

## Ephesians 4:20-32

(study resources:

- New International Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon by Arthur G. Patzia
- Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary, Vol. 3 Romans to Philemon, Clinton E. Arnold
- The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letter to the Ephesians, O'Brien
- The New International Commentary on the NT: Epistles to Colossians Philemon, Ephesians, F.F. Bruce
- The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1,2 Thessalonians, 1,2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Frank E. Gaebelin
- Word Biblical Commentary #42: Ephesians, Lincoln
- The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament, Rogers and Rogers
- Online Interlinear at biblehub.com for verse by verse - <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/ephesians/4-20.htm>
- Bible text English Standard Version)

Ephesians 4:20 resumes Paul's thought began in 4:1-3:

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, Urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called...humility...gentleness...patience...love..."

But, was diverted by the sections on:

1. The Unity of the body of Christ (4:4-6)
2. The Diversity of gifts in the body of Christ necessary for spiritual growth/maturity (4:7-16)
3. The identification of the former way of life (4:17-19)

**Ephesians 4:20 – “But that is not the way you learned Christ! —**

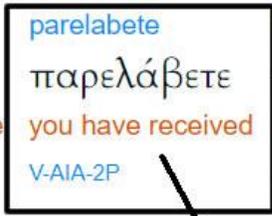
4771 [e]	1161 [e]	3756 [e]	3779 [e]	3129 [e]	3588 [e]	5547 [e]
Hymeis	de	ouch	houtōs	emathete	ton	Christon
20 Ὑμεῖς	δὲ	οὐχ	οὕτως	ἐμάθετε	τὸν	Χριστόν ,
You	however	not	this way	learned	-	Christ
PPro-N2P	Conj	Adv	Adv	V-AIA-2P	Art-AMS	N-AMS

1. “You” is a definite contrast with the “they...the Gentiles...” of 4:17-19 who are:
  - a. Futility of their minds
  - b. Darkened in their understanding
  - c. Alienated from the life of God
  - d. Ignorant
  - e. Harden hearts
  - f. Calloused souls
  - g. Given themselves over to sensuality and greed
  - h. Practicing every kind of impurity
2. “to learn Christ” is *emathete tou Christou*. The Greek *emathete* is aorist indicative active from *manthano* (or, “disciple”) meaning “to learn”. The implication is that just as the Jews learned the Torah, now the believer learns Christ.
  - a. This implies two things:
    - i. Educational, academic, catechetical /cat-e-cet-i-cal/ instruction
    - ii. Life of devotion becoming a follower or a disciple of the person Jesus Christ.
  - b. Paul studied and learned of Christ

- c. Paul sent Timothy to Corinth to remind them of Paul's ways in Christ and to teach the things Paul teaches in every church (1 Corinthians 4:17)
  - i. "That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church." – 1 Corinthians 4:17
- d. Colossians 2:6 is the very essence of this concept "to learn of Christ":
  - i. "Therefore, as you received (*paralabete*) Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that *no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, **according to the elemental spirits of the world**, and **not according to Christ.***" – Colossians 2:6-8
    - 1. According to Christ:
      - a. Received Christ Jesus
      - b. Rooted in him
      - c. Built up in him
      - d. Established in the faith
      - e. You were taught
    - 2. According to the elemental spirits of the world:
      - a. Take "you" captive (believers can still be taken captive by demons)
      - b. "Philosophy" - world views based not in the Truth of God's created reality or God's revealed Word)
      - c. "Empty deceit" - vain, empty, false realities such as OT idols)
      - d. "Human tradition" - all human tradition was at one time a new, novel idea that superseded some previous "tradition" and created a new culture, a new way of life, a new idea that became the tradition, culture or the new, contemporary way of viewing life and doing things. Point: if something can be updated and changed, then it cannot have been eternal Truth.
    - 3. These Colossians "came to know the grace of God in truth"...
      - a. ...from Epaphras who himself came from Ephesus after being with Paul according to Colossians 1:6-7 – "...just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf."
      - b. Paul had not visited the Colossians (Col. 2:1) when he wrote the letter to them.

