



*Sunday School Lesson*  
**Eph. 4:7-16**  
 by Lorin L. Cranford  
 All rights reserved ©

**God's Provision for His Church**



A copy of this lesson is posted in Adobe pdf format at <http://cranfordville.com> under [Bible Studies](#) in the Bible Study Aids section. A note about the [blue, underlined](#) material: These are hyperlinks that allow you to click them on and bring up the specified scripture passage automatically while working inside the pdf file connected to the internet. Just use your web browser's back arrow or the taskbar to return to the lesson material.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Quick Links to the Study**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| I. <a href="#">Context</a><br>a. <a href="#">Historical</a><br>b. <a href="#">Literary</a> | II. <a href="#">Message</a><br>a. <a href="#">God gave grace gifts, vv. 7-10</a><br>b. <a href="#">God gave leaders, vv. 11-16</a> |
|--|--|

\*\*\*\*\*

**What does it take for a church to succeed? Many different answers to that question come out of contemporary philosophies of church growth. Most of them revolve around numbers and money. For a church to succeed it must be getting larger and it must bring in increasingly larger amounts of offerings.**

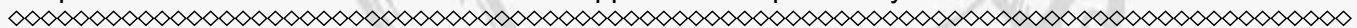
**The apostle Paul had a different take on this idea. One place where he expresses his views comes in Eph. 4:7-16. Here the philosophy of success for a church revolves around the leadership of the church training the membership of the church to so ministry and to develop spiritually. If a church is growing spiritually in active ministry it is a successful congregation, according to Paul. Increased numbers and money are very secondary concerns, and will take care of themselves when the priorities are in correct order.**

**We can learn much from Paul at this point.**



**I. Context**

As is the customary pattern, much of the background material here will be drawn from [previous studies](#) in Ephesians. New material will revise and supplement the previously written materials.



**a. Historical**

**External History.** The compositional history of Ephesians poses some interesting challenges. The document is written in the form of an ancient letter (See my [Epistolary Genre](#) discussion for details), following roughly the [traditional segments](#): Praescriptio (1:1-2); Proem (1:3-23); Body (2:1-6:22); Conclusio (6:23-24). In the Adscriptio section (to the recipients) in the beginning segment, "To

[the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus](#)" (NRSV), many of the earliest manuscripts of this document do not contain the words "who are in Ephesus." Many scholars have taken to as a signal that this document was written as a "circular" letter, that is, these words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ were intentionally left out of the original composition, so that, as the letter was read to different congregations in different cities,



read to a variety of churches, with Ephesus being one of primary ones. Largely because of this, but not entirely, the letter is broader in scope and less personal.

It was carried to Ephesus along with Colossians and Philemon by the representatives of Paul from his place of imprisonment. This would have included Tychicus (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7-8), along with

the appropriate reference would be inserted orally by the reader. That this kind of thing was done in the ancient world can be demonstrated with other writings outside the New Testament. Although not everyone concurs with this view, it is highly probable that such an understanding correctly assesses the text situation.

This then complicates the identification of when, where, to whom, by whom. The document itself doesn't provide the personal details about either the author or especially the intended readers as one finds in Romans, 1/2 Corinthians, Galatians etc. How to account for this occasions a wide diversity of responses. Without going into detailed elaboration of the options, let me simply state my convictions on this. In spite of some serious problems, I tend toward the more traditional view point of Pauline authorship and thus see the document written as a part of the later writing ministry of the apostle Paul in the late 50s to the 60s before his death in the middle 60s of the first Christian century. Ephesians belongs to the so-called [Prison Letters](#) of Paul that include Philipians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon.

This assumption implies that the letter was written probably while Paul was in prison in Rome in the early 60s, or -- more likely -- prior to that when in prison in Caesarea (late 50s). Colossians was written at the same time and Ephesians is closely connected to it, sharing substantial vocabulary and writing style often not found elsewhere in the Pauline section of the New Testament. The letter was intended to be

the converted slave Onesimus (Col. 4:9). Perhaps others were in the group as well.

Paul's relationship with the Christian community at Ephesus reaches back to the beginning of the 50s on the second missionary journey. The Christian community at Ephesus had its beginnings with a brief stop by Paul at the end of the second missionary (Acts 18:18-22), where Priscilla and Aquila stayed behind and developed the work in the early 50s. On the third missionary journey, Paul spent over two years in ministry (Acts 19:8,10; 20:31) from about 53 to 54 AD. In the traditional understanding of Ephesians, Paul is now writing this letter to them either from Caesarea (58-59 AD) or from Rome (61-62 AD).

The Christian community at Ephesus enjoyed a lengthy ministry from the apostle Paul, and also from the apostle John who spent most of his later years (60s to 90s) in ministry there. The Christian movement gradually made significant impact on the city and by the third century AD had become a major center of Christian activity. Thus the work of Paul and John laid an important foundation for a witness for Christ that would last for hundreds of years in this area.

**Internal History.** Time and place markers inside 4:7-16 are very limited due to the didactic nature of the text. They most revolve around the scripture quote from Psalms and will be treated in detail in the exegesis section below.

## b. Literary

**Genre.** Ephesians is an ancient letter. As such it bears great similarity to most of Paul's other letters in the New Testament. The standard elements, listed below, can be identified.

