the image of God and Christ."

Ephesians 5:19

λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς, ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ,

Verses 18-21 form one long sentence with five participles modifying the imperative 'be filled with the Spirit.' "Spirit-filled Christians are people whose lives are characterised by singing, thanksgiving, and mutual submission... These divinely inspired expressions of joy and gratitude are reminiscent of the opening doxology (1:3-14), where Christians are encouraged to praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for having blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ (v.3). Now, those who are being filled by God's Spirit are able to join the apostle in offering appropriate praise to the triune God for all that he has done in Christ." O'Brian

λαλεῶ speak, talk

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun,
him/her/itself

Here used in a reciprocal sense. Cf. Col 3:16. "The apostle has in view mutual instruction, edification, and exhortation which take place in a range of songs prompted by the Spirit." O'Brian

ψαλμος, οὐ m psalm, song

ὕμνος, οὐ m hymn

ᾠδῆ, ης f song, song of praise

πνευματικος, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to
the spirit

The sense here is 'with all kinds of spiritual song' – it is unwise to try to discern clear distinctions between the different terms used. O'Brian argues that "While the adjective πνευματικαῖς ('prompted by the Spirit'), consistent with Greek usage, agrees grammatically with the last term ᾠδαῖς ('songs'), it refers to all three nouns." He adds, "Although firm distinctions cannot be drawn between the terms, nor can an exact classification of New Testament hymns be made on the basis of the different words, taken together 'psalms', 'hymns' and 'songs' describe 'the full range of singing which the Spirit prompts (Lohse)."

ᾄδω sing

ψαλλω sing, sing a hymn of praise, sing
praises

τῇ καρδίᾳ signifies the whole of one's being.

τῷ κυρίῳ the singing has both a horizontal and vertical dimension.

Ephesians 5:20

εὐχαριστοῦντες πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί,

εὐχαριστεῶ thank, give thanks

παντοτε always

'regularly' or 'constantly' rather than 'always' or 'continuously'.

ὑπὲρ πάντων "Believers are to be thankful during times of trial and suffering as we endure them patiently, not because we have lost all feelings of moral sensitivity or because we can no longer distinguish between good and evil. Rather, we humbly and gratefully submit to his sovereignty, knowing that he works *in everything* for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Rom 8:28). This is not to claim that God is the author of evil or that we are praising him for what he abominates. But we recognise that he uses even the suffering which comes upon us to produce character, perseverance, and hope (Rom 5:3-5). And a life filled with thanksgiving will find spontaneous expression in psalms, hymns and songs." O'Brian

ὄνομα, τος n name, title, person, authority,
reputation

"Christians filled with the Holy Spirit give thanks to God the Father on the basis of who Jesus is and what he has accomplished for his people by his death and resurrection. The 'unconscious' trinitarian focus of the passage is very powerful indeed." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:21

ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ.

"V.21 is a hinge verse: the verb 'submitting' is the fifth and final participle that is dependent on the imperative 'be filled' (v.18), and it concludes the list of responses that should characterise the Spirit-filled-living of those in Christ (vv. 18-21). At the same time, v.21 introduces a new topic of 'submission', which is then developed throughout the household table (5:22-6:9), particularly in 5:22-33, which presents the longest statement in the New Testament on the relationship of husbands and wives." O'Brian

ὑποτασσω put in subjection; pass. be subject, submit to

The verb carries an overtone of authority and of subjection or of submission to it. O'Brian argues that due weight must be given to the use of this term in the New Testament and that it should not be given a meaning here which is outside of its semantic range. He concludes, "The apostle is not speaking of *mutual* submission in the sense of a reciprocal subordination, but submission to those who are in authority over them." Specific instances of such a general requirement for submission are then given in the verses that follow.

ἀλληλων, ος, ους reciprocal pronoun one another

"Sometimes a person who claims to be filled with the Spirit becomes aggressive, self-assertive and brash. But the Holy Spirit, and those who are truly filled with him always display the meekness and gentleness of Christ." Stott

φοβος, ου m fear

"In the light of Christ's power and holiness believers will be subordinate to those who are in authority over them." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:22-33

"The question has been raised as to why Paul has placed such a heavy emphasis on the marriage relationship here in the Ephesians household table. As with the rest of the letter, so here we have few specifics to go on regarding the life-setting of the readers. Perhaps some married members of the churches addressed were not living out the distinctives of their faith in their marriages, but were behaving like their non-Christian neighbours. More specifically it has been suggested that sexual immorality was a real threat (cf. 4:19; 5:3-6, 12, 18), and so Paul wants to stress the special status of Christian marriage in God's purposes in order to combat the danger. On the other hand, ascetic tendencies had to be combatted in Colossians 2:16-23, and this may have been a danger in Western Asia Minor to which Paul's circular letter was sent. But finally, there may have been no specific difficulties in this area that caused him to expand on Christian marriage here. In the light of God's intention to sum up all things in Christ (1:9-10), and this includes the unity of his people within that eschatological vision, the harmony of the Christian family is an essential element of this oneness, and Paul expands on the vital unity of husband and wife within the divine purposes. The 'marriage relationship is transparent to God's purposes on a larger scale ... no other relationship within the family so fully mirrors God's purposes in the universe' (Sampley)." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:22

Αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἄνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ, γυνῆ, αἰκος f woman, wife

The best Greek text does not include the verb ὑποτασσω – the theme of submission is carried over from v.21. O'Brian argues that the heart of the idea of submission is 'order' – here a God established order.

