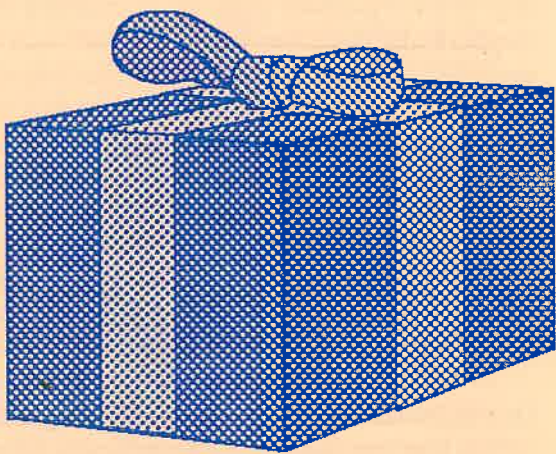


# *The Gifts of* *Ephesians 4:7-13*

By Vernon Anderson



"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and GAVE GIFTS UNTO MEN...And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:7-8, 11-13)

**A**t the outset, we say that we stand with the vast majority of the Body of Christ, believing these gifts are meant for the Body of Christ from its foundation. The verses quoted above follow Ephesians 4:1-6 wherein the Word of God exhorts us to be one, to *keep the unity*. It is hard to believe that verses 7-13 are now being discredited, even bringing disunity into the Body of Christ. A teaching is going out that these gifts should no longer be applied to the Body of Christ, the Church of today. Weakened leadership is not a practical goal: by discrediting the shepherd, the sheep become uneasy and begin to separate. Disunity has personally been observed within congregations in the USA and even on the mission field. By denying these gifts as for the Church, one pastor felt himself forced to resign his pulpit. The congregation was divided.

**How is it possible that Scriptural gifts for the purpose of unity are now used to bring disunity and division?**

One main reason presented for excluding these gifts is that they speak of God working in supernatural, miraculous ways. Are they implying: that God does no miracles today? that He does not work in a supernatural way? that He is not directly involved with His people?

How then do we have today the *greatest gift of all* - **SALVATION!** Salvation is truly supernatural and truly miraculous.

Our sins are washed away by the blood of Christ - a miracle performed only by God.  
We receive the gift of God: eternal life - another great miracle.

We receive a *new* nature - is it not a miraculous gift of God?

We become His sons - the supernatural adoption of God.

We have the Holy Spirit Himself indwelling us - another supernatural act of God.

We are delivered from the power of Satan - by  
God's power.

We are accepted into the Kingdom of His dear  
Son - only God's work.

What about resurrection, the new body, being caught up into the heavenlies, etc? Beloved, God's power is refuted when we deny His miraculous work in salvation today!

In creation, He continues to hold everything together: stars, moon, sun, animals, birds, fish, man. His supernatural power sustains the boundaries of all these so that scientific order can reign.

Some of this debate involves the teaching that we should select only spiritual needs for prayer, not physical or material needs such as food, clothing, safety, health, etc. In other words, for physical answers God would be obliged to directly intervene to provide such things. But then, what happens to praying for spiritual things? Doesn't God act in even more miraculous ways to answer man's spiritual requests? If God only answers spiritual requests, then the Bible contradicts itself by exhorting believers to *pray without ceasing*. The big question comes: **Why pray at all if God has deafened His ears to our cries for help?**

This is what we are hearing about the "Ephesians 4" gifts: "But where are the apostles and prophets *today*?" The members of the Body of Christ exist today in two places: in Heaven and on earth. God gave apostles and prophets to the Church for a specific reason. "*Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*" (Eph.2:19-20). These are not Old Testament prophets nor the 12 Apostles because Christ gave these gifts of apostles and prophets for the Church after He ascended. This truth was not

known by the Old Testament prophets or the 12 Apostles until Paul received it for his ministry. These Ephesian apostles and prophets laid the foundation of the Body of Christ. *"According to the grace of God which is given unto me...I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."* (I Cor. 3:10). Christ was entitled *Cornerstone* and He is still the *Cornerstone* now. We are building on the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets of the Church. We note that pastors, evangelists and teachers are not listed in Ephesians chapter two because they were not part of the foundation, but they were to build upon the foundation already laid by the Body of Christ's apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.

It is to be noted that these gifts in Ephesians are given by Christ, whereas the gifts in I Corinthians 12 are given by the Holy Spirit, denoting a difference. They are not the same.

Saint Paul was both an apostle and a prophet. It is upon his epistles that these pastors, teachers and evangelists are building up the Body. The Greek word translated *pastor* in Ephesians 4:11 appears 17 times in the New Testament but it was only translated *pastor* in this one verse. Every other time in the King James Version it is translated shepherd. Using this picture we can add to it by comparing Acts 20:28: *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."* This verse names believers as *the flock*, to be fed and led by overseers/elders who are the shepherds who must feed the flock. In Acts 20:17 and 28 *episkopos* and *prebuteros* are words used to describe leaders and the offices they hold. Elders, pastors, bishops and overseers speak of the same leaders and offices in

the Pauline epistles. They are called by God to feed and protect the flock until this day.

