

These arguments are linguistic, stylistic, literary, doctrinal, and historical. The linguistic and stylistic arguments are that many words (86) are unique to Ephesians and that Ephesians is not written like an epistle--it is not a real letter addressing a real situation or congregation. Literarily, the style is not like that of any of Paul's other epistles: even though much of Ephesians depends on Colossians. Paul uses Greek words in totally different contexts and with different meanings from those in Colossians. Ephesians concentrates "too much" on the church and not enough on eschatology. The historical arguments are that some references seem to require a later date or, at least, nonapostolic authorship (e.g. 2:20; 3:5). The discussion of the Gentiles also implies a later date.

The result of these points is that some scholars consider Ephesians to be an anthology of quotations from Paul's letters, assembled when these letters were being collected by some unknown Christian (Onesimus is often suggested), and intended to serve as an introduction to Paul's thought.

None of these arguments is individually decisive, however, although their combined weight is what compels some scholars to reject Pauline authorship of Ephesians. Different content can change an author's style, tone, and vocabulary. Paul did not have to write only when there was a problem in a church. His references to the second coming in other letters were often in direct response to situations or questions and may not have been appropriate to his readers in this letter. There is no reason to reject Pauline authorship of Ephesians, which was probably written during his imprisonment in Rome (c. AD 60-61).

The words "in Ephesus" (1:1) are lacking in several old, important manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. Some early church Fathers also witness to their absence in copies that they had. This has led to speculation concerning Paul's addressees. Further questions are raised because, although Paul spent two or three years in Ephesus, there are no personal greetings included (cf. Rom 16: Paul had never been in Rome, yet greeted many people there by name). Several rather impersonal references heighten this impression (1:15; 3:2; 4:21). Its similarities with Colossians have led to speculation that this may be the letter "from Laodicea" (Col. 4:15). Another conclusion is that Romans 16 was originally Ephesians 7. The usual reconstruction of this situation is that Ephesians was a general letter, sent to several churches in the vicinity of Ephesus--perhaps to the entire province of Asia. Not enough is known of first-century letter writing to answer this possibility. Keeping the above peculiarities in mind, there is no reason to reject the traditional designation "to the Ephesians"