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

ἀνηρ, ἄνδρος m man, husband

James Hurley points out that Jesus and the Apostles taught that women should be included among the people of God in a way which set the church apart from the Jewish community. Women learned, joined in worship and served in the church. Nevertheless, women are called to submit to their husbands. Hurley continues, "The women were not asked to submit for the sake of the superior wisdom of their husbands, but for the sake of Christ. The matter thus becomes one of theology rather than sociology." It is part of the way in which the wife serves the Lord. O'Brian comments, "Having described the single new humanity which God is creating in his Son, with its focus on the oneness in Christ of all, especially Jew and Gentile (cf. Col 3:11; Gal 3:28), the apostle 'does not now destroy his own thesis by erecting new barriers of sex, age and rank in God's new society in which they have been abolished' (Stott). That the verb 'submit, be subordinate' can be used of Christ's submission to the authority of the Father (1 Cor 15:28) shows that it can denote a functional subordination without implying inferiority, or less honour and glory." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:23

ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἐστὶν κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναικὸς ὡς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος.

κεφαλὴ, ἡς f head

"The origin of this headship is not elaborated here, although in the fuller treatments of 1 Corinthians 11:3-12 and 1 Timothy 2:11-13 it is grounded in the order of creation, especially the narrative of Genesis 2 (cf. 1 Cor 11:8,9)." O'Brian

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church
σωτὴρ, ἡρος m saviour
σῶμα, τος n body

Headship in the marriage relationship is to be modelled after Christ's giving of himself for the sake of his people.

Ephesians 5:24

ἀλλὰ ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ, οὕτως καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντί.

ὑποτάσσω subordinate, put in subjection;
pass. be subject, submit to, obey

Implies willing submission.

οὕτως and οὕτω thus, in this way

ἐν παντί 'in every area of life'

Ephesians 5:25

Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς,

The husband is not urged to 'exercise rule over your wife' but to 'love her'

ἀγαπαῶ love, show love for

"Elsewhere in both Old and New Testaments the command to love demands the total response of those addressed (cf. Lev 19:18; Matt 5:43; 19:19). Here, too, husbands are to respond wholeheartedly to the apostolic injunction. Their love, as a result, will involve an act of the will, and is not simply an emotional or physical response." O'Brian

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself
παραδίδωμι give over, deliver up

"The church's head is the church's bridegroom. He does not crush the church. Rather, he sacrificed himself to serve her, in order that she might become everything he longs for her to be, namely herself in the fulness of her glory. Just so a husband should never use his headship to crush or stifle his wife, or frustrate her from being herself. His love for her will lead him to an exactly opposite path. He will give himself for her, in order that she may develop her full potential under God, and so become more completely herself." Stott

Ephesians 5:26

ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγίαση καθάρισας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι,

"The imagery from the Old Testament about God's relationship to Israel stands behind this use of the marriage analogy. In particular, the background to Ephesians 5:26-27 is probably Ezekiel 16:1-14, which describes God as caring for, washing, marrying, and adorning his people with splendour." O'Brian

ἀγίαση Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἀγιαζῶ
sanctify, make holy

καθαρίζω cleanse, make clean, purify

This aorist participle is coincident with the preceding aorist subjunctive.

"It is positional or definitive sanctification that is in view here, not progressive sanctification." O'Brian

λουτρον, ου n washing, cleansing

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

Stott suggests that there may be an allusion to the bridal bath which took place before both Jewish and Greek weddings."

O'Brian comments, "v.26 is more likely to have been influenced by the marital imagery of Ezekiel 16:8-14 and the prenuptial bath in the Jewish marital customs than by baptismal considerations."

ῥημα, ατος n word

It is the word, the message of the gospel, which is the powerful agent in conversion (cf. 1 Peter 1:23,25 also Jn 15:3; 17:7).

"In the light of Christ's complete giving of himself to make the church holy and cleanse her, husbands should be utterly committed to the total well-being, especially the spiritual welfare, of their wives." O'Brian

Ephesians 5:27

ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἔνδοξον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, μὴ ἔχουσαν σπῖλον ἢ ῥυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἡ ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος.

παραστήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s παριστημι and παριστανω present, bring into one's presence

"The 'sanctification' [v.26] appears to refer to the present process of making her holy in character and conduct by the power of the indwelling Spirit, while the 'presentation' is eschatological, and will take place when Christ returns to take her to himself." Stott

ἔαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον see v.25
ἔνδοξος, ον glorious, splendid

This word may hint at the bride's beautiful wedding dress, but here it refers to being decked with a glory that comes from God himself: δοξα is the radiance of God. O'Brian says that the expression here "probably reflects the imagery of Ezekiel 16:10-14, where Yahweh clothes his bride in magnificent apparel and jewellery, so that her beauty is 'perfect because of my splendour that I had bestowed on you, says the Lord God' (v.14; NRSV)."