But Ephesians possesses some distinctive traits as a letter also. One of the distinctive surfaces in the Proem of 1:3-23. It divides itself into two parts, vv. 3-14, and vv. 15-23. A lot of content is packed into these twenty verses, but in the original Greek text all this material is contained in but two sentences. The two core expressions carry a huge amount of expansion elements that are attached: 1) "praise be to God..." (v. 3), and 2) "I do not stop giving thanks for you..." (v. 16). The second part, vv. 15-23, contain the usual elements of thanksgiving and intercession that typify most of the *Proema* in the letters of Paul. Part one, vv. 3-14, stands as an eloquent praise song to God with tones of formal liturgical structure. The roots of this reach back, not into Greek origins, but rather into Hebrew beginnings. Andrew Lincoln (*Word Biblical Commentary*, Logos Systems) provides a helpful synopsis of this:

This opening passage with its outburst of praise has the form of an extended blessing or berakah ("Blessed be God, who has ..."); the OT and Jewish worship provide the background for this form. Εὐλογητός, "blessed," is frequently used in the LXX to render the Hebrew *bārûk*. C. Westermann (*The Praise of God in the Psalms*, tr. K. R. Crim [London: Epworth Press, 1966] 87-89) has shown that in the OT the earliest form of berakah occurred when an individual responded simply to an act of God's deliverance or provision (e.g., Gen 14:20; 24:27), that later it became associated with the cult and was used in Israel's corporate worship (e.g., Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple begins and ends with the berakah formula in 1 Kgs 8:15, 56), and that a further stage of development is evidenced by the use of the berakah to conclude the books of the Psalter (Pss 41:13; 72:18, 19; 89:52; 106:48). Such eulogies remained dominant in Jewish worship and can be found in the Qumran literature (e.g., 1QS 11.15; 1QH 5.20; 10.14; 11.27, 29, 32, 33; 16.8), in Zechariah's prayer of Luke 1:68-75, and in rabbinic Judaism where they



were the most characteristic formulae for prayer, as prayers such as the *Ahābā Rabbā* and the *Šēmōnēh Ēsrēh* show. The form of the latter, the *Eighteen Benedictions* of the synagogue service, can be seen from the first benediction:

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, the great, mighty and revered God, the most high God, who bestowest loving-kindnesses, and possessest all things; who rememberest the pious deeds of the patriarchs and in love will bring a redeemer to their children's children for thy name's sake. (*The Authorized Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth of*

*Nations*, tr. S. Singer [London: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd., 1962] 46).

Another distinctive trait of Ephesians is its circular letter nature. As discussed above under **External History**, the letter was intended to be read in more than one Christian community. Thus the usual nature of a letter as an "occasional letter," produced in response to specific needs of a specific group of Christians, is not found in Ephesians. Rather the treatment of broader, more timeless spiritual principles typifies Ephesians, since it is not attempting to address unique circumstances in the Christian community at Ephesus to the exclusion of other places.

Some older commentators have seen in this an impersonal tone and thus have questioned Pauline authorship. But just the opposite is the case. The circular nature of the letter necessitates the less personal focus of the letter. Indeed, some have suggested that Ephesians may have been intended as a "cover letter" for Colossians and Philemon, since the three documents were carried to their destinations by the same individuals at the same time. With it being read first to a congregation, a rich spiritual tone would be set for the reading of Colossians and Philemon.

**Literary Context.** Now for the literary setting of our passage. The Ephesian letter follows ancient letter writing patterns reasonably close and thus falls into the following divisions:

**Praescriptio** (introductory materials): 1:1-2

The sender, recipients and greeting are con-

tained in these initial two verses.

**Proem** (prayer expressions): 1:3-23

Comprised of two major sections, this passage begins with an eloquent praise to God in one long sentence in the Greek (**1:3-14**), and then moves to a more traditional prayer of thanksgiving and intercession for the readers (1:15-23).

**Body of the letter**: 2:1-6:22

**The first major segment** (2:1-3:21) focuses on the marvelous redemptive work of God through Christ Jesus that has lifted us out of sin and into spiritual union and fellowship with Almighty God. This is brought to a grand climax with another doxology of praise in 3:14-21.

**The second major segment** (4:1-6:22) focuses on moral exhortation, technically known as paraenesis. The 'how we should live' emphasis here flows naturally from the 'who we are spiritually' first section in chapters two and three. Christian living has to be based upon spiritual relationship to the Heavenly

Father for it to be authentic.

This second major division of the letter body falls into several natural units of text material, known as pericopes: (1) 4:1-16 (Christian unity as the collective Body of Christ); (2) 4:17-24 (The Old and New Ways of Living); (3) 4:25-5:5 (Guidelines for the New Way of Living); (4) 5:6-21 (Walking as Children of Light); (5) 5:22-6:9 (Living as a Christian Family); (6) 6:10-22 (Doing Battle with Evil).

**Conclusio**: 6:23-24

The concluding prayer of blessing for peace and grace.

For further details see <http://cranfordville.com/letlstp.htm>.

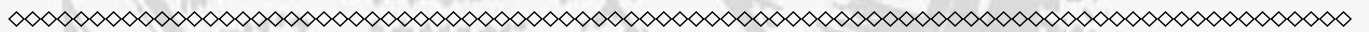
Thus our passage, 4:7-16, comes as a part of the second major section of the Body proper of the letter. The focus of 4:1-16 is Christian unity, and verses 7-16 pick up the second part of that unit of material.

---

---

## II. Message

**Literary Structure.** As is detailed more precisely in the [Block Diagram](#) and [Summary of Rhetorical Structure](#) sections of this study, the passage naturally divides into two sections. Both core expressions play off the Greek verb δίδωμι (didomi): 1) *ἐδόθη* "was given" in v. 7; and 2) *ἔδωκεν* "gave" in verse 11. In the first instance God gave grace to each member of the church; in the second instance God gave leaders to the church.



### a. God gave grace gifts, vv. 7-10

Greek NT	NASB	NRSV	NLT
<i>4.7 Ἐνὶ δὲ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 4.8 διὸ λέγει, Ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. 4.9 τὸ δὲ Ἄνεβη τί ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς; 4.10 ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα.</i>	7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." 9 (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)	7 But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." 9 (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.)	7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift according to the generosity of Christ. 8 That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." 9 Notice that it says "he ascended." This means that Christ first came down to the lowly world in which we live. 10 The same one who came down is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that his rule might fill the entire universe.

