

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 269 – September 26th – Ephesians 4:17-5:2

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Ephesians

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

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

Verse 17

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

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

μαρτυροῦμαι 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, οὐς n

nation, people; τα ἔθνη Gentiles

ματαιοτητος, ητος f worthlessness, futility

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

νοῦς, νοῦς, νοι, νοῦν 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

Verse 18

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

πῶρῶσις, εως f stubbornness, lack of feeling

Verse 19

οἵτινες ἀπηληγκότες ἑαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν τῇ ἀσελγείᾳ εἰς ἔργασίαν ἀκαθαρσίας πάσης ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ.

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

ἀπηληγκότες 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, εαυτη, εαυτον 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

ἀκαθαρσία, 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

πλεονεξία, 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

Verse 20

ὁμοῖς 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 μανθάνω
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

Verse 21

εἴ 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.

διδάσκω teach

ἀλήθεια, ας f truth, reality; ἐν ἃ. 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

Verse 22

ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν
ἀναστροφήν 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 exegetical 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.

προτερος, 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

Verse 23

ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν,

ἀνανεοῦσθαι Verb, pres pass infin ἀνανεοῶ
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.

vous, νοος, νοι, νουν m see v.17

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

Verse 24

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

ἐνδύσασθαι Verb, aor midd infin ἐνδύω 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.

δικαιοσυνη, 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.

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."

Verse 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

ἀλλήλων, ος, ος reciprocal pronoun one another

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

Verse 26

ὀργίζεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε· ὁ ἥλιος μὴ ἐπιδυέτω ἐπὶ παροργισμῶ ὑμῶν,

ὀργιζομαι be furious, be angry

ἁμαρτανω 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, ου m the sun

ἐπιδυω set (of the sun)

παροργισμος, ου m anger

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

Verse 27

μηδε δίδοτε τόπον τῷ διαβόλῳ.

μηδε negative particle nor, and not
τοπος, ου m place, opportunity
διαβολος, ου 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.

Verse 28

ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω, μάλλον 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 [ιδίαις] χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν involving both word order and the omission of ἰδίας (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.

Verse 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 διδωμι
χαρις, ιτος f grace

Verse 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
ἀπολυτρωσις, 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

Verse 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
βλασφημια, 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

Verse 32

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

Cf. Col 3:12-13.

ἀλλήλων, ος, ους reciprocal pronoun one
another

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

Sympathetic to the needs of others.

χαριζομαι give, be gracious to, forgive
ἑαυτος, εαυτη, εαυτον 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

Verse 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.

Verse 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

παραδιδωμι 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.