σπιλος, ου m spot, blemish, stain
ἢ οἱ

ῥυτις, ιδος f wrinkle

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and adjective such, of such kind, similar, like

ἢ Verb, pres subj, 3s ειμι

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated

ἄμωμος, ον faultless; without blemish

Ephesians 5:28

οὕτως ὀφείλουσιν καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα· ὁ ἀγαπᾶν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπᾷ,

οὕτως see v.24

ὀφειλω owe, ought, must

σωμα, τος n see v.23

As Christ loved his 'body', the church.

Ephesians 5:29

οὐδεὶς γὰρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν, ἀλλὰ ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν,

The picture reflects Gen 2:24: husband and wife as one flesh.

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing
ποτέ enclitic particle once, at any time
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body
μισεω hate, despise, be indifferent to
ἐκτρέφω feed; raise (children)

Cf. 6:4 also 1 Thess 2:7.

θαλπω cherish, take care of

Ephesians 5:30

ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ.

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μελος, ους n member, bodily part

The majority of MSS add ἐκ τῆς σαρκος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ. The shorter reading is adequately supported by p⁴⁶ κ* A B *et al.* The longer reading appears to be a scribal expansion from Gen 2:24.

Ephesians 5:31

ἀντὶ τούτου καταλείπει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται τῇ γυναίκε αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.

ἀντι prep with gen for, because of

Paul cites Gen 2:24 in order to provide warrant for the assertion that we are members of his body (v.30). Paul refers 'the two are one flesh' to our union with Christ.

καταλείπει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s καταλειπω leave, leave behind

προσκολληθήσεται Verb, fut pass dep indic, 3 s προσκολληομαι be united in marriage

ἔσονται Verb, fut indic, 3 pl ειμι

δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυσιν two

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

Ephesians 5:32

τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν, ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery

I.e. the union of Christ with his people (so the second half of the verse). However, O'Brian thinks that the 'mystery' refers to the relationship between Christ and the church as a *typology of marriage*. "A Christian marriage, as envisaged in this paragraph, is 'to reveal the mystery of Christ loving his responsive church. Such a marriage bears living witness to the meaning of "two becoming one". It reproduces in miniature the beauty shared between the Bridegroom and the Bride. And, through it all, the mystery of the gospel is unveiled. Further, within the wider context of Ephesians as a whole the union between Christian husband and wife which is part of the unity between Christ and the church is thus a pledge of God's purposes of unity for the cosmos."

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

Ephesians 5:33

πλην και υμεις οι καθ' ενα εκαστος την εαυτου γουναϊκα ουτως αγαπατω ως εαυτον, η δε γυνη ινα φοβηται τον ανδρα.

πλην nevertheless, however, moreover

Introduces the concluding summary.

εκαστος, η, ον each, every; καθ ενα εκαστος each and every one

The emphasis is now upon the demand for *each* husband and *each* wife to live in accordance with this pattern.

φοβηται Verb, pres midd/pass dep subj, 3 s
φοβεομαι fear, reverence

Ephesians 6:1

Τα τέκνα, υπακούετε τοις γονευσιν υμων εν κυριω, τουτο γαρ εστιν δικαιον·

"It is obvious from these exhortations that the apostle thinks of local congregations as consisting of whole families who come together not only to praise God but also to hear his word addressed to them." O'Brian

τεκνον, ου n child
υπακουω obey, be subject to

The words εν κυριω are absent from several early MSS and patristic quotations. However, the preponderance of MSS evidence favours inclusion.
"The obedience of Christian children to their parents is all of a piece with their submission to Christ: the additional motivating phrase, 'in the Lord', is virtually synonymous with 'as to the Lord' or 'as to Christ' (cf. 5:22; 6:5) and indicates that their obedience is part of their Christian discipleship. It is not rendered simply because of their parents' greater authority or status." O'Brian

γονευς, εως m parent

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

Introduces the Old Testament commandment.

Ephesians 6:2

τιμα τον πατερα σου και την μητερα, ητις εστιν εντολη πρωτη εν επαγγελια,

τιμαω honour, reverence, acknowledge the status of

Ex 20:12 LXX.

οστις, ητις, ο τι who, which
εντολη, ης f command, order, instruction
πρωτος, η, ον first
επαγγελια, ας f promise

Ephesians 6:3

ινα ευ σοι γενηται και εση μακροχροnios επι της γης.

ευ adv well

γενηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι

εση Verb, fut indic, 2 s ειμι

μακροχροnios, ον long-lived

γη, γης f earth

Ephesians 6:4

Και οι πατερες, μη παροργιζετε τα τεκνα υμων, αλλα εκτρεφετε αυτα εν παιδεια και νοουθεσια κυριου.

Fathers are not to be tyrants but shepherds.