## Notes:

To be noted are the inclusio markers binding verses 7-16 together as a unit of material. Ralph Martin (*Interpretation*, Logos Systems) calls attention to this feature.

Note that the section verses 7–16 is framed by the same link term, rendered “measure” (metron). So the writer’s carefully crafted section is inclusive in a double way: literarily he uses the device of inclusio, and theologically he wants everyone to be included in the scope of the gifts that were Christ’s endowment at his enthronement.

Additional markers for vv. 7-16 as a unit of material include “each one” (v. 7, *Ἐνὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ*; v. 16, *ἑνὸς ἑκάστου*). Also the orientation of the verbs is second plural “you” in vv. 1-6 and vv. 17-32, but is first plural “we” in vv. 7-16.

The structure of the ideas in vv. 7-10 as the first subsection section is clear. In verse seven, Paul makes a foundational assertion that God gave grace to each member of the church. This claim is buttressed by a scripture proof from Psalm 68 in verse eight. Then Paul elaborates (vv. 9-10) on the scripture quote in order to tie it to the basic claim at the beginning.

**Claim:** “But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift” ( *Ἐνὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ*). Although a few commentators take “to each one” as implying just the leadership roles mentioned in verse eleven, the more natural understanding is that ‘each one’ refers to the membership of a congregation inclusively.

What was given to each member of the church was “grace.” Paul’s use of χάρις here is roughly with the same meaning of χάρισμα elsewhere, as Ernest Best notes:<sup>1</sup>

χάρις is used here in relation not to redemptive grace as in 2:5, 8 but to special graces, an extension of its use in 3:2, 7, 8 of Paul’s ministry; Paul had already used this sense (Rom 12:6); in v. 7 as in 3:2, 7, 8 it is associated with δίδωμι (cf Merklein, Amt, 63). Only those receiving redemptive grace receive charismatic graces. Within our context χάρις is the equivalent of χάρισμα (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31; cf 1 Cor 3:10; Gal 2:9; Rom 1:5; 12:3).

Thus as a person comes into the church he / she is “gifted” with the capacity to serve Christ through the church in some capacity.

The measuring extent of this gifting by God’s

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1998), 377.

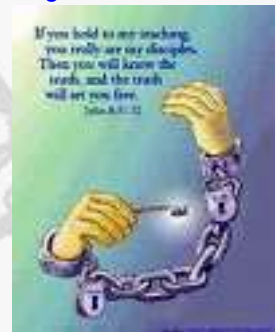
grace is defined as “according to the measure of Christ’s gift.” Each of the key words here underscores ‘giftedness’ as coming from God and not connected to natural talents or preferences for service. Note Best’s (Ibid, 377) comments:

The grace is given according to the μέτρον. The word appears twice more in our passage (vv. 13, 16) but only twice elsewhere in Paul (Rom 12:3; 2 Cor 10:13), and has probably the sense ‘full measure’. The giving is not random but in accordance with Christ’s plan; he apportions gifts to believers.<sup>3</sup> Graces are not given because of an existing degree of faith in believers; they are gifts, not the result of works (cf Origen, Chrysostom). Are they however given to supplement the natural talents which believers already possess? AE does not enter into such questions, but the stress he lays on the givenness of the gifts suggests he would have had no place for any idea of inborn talent or educational achievement as predetermining who should have each particular gift. Graces however never destroy individuality and the fact that they are given according to measure should preserve believers from envying the gifts bestowed on others.

Finally, to be noted here is the inclusiveness of this gifting of Christ to members of the church. Each person in the body of Christ has been gifted by the Spirit of Christ for service. No one is left out; everyone has a contribution to make to the building up of the church.

**Scripture Proof:** “Therefore it is said, ‘When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.’” (*διὸ λέγει, Ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἡχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις*). The connection of the scripture quote to the foundational principle of divine gifting is defined by the conjunction *διὸ*, translated as ‘therefore.’ As an inferential coordinate conjunction, it is “a coordinating conjunction that conveys a deduction, conclusion, summary, or inference to the preceding discussion. Examples include ἄρα, γάρ, and διότι.”<sup>2</sup> Paul turns to Psalm 68:18 as an OT scriptural foundation for his claim to divine gifting.

His use of the Psalm<sup>3</sup> poses some challenges. The meaning attached to this verse by Paul goes a different direction from the natural original



<sup>2</sup>Michael S. Heiser, *Glossary of Morpho-Syntactic Database Terminology* (Logos Bible Software, 2005; 2005), inferential.

<sup>3</sup>NRSV: “You ascended the high mount, leading captives in your train and receiving gifts from people, even from those who rebel against the Lord God’s abiding there.”

meaning as Bratcher and Nida describe:<sup>4</sup>

Psalm 68.18 reads in the Hebrew text: “You went up on the heights, you captured captives, you received gifts among men,” which is a description of the procession of the victorious king up Mount Zion, where he is paid tribute by his defeated enemies. TEV translates Psalm 68.18: He goes up to the heights, taking many captives with him; he receives gifts from rebellious men. The Septuagint follows the Hebrew text closely and does not change the meaning of the text.

**Commentary:** “When it says, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things” (4.9 τὸ δὲ Ἀνέβη τί ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς; 4.10 ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστίν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα.).

In traditional Jewish midrashic procedure, Paul applies the ascent concept to Christ ascending to Heaven after his resurrection. Where does he get this meaning? Many proposals have been set forth by commentators over the centuries.<sup>5</sup> One likely possibility is that he makes a new interpretation of this verse based upon ancient Jewish [targumaic](#) interpretation, which went along these lines (Best, 380):

<sup>4</sup>Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, Originally Published Under Title: A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. 1983., UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 98.

