

“But To Each One Of Us Grace Was Given”

EPH 4:7 But to each one of us [believing Jews and Gentiles] grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

- Many Greek texts have “grace” rather than “the grace.” “Grace” appears to be the best translation.
- The exact significance of the article is disputed. The article “the” does not seem to have a special meaning.

1. “But to each one of us grace was given”

a. Paul had been given the grace of apostleship. (Eph. 3:7,8).

EPH 3:7 of which I was made a minister, **according to the gift of God's grace** which was given to me according to the working of His power.

EPH 3:8 To me, the very least of all saints, **this grace was given**, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,

- 1) God had shown mercy on Paul that He might be saved through the Lord’s appearance to him. The Lord’s appearance changed the course of Paul’s life, and he received salvation in Christ and Christ’s mission for him.
- 2) He was made an apostle for the sake of others - Jews and Gentiles.
- 3) He was primarily an apostle to the Gentiles, but not exclusively.
- 4) Paul was given the exalted privilege of receiving and proclaiming the gospel of Christ.
- 5) He considered himself a debtor to preach to all. (Rom. 1:14,15).

b. The ability to perform service is called “grace” given “to each.”

2. “according to the measure of Christ's gift”

- a. The gifts, in this passage, refer to people who served the church in a variety of ways. (Eph. 4:11-13).
- b. They may include the various spiritual gifts given to Christians. (Rom. 12:5,6; 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28-31).
- c. All “gifts” were to be used to build up the church - not for personal gain or show. (1 Cor. 12:7).

EPH 4:8 Therefore it says, "When He [Christ] ascended on high [to heaven], He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men [believers]."

- “dio” [dee ah] - “therefore, wherefore”
- “legei” [leh gay] is the 3rd person singular of “lego” [leh goh] meaning “to say or speak.” The third person singular can be translated “he, she or it.”

1. “Therefore it says” - The Greek can be rendered “therefore it says” or “therefore he says”

- a. The ASV has “wherefore he says.” “Concerning this the Scriptures say.” Wms.
- b. NIV has “This is why it says.”
- c. The language refers to what is said about God in the Scriptures. (Psa. 68:18)

PSA 68:18 Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captive Thy captives; Thou hast received gifts among men, Even among the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell there.

- d. This passage originally referred to God overcoming His enemies.
 - e. Paul is using it to refer to God’s anointed King - Jesus Christ.
2. "When He [Christ] ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives”

- a. The words “He ascended on high” refer to the ascension of Jesus into heaven. (Lk. 24:51; Acts 1:9-11).
 - 1) John speaks of Christ descending to earth and His ascension into heaven. (Jn. 6:38, 62).

JOH 6:38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
 JOH 6:62 "What then if you should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before?"

- 2) Paul speaks of Christ’s resurrection, ascension and exaltation (Eph. 1:20, 21).

EPH 1:20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, The ascension of Christ is assumed by the words “seated Him at His right hand..”
 EPH 1:21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

- 3) Ascension - “Who has passed through the heavens” (Heb. 4:14).

HEB 4:14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

- 4) Exaltation - “Exalted above the heavens” (Heb. 7:26).

- b. This fact about the “captives” is not revealed by Luke, but Paul, by revelation, is bringing out this event.
 - 1) Luke mentions only the ascension of Christ in his account of Christ’s ascension into heaven.
 - 2) What Paul is recording about the “captives” may or may not have been known by Luke.
 - 3) One may know something without recording it especially if it is not part of what he is emphasizing.

- c. “aichmalosia” [ik mah loh **see** ah] - “captivity, prisoners of war.”
- d. The verb form is “aichmaloteuo” [ik mah loh **too** oh] - The verb form of this word means “to lead captive, to take captive.
- e. It is also used in the sense of “to captivate.” (2 Tim 3:6)

2TI 3:6 For among them [false teachers] are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses,

f. The meaning of these words are difficult, but here are some possible meanings.

1) The language may mean that Jesus defeated His enemies and led them in a triumphal procession. In ancient times one who conquered often led his captives in a triumphal procession. The enemies would be the spiritual forces of evil and those under the influence of the devil and his evil forces.

- Jesus was victorious. None could induce Jesus to sin. None could stop the atonement, none could stop His resurrection, none could stop His ascension and exaltation.
- Christ is now reigning in heaven and multitudes are coming to Him then and now.

2) The idea could also be that Jesus captivated a host who had been bound in the chains of sin. Jesus freed them and led them in a triumphal procession. He also gave those freed “gifts.”

3. “And He gave gifts to men”

a. “Gifts” are later defined in this chapter.

b. “Men” here is generic for believers, Christians. The Greek has “anthropos” [**ahn** throh pahs] which can be used generically. The Greek “aner” [ah **nayr**] is the specific word for “male, man, husband.”

c. The “gifts” are those serving the church and building it up. (Eph. 4:11).

EPH 4:9 (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?)

- Some think verse 9 refers to the underworld and the realm of evil spirits.
- It is falsely believed the Jesus descended into the underworld at the time of His death, and preached to those living in Noah’s day giving them a second chance to obey the gospel. (1 Pet. 3:19). The Bible affirms Jesus went to Paradise. (Lk. 23:43-46).
- A careful examination of 1 Peter 3:19 reveals that the preaching was done through Noah who had the Spirit. The spirits were not in prison at the time Noah preached to them, but they were in prison at the time Peter wrote. The prophets of old had “the Spirit of Christ” [the Holy Spirit]. (1 Pet. 1:10, 11). Noah was “a preacher of righteousness” speaking the message of God through the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 2:5).
- There is no second chance for the antediluvians or anyone else. (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12; Heb. 9:27).
- Furthermore, God is not a respecter of person. (Acts 10:34, 35). The second chance theory makes God a respecter of persons. Why were they given a second chance and not others?

