

Jim's Notes
April 25, 2007

The Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

From the Letter of St. Ignatius of Antioch written to St. Polycarp of Smyrna, about AD 107, one can see quotes and allusions to St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.

Ignatius to Polycarp, 1:2b
"Forbear everyone in love."

Ephesians 4:2
"with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, **forbearing** one another **in love**"

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Ignatius to Polycarp, 5:1
So too enjoin my brothers in the name of Jesus Christ to **love their wives as the Lord loves the Church.**

Ephesians 5:25, 29
Husbands, **love your wives, as Christ loved the church** and gave himself up for her . . . For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church,

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Ignatius to Polycarp, 6:2
Let your baptism remain as your weaponry, your faith as a **helmet**, your love as a spear, your endurance as a full set of **armor**.

Ephesians 6:11, 17
Put on the whole **armor** of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil . . . And take the **helmet** of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

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Soon after the departure of St. Ignatius of Antioch to Rome (c. AD 107) and before he had heard of his martyrdom, St. Polycarp of Smyrna wrote a letter to the Church in Philippi in which he also quoted from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

Polycarp, Letter to the Philippians, 1:3b
. . . knowing, that **you have been saved by grace, not because of works**, but by the will of God through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3:2
For **by grace you have been saved through faith**; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God
not because of works, lest any man should boast.

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Polycarp, Letter to the Philippians, 11:1

Only, as it is written in these Scriptures, “**Be angry and do not sin, and do not let the sun go down on your anger.**”

Ephesians 4:26

“**Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.**”

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About AD 180, St. Irenaeus of Lyon took for granted that Paul wrote his letter to the Church of Ephesus:

As the **Apostle [Paul] says to the Ephesians**, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,” (Ephesians 1:7) and again to the same he says, “You who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ,” (Ephesians 2:13) and again, “Abolishing in his flesh [the enmities, even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances” (Ephesians 2:15) (Against Heresies: Book 5, chap. 14,3).

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The Muratorian Canon (c. AD 175-200), also attested to this tradition of the Church:

As to the **epistles of Paul**, again, to those who will understand the matter, they indicate of themselves what they are, and from what place or with what object they were directed. He wrote first of all, and at considerable length, to the Corinthians, to check the schism of heresy; and then to the Galatians, to forbid circumcision; and then to the Romans on the rule of the Old Testament Scriptures, and also to show them that Christ is the first object in these; which it is needful for us to discuss severally, as the blessed Apostle Paul, following the rule of his predecessor John, writes to no more than seven churches by name, in this order: the first to the Corinthians, the second **to the Ephesians**, the third to the Philippians, the fourth to the Colossians, the fifth to the Galatians, the sixth to the Thessalonians, the seventh to the Romans.

Below is the oldest known existing copy of the first page of St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. It is part of the Chester Beatty collection (P⁴⁶), copied somewhere around AD 200. The title says in Greek: ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ, that is, "To the Ephesians".

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