<sup>5</sup>Older commentators who spotted the difficulty about the nature of the quotation in v. 8 resorted to various explanations,<sup>6</sup> attributing the variation to a lapse in memory, to an inspired alteration (since it appears in the NT and the NT is scripture, it must be scripture!), to the belief that giving is more Christian than receiving (Calvin), that the altered text provides a deeper or more mystical meaning (Ellicott, Grotius), or explaining it as ‘Christ received faith and gave gifts’ (Theodoret, Oecumenius); Lock regarded it as part of a Christian hymn;<sup>7</sup> H. St. J. Thackeray suggested that the change lay in line with Jewish exegesis which permitted the interchange of the order of letters in a word (such a solution would imply AE had been rabbinically trained which would be true if AE was Paul but not necessarily if he was one of his disciples; the change would hardly have been appreciated by his readers).<sup>8</sup> However, recent commentators, having discovered that the same change of meaning in the verb is present in the Targum of Ps 68, have concluded that AE is not quoting the OT directly but the targum.<sup>9</sup> [Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1998), 379.]

You ascended the firmament, Prophet Moses; you took captivity captive; you learned the words of the Law; you gave them as gifts to the sons of man.

By substituting Christ for Moses, Paul sees the Psalm as alluding to Christ's incarnation, His descent, and Christ's ascension to the Father, His ascent, in this Psalm. Thus the Psalm takes on a new and different meaning from that attributed to it in ancient Jewish understanding.



MS 204  
Hebrew square book script, frag. 1a full of 209 c.

This is further underscored by the association of this Psalm with Pentecost and the first century Jewish understanding of Pentecost as celebrating the giving of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. But from the coming of the Holy Spirit as a divine gift to the church on the Day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2) onward, Christ gifted His church in ways far beyond what Moses accomplished with the Law on Sinai.

The church fathers in the early centuries of interpretive history tended to see the taking of captives as implying that Christ descended into Hell when He died on the cross in order to conquer Satan and the demons before His resurrection on Sunday morning. But neither the Psalm nor Paul's use of it suggest this as the proper meaning of the text.

Paul sees Christ's descent as going into death for human sinfulness, that is, dying on the cross as a sacrifice for sins. His ascent is then victorious His return to the Heavenly Father forty days after His resurrection. In His dying Christ laid the foundation for taking control over the bondage that sin brings. This victorious control over sin was realized as He returned to the Father in Heaven.

The objective of all this? “so that he might fill all things” (ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα). Andrew Lincoln provides some helpful observations.<sup>6</sup>

ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα, “in order that he might

<sup>6</sup>Andrew T. Lincoln, vol. 42, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 248.

fill the cosmos.” Many scholars link this clause with both the descent and ascent in order to argue that, by having Christ descend to the lower parts of the cosmos and then ascend to heaven, the requirements for filling the universe are met. In this way they interpret the filling in a quasi-physical sense. Strictly speaking, however, the ἵνα clause is connected to the statement about Christ’s ascent and not to both the descent and the ascent. Noting this enables one not to be misled by the concept of filling and to see the parallel with 1:22, 23, where it is by virtue of his exaltation that Christ can be said to fill the universe in every respect as he pervades it with his rule (cf. Comment on 1:23 for discussion of this meaning of “to fill”).

The generalized understanding of ‘filling all things’ provides Paul the conceptual space to see a basis for Christ giving gifts of grace to the members of the church. The divine presence saturates everything, especially the church. Thus, the filling out of Christ’s full control in His ascension enabled the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to empower the church to serve Christ.

What does all this have to do with us today? Plenty! What Paul has declared in vv. 7-10 stand as timeless truth and thus is equally applicable to Christian congregations at any point in time.

Clearly we can see from these verses that every member of the church has a contribution to make to Christ through serving in the church. No such thing as ‘spectator religion’ exists legitimately in bibli-

cal Christianity. To be in Christ means to be in the church. And to be in the church means service.

No one can say, “I can’t do anything in the church.” To make that statement is to deny that God in Christ has gifted everyone coming into the church. To just want to attend the worship services without being a meaningful part of the church is outside the boundaries of what these verses allow.

Also, the contribution that each church member can make is in direct connection to the divine gifting. Whatever we contribute in time and effort needs to come through following the leadership of Christ in service. Just to sing because we are talented singers is not adequate. Our singing must grow out of Christ’s leadership to sing. Natural talents will play some role in how we serve, but this gifting and natural talents are two separate things. Divinely blessed service grows out of the gifting, which may use natural talents, but just as easily can go beyond them into new areas.

Finally, these verses remind us that our being ‘gifted’ is from God in Christ. And is based on Calvary and Easter Sunday. We can contribute meaningfully to the church only because Christ died for our sins and was raised to give us new life. In Christ’s ascension to the Father and the assumption of full control come gifts of grace upon us as a part of His body. Only as this divine grace activates and guides our contribution to the church can it be blessed of God.



**b. God gave leaders, vv. 11-16**

<b>Greek NT</b>	<b>NASB</b>	<b>NRSV</b>	<b>NLT</b>
<p><b>4.11</b> καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους, <b>4.12</b> πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, <b>4.13</b> μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, <b>4.14</b> ἵνα μη-</p>	<p>11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children,</p>	<p>11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. 14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine,</p>	<p>11 He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, 13 until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be like chil-</p>

κέτι ὄμεν νήπιοι, κλυδωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐν πανουργίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης, 4.15 ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ, Χριστός, 4.16 ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους τὴν αὐξήσιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ.

tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. 15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

dren, forever changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us something different or because someone has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16 Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

#### Notes:

These verses are made up of one long sentence in the original Greek text. The core of the sentence, i.e., the main clause, is "He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,..." (καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους,...) in verse 11. The material in verses 12-16 represent expansion elements off this core. These statements elaborate on the purpose of this giving of leaders to the church.

**Leaders:** "He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,..." (καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους,...). The NASB is actually closer to the Greek text than either the NRSV or the NLT, both of which inject interpretive assumptions into their translations. This is particularly prominent in the NRSV, "The gifts he gave..." and the NLT, "He is the one who gave these gifts to the church:..." Neither of these assumptions is particularly wrong, but they tie verse eleven to verse ten more closely than is justified in the Greek text wording.