# Colossians 2:6-7

5613 [e]	3767 [e]	3880 [e]		3588 [e]	5547 [e]	2424 [e]	3588 [e]	2962 [e]	1722 [e]
Hōs	oun	parelabete	ton	Christon	lēoun	ton	Kyrion	en	
6 Ὡς	οὖν	παρελάβετε	τὸν	Χριστὸν	Ἰησοῦν	τὸν	Κύριον	,	ἐν
Just as	therefore	you have received	-	Christ	Jesus	the	Lord		in
Adv	Conj	V-AIA-2P	Art-AMS	N-AMS	N-AMS	Art-AMS	N-AMS		Prep



**parelabete** (παρελαβετε) aorist indicative active of *paralambanw* (παρελαβετε) means "to receive, to receive through transmission, to receive through teaching; equivalent to the rabbinical terms for receiving and passing on tradition"  
 - para - is a preposition meaning "from, of, at, by, besides, near"  
 - lambano - verb meaning "to take with the hand to carry, to take/claim as ones own; to associate with as a companion; to receive or gain what is given."

846 [e]	4043 [e]	
autō	peripateite	
αὐτῷ	περιπατεῖτε	,
Him	walk	
PPro-DM3S	V-PMA-2P	

4492 [e]	2532 [e]	2026 [e]		1722 [e]	846 [e]	2532 [e]
errizōmenoi	kai	epoikodomoumenoi	en	autō	kai	
7 ἑρριζωμένοι	καὶ	ἐποικοδομοῦμενοι	ἐν	αὐτῷ	,	καὶ
having been rooted	and	being built up	in	Him		and
V-RPM/P-NMP	Conj	V-PPM/P-NMP	Prep	PPro-DM3S		Conj

950 [e]	3588 [e]	4102 [e]	2531 [e]	1321 [e]	4052 [e]	1722 [e]
bebaioumenoi	tē	pistei	kathōs	edidachthēte	perisseuontes	en
βεβαιούμενοι	τῇ	πίστει	καθὼς	ἐδιδάχθητε	,	περισσεύοντες
being strengthened in	the	faith	just as	you were taught		abounding
V-PPM/P-NMP	Art-DFS	N-DFS	Adv	V-AIP-2P		V-PPA-NMP
						Prep

846 [e]	1722 [e]	2169 [e]
autē	en	eucharistia
αὐτῇ)	ἐν	εὐχαριστίᾳ
it	with	thanksgiving
PPro-DF3S	Prep	N-DFS

**Parelabete** (aorist, active indicative form of the verb *paralambano*):

- aorist tense – conveys point of action in the past which is complete, one-time action. Words that help understand the aorist tense: effectively, successfully, completely, even once, ever, as a whole, indeed, in fact, actually, really do."

- indicative mood – is the mood of reality. Indicative mood indicates that the verb really happened, at least in the mind of the speaker.

- active voice – the subject causes or produces the action of the verb.

1. Colossians 2:6-7 is addressing the first and second phase of salvation (Justification and Sanctification):
  - a. “received” (parelabete) – believed in Jesus, accepted Christ, became a Christian or got born again is described as accepting or receiving a teaching, tradition, a truth which can be identified as Jesus Christ himself (but, not a personality separated from a very specific teaching, tradition, doctrine or truth.)
  - b. “walk” (peripateite) – meaning “to walk” and it is used in the Hebrew ethical sense which is addressing how your life is conducted and how you live ethically. This is the second phase of the Christian life which is the renewing of the mind, the maturing, the growing in Christ. It is done the SAME WAY the person became a believer (born again) – they have to hear and receive the teaching, instruction, doctrine, traditions, the Truth. This Truth/teaching, again, cannot be separated from the person Jesus Christ. There is not a choice that includes being able to “follow Jesus” and at the same time “reject the teaching” (scripture, tradition, apostolic doctrine.)

