

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
"The Reason For Spiritual Gifts"
Eph. 4:12, 13

INTRODUCTION

1. The believers' walk is outlined (vv. 1-3). Those items by which one believer is bound to another are provided (vv. 4-6).
2. It is the ascended Christ Who descended to the earth (vv. 9, 10). His ascension is viewed as a Victor returning from battle who distributes his spoils to his followers, grace gifts in this case (vv. 7, 8).
3. The major gifts were given to the body, the organism of which the Ephesian church speaks (1:22, 23). The issue of organization is not the point here as it is in the Pastorals (1 & 2 Tim.; Titus). What is the end for which these gifts were conferred? That is the matter now.

1. FOR PERFECTION v. 12.

The preposition used here indicates an ultimate goal. Thus the gifts (v. 11) are designed to perfect saints. The verb "perfect" means to restore or bring to full furnishing so as to correct all deficiencies. It is the complete outfitting of the saints. The verb is used of "mending" nets (Matt. 5:21), "framing" the world (Heb. 11:3), and "restoring" (Gal. 6:1).

2. FOR MINISTRATION v. 12.

This clause has usually been taken as coordinate with the previous one. While the change in preposition is not decisive, it does appear that what is viewed here is immediate and not ultimate as the perfection is. Moreover the anarthrous nouns "work" and "ministry" have the prevailing meaning in the N.T. of "spiritual service of an official character" (Acts 1:25; 6:4; 20:24; Rom. 11:13; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:5). This, then, would put the gifts (v. 11) as the primary subjects and theirs is the work of the ministry!

3. FOR EDIFICATION v. 12

Here is another immediate goal for the same preposition is again used as with ministry. To "edify" means to "build up." This really defines the "work of ministry." The gifts (v. 11) are the means God

has provided whereby all members are built up in completeness. It would be safe to conclude that all gifts, including those listed in Romans (12) and Corinthians (12), are designed for edification of the body.

4. FOR UNIFICATION v. 13

There is no uncertainty expressed in the original Greek in the temporal clause. The ministry and edification are in view and not the gifts in this temporal clause. The verb "come" means to "arrive at" or "attain" in the sense of reaching a goal. (Acts 26:7; Phil. 3:11). Obviously "all" speaks of Christians and not a confluence of nations. "Faith" has to do with trust or confidence while "knowledge" refers to full experimental knowledge. Both faith and knowledge relate to the "Son of God." He is at one with the Father in glory, attributes and honor.

5. FOR MATURATION v. 13.

None is perfect this side of heaven, but the goal has been set. Hence the idea is "full-grown" or "mature" here. This is opposed to the infant (v. 14). The state in which faith and knowledge are expected is also the state of maturity here. Since unity is a primary concern here, "man" is singular. This maturity is further explicated by the phrase "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Complete conformity to Christ is the ultimate standard of perfection. Individuals are not the target here, but the whole body viewed as a single organism reaching its full spiritual stature. Scripture teaches the body is already there by the call of God (1:23), but now the body is to experience this fullness in the life and growth of its members.

CONCLUSION God has glorious goals for the Church. He has given the equipment to accomplish the goals. May every member be submissive so as to experience God's intentions for the body. Amen.