What they seek to stress, and is present by implication rather than by direct statement, is that the

leadership of the church is a gift from God. A part of the divine gifting of grace (cf. verse 7) is the giving of leaders to the church to help each member fulfill his/her service obligations. Thus the leadership of a congregation stands as God's gift to it. This perspective defines the relationship between leaders and members of a church.

Who are the leaders that God gave? Five types of leaders are mentioned here: apostles (ἀποστόλους), prophets (προφήτας), evangelists (εὐαγγελιστάς), pastors (ποιμένας), and teachers (διδασκάλους).

Two observations are crucial to correct understanding.

First, the wording of the Greek text clearly sets off apostles in a special category separate from the remaining groups: μὲν...δὲ...δὲ...δὲ. Exactly what to make of this is not entirely clear, since elsewhere in Ephesians apostles and prophets are closely linked:

**Eph. 2:19-20.** "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone."

**Eph. 3:5.** "In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."



But in 4:11, the special role of apostles is clearly marked off by the wording of the Greek text.

Andrew Lincoln has some very helpful observations on the wording of the Greek text here.<sup>7</sup>

τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους, “the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers.” As our translation indicates, in the expression τοὺς μὲν ... τοὺς δὲ..., since it comes with a list of differing nouns, the article is most probably to be interpreted as simply an article which belongs directly with the following nouns and not as a substantive used absolutely with the nouns serving as predicates. In other words, the better translation is “it was he who gave, on the one hand, the apostles, on the other, the prophets” or simply, as above, “it was he who gave the apostles, the prophets,” rather than, as in most versions, “it was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets.” The preferred translation is in line with the most frequent force of the article with μὲν ... δὲ... in the NT and means that the writer’s main concern is with listing the nouns themselves (cf. the full discussion of this grammatical point in Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*. 73–75; also Schnackenburg, 183). What does the exalted Christ give to the Church? He gives people, these particular people who proclaim the word and lead. In relation to vv 7, 8b, he gives not just grace to people, but he gives specific people to people. In Rom 12 gifts were ministries or functions and this is the way the term had been employed in 1 Cor 12, though in the latter passage in vv 28.29 Paul could also speak of God appointing ministers as well as giving ministries. In contrast to both passages, here in Eph 4 the focus is narrowed to particular ministers of the word (as we shall see, even “pastors” cannot be completely separated from such proclamation of the word).

Second, the last two groups are linked together forming one group with two functions. This comes out of basic Greek grammar rules where the sequence is Article Noun and Noun, as is the case here with *τοὺς ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους*. Thus pastor and teacher represent a single group of leaders.

The nature of each of the categories is important to understand. One would be hard pressed to seriously defend these as positions in the church. For example, Paul saw himself in his various writings as each of these, apostle and teacher, a prophet and pastor, and certainly as an evangelist / missionary.

These designations are to be understood as ministry channels, not as separate, distinct positions. In the course of ministry therefore, Paul could write and

<sup>7</sup>Andrew T. Lincoln, vol. 42, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 249.

preach with the special authority given only to the [Twelve Apostles](#) by Jesus. When he was preaching the gospel to non-believers he was an evangelist, Craig L. Blomberg makes this observation:<sup>8</sup>

Like apostles, evangelists (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11) preach the gospel to unsaved people. Unlike apostles, evangelists do not necessarily organize their converts into local churches. All Christians must evangelize (Matt 28:18-20), but those with this gift are particularly capable of leading people to faith in Christ.

What were these ministry channels?

Apostles: *τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους*. The term for [apostle](#) designates one especially commissioned by Jesus to spread his teachings. In the New Testament the term virtually always designates the original Twelve Apostles, and then the Apostle Paul. As such these men represented a unique role in the life of the early church. As declared in Eph. 2:20 (cf. above), they form the foundation of the church. In the era before the New Testament as authoritative written documents of sacred scripture, the teachings of Jesus had to be preserved by those who walked with Him in His earthly ministry. Paul didn’t meet this qualification, and thus came to this level of ministry only by special revelation from Christ (cf. Gal. 1:15-17). With the death of the last of these men, the ministry of apostle ceased in the church. Out of their ministry came the New Testament as sacred scripture, and by their writings their ministry continues to be the defining boundary for the church even to this day.

Prophets: *τοὺς δὲ προφήτας*. Of the 198 instances of either the noun ‘prophet’ and the verb ‘prophecy’ in the New Testament, the use is mostly in reference to the prophets of the Old Testament such as Amos, Isaiah etc. and their activity of delivering God’s message to the Israelites. In those instances not alluding to the OT prophet, this ministry was focused on proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Christian prophets, or ‘forth tellers.’ Only in a few isolated instances did any ‘fore telling’ take place.

Blomberg (ibid.) makes this observation:

In the Old Testament, prophecy involved the foretelling or forthtelling of God’s Word based on a revelation from Yahweh himself. In the Hellenistic world of the first century, prophecy took many forms, but its unifying feature was the belief that a message had come directly from God or the gods. This message was usually intended for a specific audience in view of concrete needs. This sense of reception of

<sup>8</sup>Craig L. Blomberg, “Holy Spirit, Gifts of,” [Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#) (accessed Jan 24, 2009).

a revelation neither requires nor precludes previous preparation or meditation. In the New Testament, Agabus exemplifies a prophet who can predict the future (Acts 11:27-30; 21:10-11; cf. John as a seer in Rev 1:1-4). Other individuals called prophets include Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1). Barnabas perhaps best illustrates the spirit of prophecy with his nickname “Son of Encouragement” (4:36). Quoting Joel’s prediction (2:28-32) as fulfilled at Pentecost, Peter points out that prophecy will characterize “the last days, “ the entire New Testament age. God will bestow this gift on many of his people irrespective of gender, age, or social class (Acts 2:17-21; for additional examples, see Acts 19:6; 21:9).