Is there a place for one shepherd in a congregation? It is true that in a church there could be more than one shepherd, but from the beginning of the Bible God chose one leader to be a chief over the others. Israel had many priests, but there was one *chief priest*. God chose 12 apostles for Israel but Peter was given the keys. In Acts 15 and 21, James is the leader of the Jerusalem church. In II Cor. 11:5 and 12:11 there is an order: *the chiefest apostles*. Throughout the Bible God raised up His leader, even as the nation of Israel had many leaders but only one Moses and one David. The Judges were appointed one at a time. Even in the Body of Christ Paul was chief over many others. God's pattern for family was husband, then wife, then children. In church government there was one man at the top as leader. Every congregation needs a chief shepherd to produce *unity*, not anarchy. A two-headed or three-headed creature is a monster by any description. Paul speaks strongly of church authority in II Cor. 10:8: "*For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed.*"

An evangelist was a leader appointed by God, one we might call a missionary today, one called and sent forth by God to do the work of an evangelist. Timothy was such an evangelist. The apostle Paul's last command to Timothy in II Tim. 4:5 was: "*But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*" Timothy did not hold the office of pastor/shepherd. Rather, he was called as evangelist/missionary. In Titus 1:5 and 2:15, Titus was authorized by Paul to appoint elders and to teach them *with all authority*. Such authority denotes an office of authority.

A teacher is neither pastor nor evangelist because the teacher's main work is to teach the Word of God, perhaps in a Bible school or other teaching capacity, the emphasis focusing on teaching the Bible rather than overseeing the flock or evangelizing.

**When will these pastors, teachers and evangelists stop their work and finish their callings?** Ephesians 4:12, 13: *"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."* The word *till* or *until* in verse 13 denotes a time limit.

The big question is: Have we reached **that until?** Paul M. Sadler (Berean Searchlight, May 1996) states on pages 90-91:

It is true that the *gifts* of "apostles" and "prophets" passed with the completion of the Word of God (I Cor. 13:8-13 cf. Col. 1:25). Once the Word of God was dispensed, these two offices and the gifted men who held them were nonessential. We now have something far better, the *written revelation* that they handed down to us, which is to be obeyed in matters of faith and practice.

There is no indication, whatsoever, that the gifts of *evangelists, pastors and teachers* have ever been withdrawn. In fact, Paul plainly states their purpose: *"For the perfecting (maturing) of the saints, for the work of the ministry, or the edifying (building up) of the Body of Christ."*

And how long should this continue? *"Till we ALL come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge (Gr. epignosis -- full knowledge) of the Son of God..."* (Eph. 4:13).

The "unity of the faith" and a "full knowledge" of Christ is a goal set before us that will never be fully attained until the *Rapture*. Thus, the responsibility of God's *gifts* to His Church is to proclaim the whole counsel of God in light of the Pauline epistles. Why? So that the saints might be *established* in the faith!

In this article on the gifts, Bro. Sadler proves that the unity of the faith has never yet been attained. He shows how the Church differs on creation, redemption, and things to come.

The word *until* is also mentioned in Rom. 11:25: "...blindness in part is happened to Israel UNTIL the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." Has this "until" come to pass yet? Even the Ephesians 4 "until" has not come to pass yet. There are a number of "untils" in the epistles of Paul: Phil. 1:5,6; Eph. 1:14; II Thess. 2:7; I Tim. 6:14. An important "until" is found in I Cor. 11:26.

Some regard pastors, evangelists and teachers as gifts not evidenced today because it would signify God is empowering certain Christian offices miraculously, and they feel this is not possible. Yet some of these same brethren teach that translators were miraculously and supernaturally inspired to translate without error the King James Version into English as late as 1611 A.D. They presume that a few men were miraculously empowered to translate this Bible from other inspired copyists and translators who worked from the beginning of the written Word until 1611 A.D. but not beyond. Such reasoning would have translators of the Bible translating into world languages doing supernatural work, or else that *only English readers* were entitled to the Word of God. Here lies a contradiction in doctrine because if God does not empower men today as they imply, why would this same God empower men to copy

and translate the King James Version of the Scriptures?

Can you find the gifts of Translators or Copyists in the Bible? These gifts are not found in the Bible. Can we remove the gifts of pastors, teachers and evangelists from the Bible and replace them with translators and copyists? We think not.

**It is noteworthy** that the gifts of pastor, teacher and evangelist are not found among the sign gifts listed in I Corinthians 12. These office gifts of Ephesians 4 are not signs to anyone--they are gifts for edifying, building up the body of Christ. **These are not secondary jobs or part-time jobs--they require singular dedication to God's call.** Until Christ comes and perfects us, we definitely need their leading and feeding. Ephesians is a late-written epistle. No other epistles cancel the proclamation that these leaders build up the Church. Tongues, prophecy and knowledge are to be *done away*, but there is no mention of these office gifts being done away. **Leadership headed up in an individual is very important** if the Lord's work is to be done decently and in order, and with authority.

To conclude, it is very hard for us to believe that we can carry on the Lord's work without His power working in and through us. We can do all things through Christ Who strengthens; we can do nothing without Him.

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