

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

"Spiritual Gifts"

Ephesians 4:11

Introduction

1. The Spirit of God has unified believers in one body (vv. 4-6). This unity does not obliterate diversity within the body (vv. 7-10).

2. It is the exalted Saviour who distributes the energy resulting in gifts (δόματα domata) to men (v. 8). He is the same Who became incarnate, but is now in the highest heavens and He fills all (omnipresence).

3. The gifts to men are, in turn, gifted men bestowed upon the church. The persons endowed by the Lord are gifts to the entire body of Christ. The men and the office they fill are gifts to the church (body of Christ).

4. It should be noted that the personal reflexive pronoun (αὐτός autos) is used to indicate Christ "Himself" as the giver. The common verb for "give" (ἔδωκε edoke) is used, but its aorist form suggests a once for all intent. Now, some of the gifts are enumerated:

1. APOSTLES

a. Semantically (ἀποστόλους apostolous)

This term means "one sent from" and was understood as the same as the one who sent him. Hence, an apostle of Christ was as if Christ were present.

b. Definitively

It was necessary for an apostle: 1) to have seen Christ (Acts 1:22, 25, 26; 1 Cor. 9:1, 2); 2) to be an eye witness of Christ's resurrection (Acts 1:22); 3) to be chosen by the Lord or divinely by the Holy Spirit (Mat. 10:1-5; Acts 14:4); 4) to be endowed with sign gifts (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:1-4). Quite obviously by the nature of its qualifications, the office and gift were not.

2. PROPHETS

a. Semantically (προφήτας profetas)

The word means "one who speaks for" another. They were "fore speakers" or "forth-speakers." "Fore-speakers" were involved in predicting events in the Name of the Lord (Acts 11:27, 28). "Forth-speakers" represented God to men, hence gave forth the Word of God (1 Cor. 14:24, 25).

b. Definitively

The prophets performed a preaching function for they spoke under the immediate, albeit occasional, inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1, 2). The prophet had to follow specific rules (1 Cor. 14:29, 31). He was also to be self-controlled so that there wouldn't be any confusion (1 Cor. 14:32, 33). Prophecy was employed in the early church for both believers and non-believers (1 Cor. 14:22-25). The gift had specific goals (1 Cor. 14:3, 31). Once the canon of Scripture (books included in Bible)

was complete, prophecy was no longer required (1 Cor. 13:8; Rev. 22, 18, 19). Today, preachers are prophets only as they declare the already revealed Word of God (Bible).

3. EVANGELISTS

a. Semantically (εὐαγγελιστὰς euangelistas)

This word means "proclaim good news" in reference to the N.T. It obviously speaks of the Gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-5). The term is found only three times in the N.T. (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5 and here).

b. Definitively

The term properly refers to itinerant preachers specially endowed to preach the Gospel where it has not been previously known (Acts 8:4; 14:7; 1 Cor. 1:17; 2 Cor. 10:16). The modern "evangelist" has no counterpart in the Bible.

4. PASTORS AND TEACHERS (ποιμένας και διδασκάλους poimenas kai diodaskalous)

Note: The original Greek links these two gifts by a connective. Moreover, the grammar of the verse does too, but it distinguishes four groups, the final one including two gifts).

a. Semantically (ποιμένας poimenas)

The word "pastor" comes from a root meaning "to protect." It is the word for "shepherd." "Teacher" (διδασκάλους didaskalous) is strictly one who provides instruction.

b. Definitively

This is the only place in the N.T. where "pastor" is used of the office we know by that name. Christ used the idea with Peter (Jn 21:16), Peter of other ministers (1 Pet. 5:2), and Paul of the elders at Ephesus (Acts 20:28). Elders are said to be "bishops" for the purpose of "pastoring" churches (Acts 21:17, 28). Elder denotes maturity; bishop denotes administration; pastor denotes shepherding. There were two kinds of elders (Ro. 12:8; 1 Tim. 5:17). The early church pastor was the shepherd under the Great Shepherd (1 Pet. 2:25) in Scripture (Rev. 2:3). The same should be true today.

Conclusion

All these gifts are viewed for the sake of the body at large.