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul enjoins the Corinthians to prefer prophecy to tongues because it is more immediately intelligible (vv. 1-19). He also requires prophets to regulate their behavior (vv. 29-33a), presupposing that their speech is not ecstatic but subject to their control (vv. 30-32). “Two or three prophets should speak, and the others [i.e., the congregation] should weigh carefully what is said” (v. 29). First Thessalonians 5:20-21 and 1 Jo 4:1 also stress this need for assessment. Criteria for evaluating purported prophecies would have included seeing if predictions came true (Deut 18:21-22) and, presumably, testing the content of forthtelling against already accepted (i.e., scriptural) revelation. Whether or not a message edified the church was doubtless equally crucial. Although all believers must “test the spirits, “ each church’s leadership must ultimately render a verdict on the legitimacy of any alleged prophecy.

Prophets were to deliver God’s Word to His people, both then and now.

Evangelists: *τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς*. The evangelist were the missionary preachers of the Gospel to non-believers. Lincoln (WBC, 250) observes:

As the name suggests, evangelists were involved in the proclamation of the gospel. The term is used of Philip in Acts 21:8 in the context of mission (cf. also Acts 8:14–17 where Luke depicts Philip’s missionary activities as dependent on the apostles). It is used also in 2 Tim 4:5, where it may well be intended to be seen as part of the work of a church leader. Since the term “pastors” covers church leadership in Eph 4, it is likely that here “evangelists” are to be seen as those engaged in mission and the founding of churches and, therefore, as having responsibilities beyond the local congregation. A further reason for their mention here could be that the churches in Asia Minor which are being addressed, were not founded directly by Paul but by just such people, co-workers and followers of Paul who continual his type of missionary activity (cf. also Schlier, 196; Ernst, 354). It is in this sense that the term is used much later by Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. 3.37.23; 5.10.2. the view, first proposed by Oecume-

nus, that the reference in Eph 4:11 is to “the office of gospel writer” (cf. Hadidian, CBQ 28, [1966] 317–21) is quite improbable.

Pastors: *τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας*. The word for pastor here means shepherd, which is the meaning of *Le Pasteur*, the French word from which the English word pastor is derived. Other terms used interchangeably with *ὁ ποιμὴν* are *ὁ πρεσβύτερος* and *ὁ ἐπίσκοπος*. Again, Lincoln’s comments (WBC, 250) are helpful:

Though the noun *ποιμὴν*, “shepherd, pastor,” is used of Christ himself in John 10:11, 14; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25, it is employed for church leaders only here in the NT. The cognate verb does, however, describe their function in Acts 20:28 and 1 Pet 5:1–4 and Peter’s activity in regard to the Church in John 21:16. It suggests the exercise of leadership through nurture, care, and guidance. Significantly, the concept of the shepherd and tending the flock is often found in association with that of the bishop or overseer and overseeing (cf. Jer 23:2; Ezek 34:11; Zech 11:16; CD 13.7–11, where the *mēbaqqēr*, “guardian, overseer,” in the Qumran community is likened to a shepherd with his flock; Acts 20:28, where those appointed bishops of the church at Ephesus are to shepherd the church of God; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:2; Ign. Rom. 9.1; Phil. 2.1, where the bishop is also called a pastor). It is probable, then, that the pastor of Eph 4:11 fulfills the functions denoted in Paul’s writings by such terms as *προϊστῆμι*, “to rule, manage” (1 Thess 5:12; Rom 12:8), *κυβέρνησις*, “administration” (1 Cor 12:28), and *ἐπίσκοπος*, “bishop, overseer” (Phil 1:1). *ἐπίσκοπος* was a term taken from the Hellenistic world, but because the general notion of overseeing had close associations with the shepherd in Jewish thought, it is understandable that the term “pastor” could become interchangeable with “bishop” in the Christian movement. It is the equivalent to *πρεσβύτερος*, “elder,” of Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Tim 4:14; 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet 5:1, 5; Jas 5:14 (see Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 362–78, for an extended discussion). That bishops and deacons are not mentioned here, though they are in Phil 1:1; Did. 15.1; Herm. Vis. 3.5.1; Mart. Pol. 16.2, illustrates the variety of structures in the early church and the difficulty of obtaining any clear overall picture. But it justifies neither the assertion that “the churches here addressed had not yet reached that stage of development rejected in Phil 1:1” (pace Caird, 76) nor the speculation that the writer is opposed to these particular structures (pace Fischer, *Tendenz*, 21–39, 201–2, and see the discussion under Form/Structure/Setting).

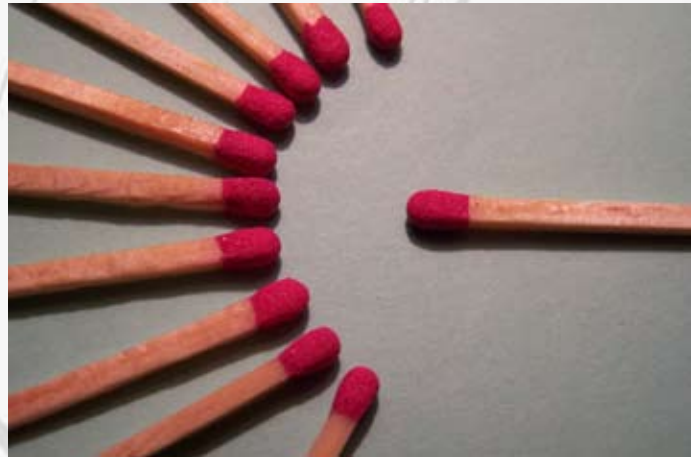
Teachers: *καὶ διδασκάλους*. The teaching ministry of early Christianity focused on accurately communicating the message of the Gospel to believers. Once more, Lincoln’s comments (WBC, 251) are helpful:

The teachers, with whom the pastors are so closely associated, already had a special role in Paul's time (cf. 1 Cor 12:28, 29; 14:26; Rom 12:7) and are mentioned specifically elsewhere in early Christian writings (cf. Heb 5:12; Jas 3:1; Acts 13:1; 1 Tim 3:2; 4:11, 13, 16; 5:17; 2 Tim 2:2, 24; 3:16; 4:2, 3; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 7; Did. 13.2; 15.1,2). Their function appears to have been preserving, transmitting, expounding, interpreting, and applying the apostolic gospel and tradition along with the Jewish Scripture. They were specialists in the inculcation of Christian norms and values and the conduct appropriate to them, and in this way became particularly associated with the qualities of wisdom and knowledge. (For a discussion of the teaching ministry in the early church, see F. V. Filson, "The Christian Teacher in the First Century," JBL 60 [1941] 317–28; H. Schürmann, "...und Lehrer," 116–56.) Wisdom and knowledge are qualities which this writer has desired for his readers in the intercessory prayer-reports (cf. 1:17, 18; 3: 18, 19), and knowledge of the Son of God forms part of the goal of the Church's existence here in 4:13. Teachers, then, are instrumental in the Church's growth in these qualities. That teachers instructed in practical Christian living is also clear from the immediate context in Eph 4:20, 21. In Colossians, over against the syncretistic philosophy, the importance of the apostolic tradition of teaching (1:5–7, 23; 2:6, 7) and its mediation through such people as Epaphras (1:7; 4:12), Tychicus (4:7), and Archippus (4:17) had been emphasized. Now in Ephesians also, the writer stresses the vital significance of such ministers in building up the body of Christ, a significance that is underlined in relation to the false teaching which he mentions in v 14. In this passage the writer's major concern is with the unity and maturity of the Church. So, of the ministers listed whom Christ has given to the Church, it is particularly the pastors and teachers active in his own day whose worth he wishes to assert. This could be seen as self-serving, for the writer himself is surely to be regarded as a gifted teacher who transmits and interprets the Pauline tradition on the basis of his own special insights (cf. also Merklein, Das kirchliche Amt, 351; Schürmann, "...und Lehrer," 151). But the context makes clear that he is not out to promote his own position or that of any particular individuals. His burden is for the well-being of the Church as a whole. He genuinely believes that the preservation of the apostolic tradition is essential for such well-being and that pastors and teachers are the Christ-given means for accomplishing it. Because of the special foundational place given by this writer to the apostles and prophets, in effect a new triad of ministers, in comparison with the triad of 1 Cor 12:28, emerges as active in the churches of his time—evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Interestingly, it is the teachers who retain their place. While the evangelists carry on

the missionary activity of the apostles and the pastors take over the earlier leadership functions of the prophets, evidently the role of the teachers has been consolidated as they provide the major element of continuity in ministry, the bridge between the apostolic and post-apostolic periods.

Thus what we are seeing here is that God blessed early Christianity with ministry channels of a leadership nature. These roles were functional and one individual could serve in more than one way.

**Why.** Verses 12 through 16 basically answer this question of why God gave these leaders to the church.



The heart of the goal of leaders is defined in verse 12: "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (*πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἀγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ*). The leaders are not to do the work of ministry (*ἔργον διακονίας*); instead, all the saints together are to perform the different tasks of ministry and service. The leaders are to train and equip the others for ministry.

What then do ministry actions by the saints lead to? "building up the body of Christ" (*οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ*). The spiritual development of the church is the intended impact of the saints doing ministry.

And how long should this ministry continue? "until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (*μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ*). Three inter-related goals are to be achieved. The focus on spiritual maturity, which is defined by Christ Himself.

What positive impact will this have on the church? "We must no longer be children, tossed to

and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." (*ἵνα μηκέτι ὄμεν νήπιοι, κλυδωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐν πανουργίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδεῖαν τῆς πλάνης, ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, ὃς ἐστὶν ἡ κεφαλὴ, Χριστός, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβασόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους τὴν αὐξήσιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ.*). For the church at Ephesus and elsewhere, the congregations needed to develop Christ like maturity in order to ward off false teaching which was corrupting the Gospel and leading believers into false thinking and behavior.

The antidote to false teaching is growing up in authentic Christ likeness with the help of good leaders. The role of Christian love is especially highlighted by Paul.

Peter O'Brien sums up these verses well:<sup>9</sup>

Ephesians 4:1–16 stands at the beginning of the explicitly exhortatory half of the letter (chaps. 4–6). It consists of two main sections (vv. 1–6, 7–16), the first of which reminds the readers of their calling into membership of the body of Christ (4:1). The rest of this lengthy paragraph underscores Paul's distinctive concerns for the unity of the church, as he admonishes his readers with the utmost urgency to preserve the oneness given by the Spirit (v. 3; cf. 2:14–18; 3:6), a unity that is organically related to the divine intention of bringing all things together in unity in Christ (1:9, 10). The second section (vv. 7–16) introduces the note of diversity and shows how it contributes to the unity of the body, since Christ's giving different gifts of grace to each is for the purpose of enriching the whole, so that all may be prepared for full maturity when they meet their Lord (v. 13). The whole paragraph, then, is concerned about unity, diversity, and maturity.

This important paragraph focusses very specifically on the church. It is the sphere into which believers have entered by being called by God into a relationship with his Son. A major image for this community is the body (vv. 4, 12, 16), and it is combined with the language of building (vv. 12, 16) and

the fullness of Christ (v. 13). Ministries have been given by Christ, particularly ministries of the word, to enable the body of Christ to attain to its ultimate goal, that is, 'the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ' (v. 13). In one sense the body of Christ is already complete: it is a true body, not simply part of one. In another sense that body is said to grow to perfection, a process that will be completed only on the final day. The body metaphor reflects the 'already-not yet' tension of the two ages. It is both complete and yet it grows. It is a heavenly entity and yet it is an earthly reality; and it is both present and future, with a consummation occurring at the parousia.