παροργιζω make angry, make resentful
τεκνον, ου n see v.1

"Effectively the apostle is ruling out 'excessively severe discipline, unreasonably harsh demands, abuse of authority, arbitrariness, unfairness, constant nagging and condemnation, subjecting a child to humiliation, and all forms of gross insensitivity to a child's needs and sensibilities' (Lincoln). Behind this curbing of a father's authority is the clear recognition that children, while they are expected to obey their parents in the Lord, are persons in their own right who are not to be manipulated, exploited or crushed." O'Brian

εκτρεφω feed; raise (children)

παιδεια, ας f discipline; instruction, training

νοουθεσια, ας f instruction, warning

"In contrast to the norms of the day, Paul wants Christian fathers to be gentle, patient educators of their children, whose chief 'weapon' is Christian instruction focussed on loyalty to Christ as Lord. Christian fathers were to be different from those of their surrounding society. Presumably, when these words from the household table were read to them, they had already heard and remembered what Paul had written earlier in the letter, namely, that their fatherhood was derived from the 'one God and Father of us all' (3:14-15; 4:6), and that God's mighty work of reconciliation in his Son had been effected in order to form 'one multinational, multicultural family of God'. Let them as human fathers, then, 'care for their families as God the Father cares for his' (Stott)." O'Brian

Ephesians 6:5

Οἱ δοῦλοι, ὑπακούετε τοῖς κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐν ἀπλότητι τῆς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς τῷ Χριστῷ,

δουλος, ου m slave, servant
 ὑπακουω obey, be subject to
 σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

A deliberate play on the term κυριος.
 "Ultimately, Christian *slaves* belong to the one Lord, Jesus Christ (v.6), and their obedience to their earthly masters is all of a piece with their serving him (vv.7,8)." O'Brian

φοβος, ου m fear
 τρομος, ου m trembling
 ἀπλοτης, ητος f generosity, liberality, sincerity

"This kind of inner commitment can occur only as slaves recognise that in serving their masters they are rendering obedience to their heavenly Lord, Christ. The performance of their earthly tasks is related to his rule over their lives. Ultimately, then, the distinction between the sacred and the secular breaks down. Any and every task, however menial, falls within the sphere of his lordship and is done in order to please him. Their work is done 'as to Christ', their obedience is rendered 'as slaves of Christ' (v.6), their wholehearted service is performed 'as to the Lord' (v.7), because they know that they will be rewarded 'by the Lord' (v.8) for every good that is done. These instructions provide a specific application of the apostle's comprehensive exhortation of Colossians 3:17, 'Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'" O'Brian

Ephesians 6:6

μὴ κατ' ὀφθαλμοδουλίαν ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι ἀλλ' ὡς δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ ποιῶντες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐκ ψυχῆς

ὀφθαλμοδουλια, ας f service rendered merely for the sake of impressing others

Cf. Col 3:22. Not attested in pre-Pauline writings.

ἀνθρωπαρεσκος, ον one who acts merely to please men
 θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire
 ψυχη, ης f self, inmost being, life

Ephesians 6:7

μετ' εὐνοίας δουλεύοντες, ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις,

εὐνοια, ας f good will; eagerness, zeal

Here alone in the New Testament.

δουλευω serve, be a slave

Ephesians 6:8

εἰδότες ὅτι ἕκαστος, ὃ ἂν ποιήσῃ ἀγαθόν, τοῦτο κομίζεται παρὰ κυρίου, εἴτε δοῦλος εἴτε ἐλεύθερος.

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

εἰαν if

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

κομιζω buy; midd receive back, be paid back

"Consistent with the rest of the New Testament (indeed, the whole Bible), Paul assumes that judgment is according to works (cf. Rom 2:6). There is clearly a connection between good deeds and reward, although the content of the reward is not spelled out here. In Colossians 3:24, the parallel passage, the reward is identified with the eternal inheritance that has been prepared for believers (cf. Col 1:5, 12, 27; 3:1-4)." O'Brian

εἴτε if, whether

ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person

The day of judgment, like the gospel itself, is a great leveller. Earthly status is of no significance on that day.

Ephesians 6:9

Καὶ οἱ κύριοι, τὰ αὐτὰ ποιεῖτε πρὸς αὐτούς, ἀνιέντες τὴν ἀπειλήν, εἰδότες ὅτι καὶ αὐτῶν καὶ ὑμῶν ὁ κύριός ἐστιν ἐν οὐρανοῖς, καὶ προσωποληψία οὐκ ἐστιν παρ' αὐτῶ.

τα αὐτα ποιειτε Shocking words in the context of the first century. Paul is saying that masters have the same responsibility as their slaves to act in a manner pleasing to God.

ἀνιέντες Verb, pres act ptc, m nom pl ἀνιμι
loosen, stop, cease

ἀπειλή, ης f threat, threatening

εἰδότες see v.8

προσωποληψία, ας f favouritism, treating one person better than another

"Christ's lordship over the lives of both slaves and masters has the effect of changing the dynamic of the relationship between them and lifting their mutual attitudes and behaviour to a new plane." O'Brian

Ephesians 6:10-20

"A thorough knowledge of the enemy and a healthy respect for his powers are a necessary preliminary to victory in war." Stott.

