

Situational Context: Circular Letter Ephesians

Paul's Relationship with Ephesus	
¹⁷ Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. ¹⁸ And when they came to him, he said to them ... ³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. (Acts 20:17-18, 31)	Paul spent 3 years ministering in Ephesus
¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you (Eph. 1:15) assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you (Eph. 3:2) assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus (Eph. 4:21)	Apparent second-hand knowledge of recipient of letter
Ephesians is a Prison Epistle	
For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles (Eph. 3:1) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling (Eph. 4:1) the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains (Eph. 6:20)	Paul wrote Ephesians from prison
to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison (Col. 4:3) ¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you ... ¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. (Col. 4:10, 18)	Other prison epistles: Colossians
Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon (Phlm. 1) I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— ¹⁰ I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment ... ¹³ I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel (Phlm. 9-10, 13) Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you (Phlm. 23)	Philemon
¹² I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. ¹⁴ And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. (Phil. 1:12-14; cf. 1:16-17)	Philippians

²¹ So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. ²² I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts. (Eph. 6:21-22)	¹ Paul, an apostle ... and Timothy our brother, ²To the saints ... at Colossae (Col. 1:1-2) ⁷ Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, ⁹and with him Onesimus ... ¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark ... ¹¹ and Jesus who is called Justus ... ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you ... ¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas ... ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.” (Col. 4:7-17)	¹ Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved fellow worker ²and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house ... ¹⁰ I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (Phlm. 1, 10) ²³ Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, ²⁴and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers. (Phlm. 23-24)	<i>The final greetings (and geographical proximity) of Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon argue for a close relationship between these letters</i>
Similarity of Ephesians and Colossians			
In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:7) that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:20) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved (Eph. 2:5) ¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. (Eph. 5:15-16)	in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:14) If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. (Col. 3:1) And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses (Col. 2:13) Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. (Col. 4:5)	<i>73 of the 155 verses in Ephesians have a direct parallel to another verse in Colossians</i>	
Absence of “In Ephesus” from Important Manuscripts			
¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:1-2)	<i>The modifier, “in Ephesus,” is missing from Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Papyrus 46</i>		