Although the church is at the forefront of Paul's thinking in this passage, Christology has not collapsed into ecclesiology, as some seem to suggest. The lordship of Christ is clearly evident throughout. He remains the 'one Lord' (v. 5) who as the exalted one gives grace both to individuals (v. 7) and to ministers of the word (v. 11) for the church. The church is his fullness (v. 13) and his body (v. 12). As its head who rules over it Christ is the source and goal of its growth (vv. 15–16).<sup>184</sup>

Quite clearly God has a plan to grow His church. That growth is largely defined as developing spiritual maturity. The numerical growth will happen properly when the spiritual growth is taking place according to God's plan, as outlined here.

That growth comes about through the gifting of God's grace of each member for service and ministry. The training and preparing of the members by the leaders of the church is essential for this growth to take place. All the saints, both members and leaders, then engage in ministry together. Love is the glue binding together everyone in the church in its ministry.

When this is taking place a church will stay on track and not be knocked off course by false teaching of the Gospel. It will develop into a tight knit body of believers who share love and ministry with one another and together.

What a wonderful picture of



the church?

<sup>9</sup>Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians, The Pillar New Testament commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 316.

**Greek NT**

4.7 Ἐνὶ δὲ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 4.8 διὸ λέγει, Ἄναβās εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώ- τευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. 4.9 τὸ δὲ Ἄνεβη τί ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς; 4.10 ὁ καταβās αὐτός ἐστίν καὶ ὁ ἀναβās ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα.

4.11 καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐ- ἀγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκά- λους, 4.12 πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώμα- τος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 4.13 μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέ- λειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικί- ας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 4.14 ἵνα μη- κέτι ὤμεν νήπιοι, κλυδ- ωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφ- ερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐν πανουργίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης, 4.15 ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, ὡς ἐσ- τίν ἡ κεφαλὴ, Χριστός, 4.16 ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς

**NASB**

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." 9 (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being

**NRSV**

7 But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." 9 (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.)

11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. 14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. 15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's

**NLT**

7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift according to the generosity of Christ. 8 That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." 9 Notice that it says "he ascended." This means that Christ first came down to the lowly world in which we live. 10 The same one who came down is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that his rule might fill the entire universe.

11 He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, 13 until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be like children, forever changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us something different or because someone has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more

*ἐπιχορηγίας κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἑκάστου μέρους τὴν αὐξήσιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ.*

fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

growth in building itself up in love.

and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16 Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.



## Greek NT Diagram

- 4.7 δὲ  
1 Ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις  
κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
- 4.8 διὸ  
2 λέγει,  
Ἄναβας εἰς ὕψος  
ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν,  
ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.
- 4.9 δὲ  
3 τὸ Ἄνεβη τί ἐστίν,  
εἰ μὴ (ἐστίν)  
ὅτι καὶ κατέβη  
εἰς τὰ κατώτερα (μέρη)  
τῆς γῆς;
- 4.10 ὁ καταβάς αὐτός  
ἐστίν  
καὶ  
ὁ ἀναβάς  
ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν,  
ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα.
- 4.11 καὶ  
5 αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους  
τοὺς δὲ προφήτας,  
τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς,  
τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους,  
4.12 πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων  
εἰς ἔργον διακονίας,  
εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ,  
4.13 μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες  
εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως  
καὶ  
τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ,  
εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον,  
εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ,  
4.14 ἵνα μηκέτι ὦμεν νήπιοι,  
κλυδωνιζόμενοι  
καὶ  
περιφερόμενοι  
παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας  
ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων,  
ἐν πανουργίᾳ  
πρὸς τὴν μεθοδεῖαν τῆς πλάνης,
- 4.15 δὲ  
ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ  
αὐξήσωμεν . . . τὰ πάντα,  
εἰς αὐτὸν  
ὅς ἐστίν ἡ κεφαλὴ,  
Χριστός,

συναρμολογούμενον  
 καὶ  
 συμβιβαζόμενον  
 διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς  
 τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας  
 κατ' ἐνέργειαν  
 ἐν μέτρῳ  
 ἑνὸς ἑκάστου μέρους

ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα... τὴν αὐξήσιν... ποιεῖται  
 τοῦ σώματος

εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ  
 ἐν ἀγάπῃ.

#### Summary of Rhetorical Structure:

The thought flow of this pericope is pretty easy to detect. The passage naturally divides itself into two units of material: 1) statements 1-4, and 2) statement 5.

The first segment builds off the foundational assertion in statement 1 that God gave grace to each member of the body. This occasions a scripture proof (#2) taken from Psalm 68:18 as the basis of the beginning assertion. This scripture quote then occasion commentary elaboration (#3-4) in order to explain its connection to the beginning assertion of God giving grace. In his commentary, Paul picks up on the *τὸ Ἀνέβη τί ἐστίν* part of the Psalm. For the one to ascend, he first had to descend to the earth. Then he could ascend back to Heaven in fulfillment of all things (*ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα*). Thus Christ's ascension back to the Father opened the door for leadership provision to the early church.

The second section (#5) is one long sentence, typical in Ephesians, that expands on the leadership provision made by God upon the ascension of the Son back to Heaven. The expansion elements include four groups of leaders: *τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους* (apostles; prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers). The structuring of the group sets apart the apostles as being at the top of the list. The others then function as "assistants" to the apostles. Following the list of leaders there comes a series of purpose declarations indicating the objective of the work of these leaders: to train the saints to do ministry. This is intended to produce growing spiritual maturity that builds a defense around the community to protect them from false teaching.