"Throughout this paragraph on spiritual warfare Paul's sustained imagery is drawn from the prophecy of Isaiah, which describes the armour of Yahweh and his Messiah (11:4-5; 59:17; cf. 49:2; 52:7). The Isaianic references depict the Lord of hosts as a warrior dressed for battle as he goes forth to vindicate his people. The 'full armour of God' which the readers are urged to put on as they engage in a deadly spiritual warfare (v.11) is Yahweh's own armour, which he and his Messiah have worn and which is now provided for his people as they engage in battle." O'Brian

Ephesians 6:10

Τοῦ λοιποῦ ἐνδυναμοῦσθε ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ ἐν τῷ κράτει τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ.

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining; του λοιπου
henceforth

"The apostle is indicating that the whole of the interim period between the Lord's two comings is to be characterised by conflict. The peace which God has made through Christ's cross is to be experienced only in the midst of a restless struggle against evil." Stott

ἐνδυναμοω strengthen, make strong; pass
become strong

O'Brian argues that the verb is best understood as passive rather than middle voice and the meaning is 'be made strong, be strengthened' cf. 3:16. See also Josh 1:6,7,9.

κρατος, ους n might, strength,

ισχυς, υος f strength

Cf. 1:9-20. "The apostle prayed that his readers might understand and experience the extraordinary power of God working on their behalf (1:19). Now he calls upon them to appropriate this might, which in the case of Jesus has already proven itself sufficient to overcome powerful, diabolical opposition." O'Brian

Ephesians 6:11

ἐνδύσασθε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὸ δύνασθαι ὑμᾶς στήναι πρὸς τὰς μεθοδείας τοῦ διαβόλου·

ἐνδύσασθε Verb, aor midd imperat, 2 pl

ἐνδύω dress, clothe

πανοπλία, ας f armour, complete armour

The word originally referred to 'a complete set of instruments used in defensive or offensive warfare,' as worn by a heavily armed foot soldier.

του θεου that God supplies

δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of,
able to do

στηναι Verb, 2 aor act infin ἰστημι 2 aor
stand, stand firm, hold ground.

Christ has already won the victory (1:19-22; cf 4:8). Hence believers are not urged to win the victory but to stand firm – to appropriate what Christ has won for them.

μεθοδεια, ας f trickery; pl tricks

διαβολος, ου m the devil

"Mention of the 'schemes' of the devil reminds us of the trickery and subterfuge by which evil and temptation present themselves in our lives. Evil rarely looks evil until it accomplishes its goal; it gains entrance by appearing attractive, desirable, and perfectly legitimate. It is a baited and camouflaged trap." Snodgrass

Ephesians 6:12

ὅτι οὐκ ἐστιν ἡμῖν ἡ πάλῃ πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς, πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας, πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τούτου, πρὸς τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις.

Though p⁴⁶ B and a few other MSS read ὑμιν there is sufficient MSS evidence for the support of ἡμιν which Metzger deems to be the harder reading in context. ἡμιν emphasises that the battle is one in which Paul himself is also engaged.

παλη, ης f struggle, fight

Not found elsewhere in the NT. The word was commonly used of the sport of wrestling in the first century. It emphasises the close nature of the struggle – hand-to-hand conflict.

αἷμα, ατος f blood

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

ἀρχη, ης f power, first principle

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power

Cf. 1:21; 3:10.

κοσμοκράτωρ, ορος m world ruler, ruler

A word that does not occur elsewhere in the NT or in the LXX. This word was used in astrology of the planets which were thought to control the fate of mankind. See Acts 19:13-20 for evidence of the occult at Ephesus.

On the devil as ruler of this world, see Mt 6:8,9; Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 Jn 5:19 and Eph 2:2.

σκοτος, ους n darkness, evil

A darkness from which believers have been delivered through Christ (5:8,11; cf. Col 1:13).

πνευματικός, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to the spirit

πονηρία, ας f evil, wickedness

ἐπουράνιος, ον heavenly, celestial

Stott warns against the contemporary trend to 'demythologise' the principalities and powers and to understand them simply as a poetic way of speaking of social structures. O'Brian similarly argues that views such as those of Walter Wink are "seriously flawed both theologically and hermeneutically". But he adds, "To reject the *identification* of the powers with human traditions and socio-political structures, however, is not to deny that these supernatural intelligences work through such agencies; after all, the New Testament speaks of the whole world lying in the power of the evil one."

"Many contemporary Christians seem to be unaware that there is a war in progress, or if they are, they consider it to be fought at a purely human level, and therefore earthly resources will be entirely adequate for conducting the campaigns. V.12 warns us that we are engaged in a deadly warfare against the god of this world and his minions, and that our struggle is *not* against flesh and blood, that is, other people, but against spiritual forces of evil headed up by Satan himself. God's own armour has been forged and furnished by him for our use so that we may obey his injunction to stand firm. Only spiritual weapons are of value in this deadly struggle. Hence the apostle will repeat his urgent call to put on this divine armour." O'Brian

Ephesians 6:13

διὰ τοῦτο ἀναλάβετε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα δυνηθῆτε ἀντιστῆναι ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς πονηρᾶς καὶ ἅπαντα κατεργασάμενοι στήναι.

