

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS  
"Provision of Spiritual Gifts"  
Ephesians 4:7-10

Introduction

1. Believers are to walk consistently with their calling in grace (vv. 1-3). This promotes the unity of the body which in fact affirms seven basic unities (vv. 4-6).

2. Now Paul changes his concerns from unity to diversity. This is linked with spiritual gifts, a grace bestowal of special capacities for service (Ro. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31). These gifts may parallel natural endowments, but are applied for special grace connections. Moreover, the gifts are used for the two ministries believers have: 1. Missionary (outside). 2. Edification (inside).

3. Aspects of spiritual grace gifts include the following important issues:

1. INDIVIDUALITY OF GIFTS v. 7

Not all gifts are conspicuous, but every believer has a capacity somewhere in the body. This is in contrast to the previous "all" (πάντων panton) (v. 6). No single individual is overlooked (1 Cor. 12:11). Each has his peculiar gift and ought to contribute his share.

2. DIVERSITY OF GIFTS v. 7

Saving grace is the same for all, but (δέ de ) service grace is different for all. The definite article "the grace" (ἡ χάρις e charis) supports this. It also points to that gift which was known to have been given. This is that subjective grace that works within and shows itself in the charisma which each one has been given. Hence there is diversity in the body (1 Cor. 12:12-27).

3. DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTS v. 7

The verb "is given" (ἐδόθη edothe) indicates there is perfectness in the exalted sovereign Lord as He gives. Merit, asking, capacity, etc. are not the issue. It is all His good pleasure. Each is to be content, therefore, with his gift and not envy another's which may seem more honorable. This distribution is undertaken in proportion to the amount which our Lord gives (Ro. 12:3, 6). No matter what the measure is, all gifts come from the same hand and with the same purpose.

4. EXPLANATION OF GIFTS vv. 8-10

a. Scripturally v. 8

The quotation is from Psalm 68:18. The imagery is of a military conqueror leading captives in triumph. He is laden with spoils which he

distributes to his followers. There are features in this quotation. Originally, the reference was to God the Father. He triumphs over Israel's enemies and provides gifts for the nation, but all of this is applied to the Messiah, Jesus. The identity of Christ in the N. T. with the Jehovah of the O.T. is striking (cf. Ps. 136:16 with 1 Cor. 10:4; Isa. 6:1-4 with John 12:41; Isa. 45:23 with Ro. 14:10, 11; Ps. 102:25 with Heb. 1:10). Hence Christ by His redemption has delivered those held captive (Heb. 2:15; Col. 2:15). They are now His captives and they share in His life and destiny.

b. Practically vv. 9, 10

Here is a parenthesis to give full thrust to the Psalm quotation.

1) Incarnation v. 9 Christ is obviously the descender. As such, He went to "the lower parts of the earth" (τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς ta katotera tes ges ). While there are many who view this as a descent to hell or hades, it is more appropriate to see it as a statement of the incarnation. Reasons: a) Hell is foreign to Ps. 68 context. b) Descent (earth) is opposite to ascent (heaven). c) Analogy of Scripture (John 3:13; 6:38; 8:14; 16:28).

2) Ascension v. 10 Here is an expression of highest exaltation. Christ ascends all the way to God' s abode (cf. 1:21; 2 Cor. 12:2). In this exalted position, Christ fills all the universe with His presence and power. This is not diffused corporeity, but His pervading and energizing omnipresence. Christ is perfect God and glorified man. As the former, He is everywhere present. As the latter, He can be present anywhere.

Conclusion God' s gifts to ~~man~~ are part of the triumph of Calvary. We should rejoice and be glad that we share so bountifully in the reward of His sacrifice. Amen.