

“Every Gift is from Above”

Ephesians 4:7-10

Dr. Cliff McManis

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In Ephesians 4:7-10, Paul tells us that Christ dispenses spiritual gifts to the Church, and to every Christian, for the purpose of building up the Body of Christ. God is growing the Church toward maturity, in unity, with diversity among individual believers.

1. Christ gives every Christian a spiritual gift.
“to each one of us grace has been given” (4:7a)
2. Christ determines the nature of the gifts.
“as Christ apportioned it” (4:7b)
3. Christ gave spiritual gifts after His ascension.
“when He ascended on high” (4:8)
4. Christ earned the right to give the gifts.
“He descended...to the heart of the earth” (4:9)
5. Christ has an ultimate purpose for giving gifts.
“He...ascended...so that He might fill all things” (4:10)

Study Notes:

**Ephesians 4:1-16 is a unit; in 1-6 Paul emphasizes “unity,” in 7-11a “diversity” and 11b-16 “maturity.”*

- *4:7— says Christ gave us “grace”—in 4:8 it says “gifts” were given; so a spiritual gift is a “gift of grace”; the word “gift” (*δωρεας, doreas*) also appears at the end of 4:7, but unfortunately the NIV does not translate it; NKJV, KJV and NASB appropriately do.
- *4:7—the word “grace” emphasizes that 1) the gifts are not earned 2) as well as the idea of “divine enablement”—God freely gave us spiritual gifts and the ability to use them properly.
- *4:7—“has been given” [NIV]; “was given” [NKJV]; “is given” [KJV] is *passive voice* (*εδοθη, edothe*)—meaning we receive the action; God is the giver...we are simply the beneficiaries.
- *4:7—“given” is aorist tense, in the past—Christ gave you a gift when you were saved; you already have it.
- *4:7—“Christ apportioned” [NIV]; “according to the measure of Christ’s gift” [NKJV]; “apportioned/measure” is the word *metron*, from which we get “metrics”—“to measure”; Christ “measures out” or determines how much and to what degree of gifts are given to each person; we all have different wattage in terms of our giftedness and capabilities, but we are to use those different gifts to their full potential—if you are a 60- watt light bulb, shine for Jesus with all 60 watts; if you are 75 watts, shining just 60 watts is not acceptable (cf. Romans 12:3).
- *4:8—here Paul alludes to Psalm 68:18 [LXX 67:19], which refers to the days of Moses at the Exodus; under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Paul gives the fuller prophetic meaning of this passage that was unknown to those in Moses’ day; Paul could do this because he was an Apostle who utilized divine inspiration as God determined; we cannot use the OT this way because we are not Apostles nor do we have access to divine inspiration; Hosea 11:1 used in Matthew 2:15 is another example of this kind of fuller meaning revealed by a NT author.
- *4:8—“it says” [NKJV, NIV, NASB]; “he says” [KJV]; “it” refers to Scripture, the OT passage in Psalm 68—this tells us that Scripture “speaks”—God’s Word is alive (Hebrews 4:12).
- *4:8—“led captives in his train” [NIV]; “led captivity captive” [KJV]; “led captive a host of captives” [NKJV, NASB]—the NIV gives a very inaccurate translation on this phrase, failing to even translate the verb “take captive”; the literal rendering of the Greek verb and the noun used together is “he captured captives” (*ηχμαλωτευσεν αιχμαλωσιαν, eichmaloteusen aichmalosian*).
- *4:8—“captives”—the captives in Psalm 68 were the bad guys; so also in Ephesians 4:8...the captives are the enemies of God that Christ conquered when He descended down to earth, namely Satan, sin and death.
- *4:8—“He ascended”—this is when Christ ascended back into heaven after His resurrection.
- *4:9—“he descended”—this refers to Christ’s incarnation, when He left Heaven and came down to earth for 33 years as a man—‘He came from heaven above, to show the way...’ (cf. John 6:33, 38, 50).
- *4:9— “the lower earthly regions” [NIV]; “lower parts of the earth” [KJV, NASB, NKJV]; the literal Greek is “to the lower parts of the earth” and refers to Jesus going into the grave which is in the earth—He died for us and that is how He conquered His enemies and secured victory—a parallel phrase is used by David in Psalm 63:9 when he made reference to “the grave” (cf. John 12:24).
- *4:10—“fill all things” [NKJV, NASB, KJV]; “fill the whole universe” [NIV]; literally it is “fill all things.”