"The three exhortations of vv. 10, 11, and 13, which are similar in meaning and stress the need for divine empowering, at the same time remind the readers that the devil can be resisted since God has provided all the necessary resources for the battle." O'Brian

ἀναλάβετε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl

ἀναλαμβάνω take up, take, pick up

πανοπλία, ας f see v.11

δυνηθῆτε Verb, aor midd dep subj, 2 pl

δυναμαί see v.11

ἀνθιστημί resist, oppose, withstand

πονηρός, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

Cf. 5:16. "The exact phrase, 'the evil day' turns up in three prophetic passages in the Old Testament (Jer 17:17, 18; Obad 13; cf. Dan 12:1), and has an apocalyptic ring to it with its end-time connotations." O'Brian. Here it probably continues the thought that this present age is marked by evil (5:16), "while the singular evil *day* points to specific times of satanic attack that come with extraordinary force and when the temptation to yield is particularly strong." O'Brian (so also Bruce).

ἅπας, ασα, αν (alternative form of πας) all; pl everyone, everything

κατεργασάμενοι Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom pl κατεργάζομαι do, accomplish

στήναι see v.11

"When they have done everything, that is, made all the necessary preparations for battle and are fully armed, Christians are to stand firm against the onslaughts of the evil powers." O'Brian.

Ephesians 6:14

στήτε οὖν περιζωσάμενοι τὴν ὀσφὺν ὑμῶν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν θώρακα τῆς δικαιοσύνης,

"The four participles which follow the imperative 'stand', namely '*having fastened* the belt of truth', '*having put on* the breastplate of righteousness' (v.14), '*having fitted* your feet' (v.15), and '*having taken up* the shield of faith' (v.16), spell out the actions believers need to have taken if they are to stand firm. Given the context, these participles could also be taken as having implied imperatival force." O'Brian

στήτε Verb, 2 aor act imperat, 2 pl ἵστημι see v.11

περιζωσάμενοι Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom pl
 περιζωννυμι and περιζωννω wrap
 around (of clothes); midd dress oneself,
 make oneself ready

ὄσφυς, υος f waist

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

Men of those days, soldiers included, wore long flowing garments. A belt was necessary to keep these in place and/or to hitch them up in preparation for battle. "The apostle's language clearly alludes to the LXX of Isaiah 11, which declares of the Messiah: 'With righteousness shall he be girded around his waist, and with truth bound around his sides' (vv 4-5). Within its Old Testament context the rule of God's Anointed One in the divine kingdom will be characterised by righteousness and truth. The armour which the Messiah wears in battle is now provided for his people as they engage in spiritual warfare. 'Truth', which occupies a prominent place in Ephesians, refers to the truth of God (4:24; 5:9) revealed in the gospel (1:13; 4:15,21,24), which has its outworking in the lives of believers who are members of the new humanity (4:25; 5:9)." O'Brian
 A mastery of the truth of God will prevent us from getting tangled up and defeated in our spiritual warfare.

ἐνδύω see v.11

θώραξ, ακος m breastplate, chest

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

Cf. Is 59:17 "where Yahweh puts on 'the breastplate of righteousness' as he comes to deliver his people and to punish the nation's enemies. According to Ephesians 6 believers need to be armed with God's own righteousness if they are to be protected against the blows and arrows of their spiritual enemies. Some exegetes understand this righteousness to refer to God's justifying, forensic righteousness which results in right standing before him (cf. Rom 3:21-26); on this view, God's sovereign verdict of acquittal through Christ's death provides the basis for believers standing firm in their spiritual struggle. Many recent commentators, however, in the light of earlier instances of 'righteousness' in Ephesians 4:24; 5:9), regard it as ethical righteousness. If the expression is to be understood in the light of its Old Testament context where righteousness is parallel to salvation, then to speak of donning God's own righteousness or appropriating his salvation is in effect to urge the readers once more to put on the 'new man' of 4:24, who is created to be like God in righteousness and holiness. By putting on God's righteousness believers are committed to being imitators of him (5:1) and acting righteously in all their dealings." O'Brian

Ephesians 6:15

καὶ ὑποδησάμενοι τοὺς πόδας ἐν ἑτοιμασίᾳ
 τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς εἰρήνης,

ὑποδησάμενοι Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom pl
 ὑποδομαι put on (ὁ. τους ποδας put on
 one's shoes)

πόδας Noun, acc pl πους, ποδος m foot
 ἑτοιμασια, ας f readiness; equipment
 εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel
 εἰρηνη, ης f peace