**Ephesians 4:21 – “assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,”**

	1487 [e]	1065 [e]	846 [e]	191 [e]	2532 [e]	1722 [e]	846 [e]	1321 [e]	2531 [e]
	ei	ge	auton	ēkousate	kai	en	autō	edidachthēte	kathōs
<b>21</b>	εἰ	γε	αὐτὸν	ἠκούσατε	καὶ	ἐν	αὐτῷ	ἐδιδάχθητε ,	καθὼς
	if	indeed	Him	you have heard	and	in	Him	have been taught	just as
	Conj	Prtcl	PPro-AM3S	V-AIA-2P	Conj	Prep	PPro-DM3S	V-AIP-2P	Adv

	1510 [e]	225 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	2424 [e]
	estin	alētheia	en	tō	lēsou
	ἐστιν	ἀλήθεια	ἐν	τῷ	Ἰησοῦ .
	is	[the] truth	in	-	Jesus
	V-PIA-3S	N-NFS	Prep	Art-DMS	N-DMS

1. “assuming” (*ei ge*), or “if indeed”, or “surely” means it is a certainty. This is the first class condition of “if” in the Greek which means “if, and I know it is true”, and not the third class condition which we are familiar which means, “maybe you did or maybe you did not, we are not sure.” This does not express Paul’s doubt, but his absolute certainty and confidence that they have “heard” and “have been taught”.
2. “in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus” means this whole discussion is still describing “you learned Christ” in 4:20.
  - a. “Truth that is in Jesus” and “learned Christ” establishes the fact that the DOCTRINE and the PERSON cannot be separated.
    - i. The TRUTH and JESUS cannot be divided.

- ii. It is inaccurate to say “I follow Christ” but reject the Scriptural account.
- iii. A person cannot be a “follower of Christ” without being accepting of and pursuing obedience to the full text of Scripture.

Conditions of “If” or “εἰ”			
Class	Viewpoint	Statement	Example
First	Reality	“If, and I know it to be true.”	Mt. 4:3, 6
Second	Unreality	“If you will, but you won’t”	Mt. 4:9
Third	Unknown	“If, maybe you will, maybe you won’t”	1 Jn. 1:9
Fourth	Unlikely	“If, I wish it were true, but it is not”	1 Pt. 3:14, 17

- 3. “Heard” *akouo* – “to hear”
  - a. Occurred in Ephesians 2:17-20 – When Jesus preached and when the teaching of the apostles and prophets of the NT church preached/taught.
  - b. “Heard of him” refers to hearing the Gospel and the hearer being born again. This is phase one.
- 4. “Taught” *didasko* – to teach, or to be taught (passive)
  - a. “you were taught in him” is addressing the second phase of the Christian’s life which is renewing of the mind for sanctification, growth and production of spiritual fruit seen in the life style (good deeds) of the believer being transformed into the image of Jesus, the Creator.
- 5. “Truth” has no article in the original Greek. This TRUTH is going to be the foundation of what follows in Paul’s writing to the Ephesians:
  - a. “True righteousness and holiness” instead of a religious standard of the *kosmos* (world) (4:24)
  - b. Speak Truth to neighbors instead of falsehood such as the false philosophies and malicious scheming of men. (4:25)
  - c. “Speak Truth in love” was contrasted to the unstable teaching of the men who adapt their “truth” (or, false teaching) with craftiness and deceitful schemes (4:14-15)
- 6. “Jesus” – as used here by Paul is the only place in Ephesians that Jesus is used without the title “Christ” (meaning “anointed one” or “Messiah”).
  - a. Paul switches from using “Christ” in 4:20 to “Jesus” here in 4:21
  - b. This is stressing the historical person of the man Jesus, and not merely the concept of a Messiah.
  - c. TRUTH that is in JESUS.
    - i. Again, the teaching is not separated from the historical man.
    - ii. Christianity is not a concept, but instead a reality directly connected with creation, history and our daily activity (which need to be constantly changing to conform with Truth)