

Ephesians 4:1-16

New English Translation Bible 2019

Fifth century or earlier manuscript variants: [inserted] [~replaced] [-omitted]

Working Outline of the Epistle to the Ephesians

I. Greeting 1:1-2	E Ephesus
II. Praise 1.3-14	P Praise
III. Prayer 1:15-23	H Hope
IV. Teaching 2:1 – 3:21	E Edification
V. Exhortation 4:1-32	S Spiritual life
VI. Warning 5:1-21	I Instruction
VII. Counsel 5:22 – 6:9	A Attitudes
VIII. Spiritual warfare 6:10-20	N Negotiation
IX. Closing 6:21-23	S Salutation

Structure of Ephesians 4:1-16

Application: 'Therefore' 1

Exhortation: walk worthily of our call 1-3

Explanation 1: called to one and same 4-6

Explanation 2: Christ gives grace to each one 7-10

Explanation 3: Christ gives workers to churches 11

Purpose 1: To equip us 12

Purpose 2: To mature us 13

Purpose 3: To conform us 14-15

Purpose 4: To edify us 16

Exhortation

1 I, therefore, the prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live worthily of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, putting up with one another in love, 3 making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Query: How does character relate to salvation?

Query: How does gentleness differ from weakness?

Query: How to show love to the unlovely?

Query: How does peace relate to unity?

Query: Define Christian Stoicism.

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Explanation 1

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the one hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Query: What is the point of all this oneness?

1 Body:	No division
2 Spirit:	No distinction
3 Hope:	Same destiny
4 Lord:	Same obedience
5 Faith:	Same loyalty
6 Baptism:	All acceptable
7 Father God:	All grateful

There is ONE	But MANY
1 Body:	Gatherings
2 Spirit:	Experiences
3 Hope:	Calendars
4 Lord:	Leaders
5 Faith:	Theologies
6 Baptism:	Methods
7 Father God:	Liturgies

What does baptism accomplish? Five views:

- 1 Proclaims and completes a candidates' conversion.
- 2 A 'sign and seal' of conversion, completing a candidates' entry into the covenant community.
- 3 A candidate's testimony to accomplished conversion.
- 4 The community's incorporation of a candidate.
- 5 A ceremony celebrating a candidate's conversion.

Query: What do all of these views have in common, making them 'one baptism'?

Reply: They are all performed in obedience to Jesus.

The gift giver

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he captured captives; he gave gifts to men."

Query: Which Christians are gifted for service?

Query: How does one earn or obtain a desired gift?

Query: Who measures out each one's gift(s)?

Query: Who is the giver of gifts from God?

Query: Whom did he take captive? Departed souls? Defeated spirits?

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Psalm 68:18

Paul: 'When he ascended on high he captured captives; he gave gifts to men'. Eph. 4:8

Hebrew: 'You ascend on high; you have taken many captives. You receive tribute from men'.

Greek: 'You ascended on high; you led captivity captive; you received gifts by a person'. LXX 67:19

Targum: 'You ascended to the firmament, O prophet Moses; you captured captives, you taught the words of Torah, you gave gifts to the sons of men'.

From heaven to earth, then back to heaven

9 Now what is the meaning of "he ascended," except that he also descended to the lower [-regions], namely, the earth? 10 He, the very one who descended, is also the one who ascended above all the heavens, in order to fill all things.

Greek: 'into the lower parts of the earth'.

Optional interpretations:

- a) Sheol, the underworld, to remove the save to heaven.
- b) Earth is the lower parts of 'heaven and earth'.
- c) The image is that of God coming down from atop his 'holy hill', Mount Zaphon, the mountain of the North (=Jerusalem).

Which best fits the context?

He gave (gives) gifted servants

11 And he himself gave [~has given] some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ...

Interpretations:

Cessationist: First apostles, prophets (and evangelists?) only, all of whom have died. Their offices have ceased.

Continuist: Christ still gives divinely-inspired apostles and prophets who speak authoritatively.

Actualist: Apostles=missionaries, prophets=preachers, evangelists=soul-winners.

Ephesians 4:11

Gave: Timeless aorist tense. May be translated with any suitable time tense: Gave, has given, gives.

And the shepherds and teachers: 'teachers' has neither 'and' nor 'the', making shepherds and teachers a single grammatical class of workers.

Interpretations:

- (a) Stylistic touch, leaving teachers as fifth category.
- (b) Shepherds and teachers remain a continuing category after the death of the first apostles, prophets and evangelists.
- (c) Shepherds and teachers are local staff.
- (d) Shepherds are teaching elders, or shepherding teachers, i.e., evangelical 'pastors'.

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Five kinds of New Testament apostles

1. Jesus himself: Our Apostle and High Priest. Heb 3:1
2. The twelve: Commissioned by Jesus. Luke 6:13
3. Church planters: Sent by the Spirit. 1 Thess 2:6
4. Messengers: Sent by churches. 2 Cor 8:23
5. False: Deceitful Christians. 2 Cor 11:13

Query: Which kind was Paul? Acts 11:30; 1 Cor 9:1; 1 Thess 1:6

Goal 1: Attain maturity

12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, that is, to build up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God—a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ's full stature.

Greek: Verses 11-16 = one long sentence.

Query: Who equips? Jesus? The gifted ones? Those whom these empower? All of these together?

Query: Are pastors paid to preach, whilst we laymen must freely do all of the work?

Goal 2: Refuse deceit

14 So we are no longer to be children, tossed back and forth by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching by the trickery of people who craftily carry out their deceitful schemes [of the devil].

Greek: 'So that' (*hina*) + subjunctive mood ('we be' and 'should speak') usually = purpose, sometimes = result.

Query: What are some common tricks by which preachers, politicians and advertisers (try to) deceive us?

Goal 3: Practice love

15 But practicing the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ, who is the head. 16 From him the whole body grows, fitted and held together through every supporting ligament. As each one does its part, the body builds itself up in love.

Query: What kinds of Christian activity give each of us joy, yet seem to help others, too?

Query: What is meant by 'gift-based ministry'? (8 qualities).

Query: How can enjoying ourselves so much be called 'love'?

Conclusion

Query: What is one truth, insight, belief or action that you learned from Ephesians 4.1-16, this week?

For next time:

- Let us read a chapter of Ephesians each day in versions that we trust.
- Let us study Ephesians 4:17-32, preparing comments and queries to share, next session.