Cf. Is 52:7. "Paul's expression points to a readiness that derives from the good news of peace which has been appropriated by believers. Because this mighty announcement of reconciliation has become powerful in their lives, they will not only resist the evil influences of the powers and withstand temptation, but they also carry the attack into enemy territory by sharing and proclaiming this good news with others... The peace which Yahweh's messenger brings [Is 52:7-10] deals with both vertical and horizontal relationships. This is precisely the focus of Ephesians 2:14-18, where God's Messiah by his death makes peace: he destroys the alienation between Jew and Gentile, creates in himself one new humanity out of the two, and in his body reconciles them both to God (vv. 15-16)... Those who have appropriated that peace for themselves have their feet fitted with this 'readiness', a preparedness to announce the gospel of peace. Paradoxically, they are prepared to announce the gospel of peace as they engage in spiritual warfare!" O'Brian

Ephesians 6:16

ἐν πᾶσιν ἀναλαμβάνετε τὸν θυρεὸν τῆς πίστεως, ἐν ᾧ δυνήσεσθε πάντα τὰ βέλη τοῦ πονηροῦ πεπυρωμένα σβέσαι·

ἐν πᾶσιν here probably means 'besides all these' rather than 'in all circumstances'

ἀναλαμβάνω see v.13
θυρεός, ου m shield

The Roman *scutum*, a large shield measuring four feet by two and a half and shaped like a door (cf. θύρα). "In the Old Testament the shield was used as an image of God's protection for of people (Gen 15:1; Ps 5:12; 18:2, 30, 35; 28:7, etc.). He is 'a shield to those who take refuge in him' (Prov 30:5). Here the shield which believers are to take up is 'the shield of faith'; the genitive is best understood as one of apposition, meaning that faith itself is the shield." O'Brian

πίστις, εως f faith, trust

"To take the shield of faith ... is to appropriate the promises of God on our behalf, confident that he will protect us in the midst of battle. According to 1 Peter 5:8-9, firm faith, described as 'flint-like resolution', is called for in resisting the devil." O'Brian

ἐν ᾧ 'by which'

δυνήσεσθε Verb, fut midd/pass dep indic, 2 pl
δυναμαι can, be able to
βέλος, ους n arrow
πονηρός, α, ου see v.13

πεπυρωμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc
πυροομαι burn
σβέσαι Verb, aor act infin σβεννυμι
extinguish, put out

"The burning arrows depict, in highly metaphorical language, every kind of attack launched by the devil and his hosts against the people of God. They are as wide-ranging as the 'insidious wiles' (v.11) that promote them, and include not only every kind of temptation to ungodly behaviour (cf. 4:26-27), doubt and despair, but also external assaults, such as persecution or false teaching. Paul's experience conveys the sense of extreme danger. The forces of 'the evil one' are incredibly powerful, and left to our own devices we would certainly fail. But these flaming arrows cannot harm those whose trust and confidence are 'in the Lord and in his mighty power' (v.10). They are able to resist and overcome these satanic attacks." O'Brian

Ephesians 6:17

καὶ τὴν περικεφαλαίαν τοῦ σωτηρίου δέξασθε, καὶ τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ πνεύματος, ὃ ἐστὶν ῥῆμα θεοῦ,

Cf. Is 59:17. God gives the helmet of his own warfare to his people for their protection.

περικεφαλαία, ας f helmet
σωτηριον, ου n salvation, saving power

genitive of apposition – 'the helmet which is salvation'. Having God's salvation we have every reason to be confident concerning the outcome of the battle.

δέξασθε Verb, aor midd dep imperat, 2 pl
δεχομαι receive, take
μαχαιρα, ης f sword

A short handled sword which was an important offensive weapon in close combat. Here the genitive is probably one of source "indicating that the Spirit makes the sword powerful and effective." O'Brian. Cf. Heb 4:12.

ῥῆμα, ατος n word

ῥημα suggests a spoken word. "Paul again appears to be drawing on the imagery of Isaiah 11, which refers to the Spirit of the Lord resting on the Messiah, who will smite the earth with the word of his mouth and destroy the wicked with the breath of his lips (v.4)... Once again a weapon carried by the Messiah into battle is available to Christians to use. In their warfare with the powers of darkness, they are able to take hold of the word of God, the gospel (cd. 1:13; 6:15), and to proclaim it in the power of the Spirit... What is in view here ... is the faithful speaking forth the gospel in the realm of darkness, so that men and women held by Satan might hear this liberating and life-giving word and be freed from his grasp." O'Brian.

Ephesians 6:18

διὰ πάσης προσευχῆς καὶ δεήσεως,
προσευχόμενοι ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἐν πνεύματι,
καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ ἀγρυπνοῦντες ἐν πάσῃ
προσκαρτερήσει καὶ δεήσει περὶ πάντων τῶν
ἀγίων,

δια here meaning 'with'

προσευχη, ης f prayer
δεησις, εως f prayer, plea
προσευχομαι pray

Prayer is "foundational for the deployment of all the other weapons." O'Brian

καιρος, ου m time

"Believers are to pray continually because their struggle with the powers of darkness is never ending. And their prayers are to be 'in or by the Spirit', that is, inspired and guided by the same Holy Spirit through whom they have confident access to the Father (2:18). As those who have been built into God's dwelling place in the Spirit (2:22) and who are being filled with the Spirit (5:18), they are to pray to the Father, prompted and guided by the Spirit. This is not a reference to praying in tongues, since not all Christians are expected to engage in such prayer, but has to do with specific requests offered through the Spirit by every believer involved in the spiritual warfare. Even when we do not know *what* to pray as we ought, the Spirit comes to our assistance and intercedes for us with unspoken groanings that are perfectly in line with the will of God (lit, 'according to God', Rom 8:26-27)." O'Brian

ἀγρυπνεω be alert, watch over

Cf. Jesus' exhortation to 'watch and pray' Mk 14:38 etc.

προσκαρτερησις, εως f perseverance

"Believers are to persevere so as to overcome fatigue and discouragement, and not to fall into spiritual sleep or complacency." O'Brian

ἅγιος, α, ον holy; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

"The fourfold 'all' in this verse, pray at *all* times, with *all* prayer and supplication, with *all* perseverance, and make supplication for *all* the saints, underscores in a most emphatic way the significance which the apostle gave to such mutual intercession." O'Brian

Ephesians 6:19

καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ, ἵνα μοι δοθῆ λόγος ἐν ἀνοίξει
τοῦ στόματός μου, ἐν παρρησίᾳ γνωρίσαι τὸ
μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

"At the end of his letters Paul often asks for prayer for himself and his colleagues, particularly in relation to their ministry of the gospel (Rom 15:30-32; 2 Cor 1:11; Col 4:3,4; 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1,2; cf. Phil 1:19)." O'Brian

δοθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3s δίδωμι
ἀνοίξις, εως f (act of) opening
στομα, τος n mouth
παρρησια, ας f openness, boldness,
assurance

Implies both boldness and clarity.

γνωρίζω make known, disclose, know
μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery (of
something formerly unknown but now
revealed)

"Central to this mystery is the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in the one body of Christ (Eph 1-3), a feature which appears to be significant for the specific circumstances apparently alluded to in v.20." O'Brian

εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

An exegetical genitive – 'the mystery which is the gospel'

Ephesians 6:20

ὑπὲρ οὗ πρεσβεύω ἐν ἀλύσει, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ
παρρησιάσωμαι ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι.

πρεσβευω be an ambassador
ἀλυσις, εως f chain, imprisonment

"His imprisonment in Rome serves to open the door for him to address the emperor or his prefect. What he would have little hope of achieving otherwise, Paul might do as an accused prisoner, that is, as 'an ambassador in chains'." O'Brian

παρρησιάσωμαι Verb, aor midd dep subj, 1 s
παρρησιαζομαι speak boldly, have
courage

δει impersonal verb must, should, ought
λαλεω speak, talk

Ephesians 6:21-22

Cf. Col 4:7-8 for almost verbatim agreement between the two epistles at this point.

Ephesians 6:21

Ἴνα δὲ εἰδῆτε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ κατ' ἐμέ, τί πράσσω, πάντα γνωρίσει ὑμῖν Τυχικός ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος ἐν κυρίῳ,

εἰδῆτε Verb, perf/pres act subj, 2 pl οἶδα
(verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

καὶ ὑμεῖς "may well refer to letters sent to other recipients, such as Colossians, which were also delivered by Tychicus." O'Brian

πράσσω practice, do

γνωρίζω see v.19

ἀγαπητός, ἡ, ον beloved

πιστός, ἡ, ον faithful, trustworthy

διάκονος, ου m & f servant, helper

Ephesians 6:22

ὃν ἐπέμψα πρὸς ὑμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἵνα γνῶτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν καὶ παρακαλέση τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν.

πέμπω send

εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο for this very purpose

γνῶτε Verb, aor pass subj, 2 pl γινώσκω

παρακαλέση Verb, aor act subj, 3 s

παρακαλεῶ exhort, encourage

Ephesians 6:23

Εἰρήνη τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς καὶ ἀγάπη μετὰ πίστεως ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

εἰρήνη, ἡς f peace

The emphatic position given to 'peace' in this benediction reflects the centrality of this theme to the letter.

πίστις, εως f see v.16

"The expression 'with faith' signifies not that a priority is given to faith, but that love is accompanied by faith. Its present connection with love takes up Paul's thanksgiving in 1:15 (cf. 3:17), where he expresses his pleasure at news of the readers' faith and their love shown to all the saints." O'Brian. Here he prays that these qualities may continue to characterise them.

Ephesians 6:24

ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγαπώντων τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ.

χάρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour

ἀγαπώντων Verb, pres act ptc, gen pl

ἀγαπαῶ love, show love for

ἀφθαρσία, ας f imperishability, immortality

The sense here may be 'with undying love'. However, O'Brian prefers to link the noun with the preceding 'grace', even though it is separated syntactically. "So grace and immortality, which are blessings of the new age, are what Paul wants to be given in greater measure to his readers. The two blessings are not unrelated: grace, which has appeared often in Ephesians, is imperishable, not subject to corruption, while immortality flows out of God's grace shown in the present but also in the coming ages (cf. 2:7)."