1. “Now this expression, "He ascended" - Lit. “to de” [tah (the) deh (but)] - “Now or but the”

2. “what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?”

a. The words “descended” refers to His incarnation. (Jn. 1:14). See Jn. 6:38; 1 Tim. 3:16.

b. The words “of the earth” are in apposition to “the lower parts” and they are defining “the lower parts.”

1) The words “of the earth” are a genitive of definition

2) NEB has “to the lowest level, down to the very earth.”

ISA 44:23 Shout for joy, O heavens, for the Lord has done it! Shout joyfully, **you lower parts of the earth**; Break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it; For the Lord has redeemed Jacob And in Israel He shows forth His glory.

- c. The reference “descended into the lower parts of the earth” is to Christ coming to earth and spending some 33 years in flesh. It is a reference to His earthly ministry and the time of His humiliation. (Phil. 2:6-8).
- d. Jesus is the only One who has ascended into heaven. (Jn. 3:13). These words were penned by John long after Christ’s ascension, but he still records that Jesus was the only One who had ascended into heaven.
- e. Righteous departed spirits, at death, go to “Abraham’s bosom.” (Lk. 16:19-31).
- f. “Abraham’s bosom” is the same place as Paradise. (Lk. 22:43).
- g. They are other names for “the third heaven.” (2 Cor. 12:2).

2CO 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

EPH 4:10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

- 1. “He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens”
 - a. After the incarnation of Jesus, Jesus ascended to the highest heavens where God abides.
 - b. “Above all the heavens” - Jesus ascended above the physical heavens to the heaven of heavens where God abides.
 - c. He reigns at God’s right hand. (Acts 2:32, 33; Heb. 1:3).
- 2. “ that He might fill all things” - “fill” is from “pleroo” [play **rah** oh] meaning “fill, fulfill, complete, finish.”
 - a. This expression is difficult, but here are some ways that translators have interpreted it. .
 - 1) “That He might be the ruler over all things everywhere” - Tay. This seems to be an excellent way of stating what Paul was affirming.
 - 2) “to fill creation with his presence” - Knox
 - 3) “in order to fill the whole universe” - NIV
 - b. Jesus fills the universe just as His Father. (Jere. 23:23, 24).

JER 23:23 "Am I a God who is near," declares the Lord, "And not a God far off?"

JER 23:24 "Can a man hide himself in hiding places, So I do not see him?" declares the Lord. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the Lord.

EPH 4:11 And He [Christ] gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as

pastors and teachers,

1CO 12:28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

1CO 12:29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?

1CO 12:30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

1. “And He gave some as apostles”

- a. Greek “apostolos” [ah **pah** stah lahs] - “one sent forth, messenger.”
- b. This is primary a reference to the twelve apostles. (Acts 1:26; 2:14).
- c. It would include Paul and James the Lord’s brother who later became apostles. (Eph. 1:1; Gal. 1:19).

2. “and some as prophets”

- a. “prophetes” [prah **fay** tays] means “a forth teller, a spokesman.” Prophets were inspired teachers who could speak in regard to the past, present or future.
- b. There were Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets.
- c. Here are references primarily referring to New Testament prophets.

1CO 12:28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, **second prophets**, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

1CO 12:29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not **prophets**, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?

1CO 14:29 And let two or three **prophets** speak, and let the others pass judgment.

1CO 14:32 and the spirits of **prophets** are subject to prophets;

EPH 2:20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles **and prophets**, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, “Prophets” likely refers to both Old and New Testament prophets.

EPH 3:5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; “Prophets” likely refers to both Old and New Testament prophets.

1JO 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. “spirit” refers to prophets either faithful or false.

Note: Ephesians 2:20 sets forth that the apostles and prophets make up the foundation of the church with Christ being “the chief cornerstone.” “Evangelists, pastors [shepherds], teachers are important, but they are not a part of the foundation of the church.

3. “and some as evangelists”

- a. “euaggelistes” [yoo ahn geh lis **tays**] refers to “one who is a proclaimer of good news.” The verb form is “euaggelizomai” [yoo ahn geh lee zah mi] meaning to “preach or proclaim good news, glad tidings.”
- b. This word “evangelist” appears several times in the New Testament. (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5).

ACT 21:8 And on the next day we departed and came to Caesarea; and entering the house of Philip **the evangelist**, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. Philip was “one of the seven” chosen to take care of widows. See Acts 6:3-6.

2TI 4:5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of **an evangelist**, fulfill your ministry. Timothy was an “evangelist,” but he is never call an apostle, prophet, or pastor.

4. “ and some as pastors”

- a. “poimen” [poi **mayn**] - “shepherd, pastor” - The verb from “poimaino” [poi **mi** noh] having the meaning of “to feed, to shepherd.”
- b. “Pastors” in the New Testament are “elders,” that is, “shepherds” of the flock (church). “Pastor” is another word for “shepherd.”
- c. Elders are referred to as “shepherds” in Acts 20:17, 28, and again in 1 Peter 5:3,4.
- d. A plurality of “elders” [shepherds, bishops] governed each congregation. (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1).
- e. Normally “the evangelist” was not one in same as a “shepherd” though it ia possible that one might serve in both capacities. Peter was an apostle and an elder (shepherd). (1 Pet. 5:1,2).
- f. “Pastors” were to feed and care for the flock. (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).

5. “ and teachers” - “didaskalos” [dee **dah** skah lahs]

- a. Some teachers in the early church were inspired, but not all.
- b. Inspired teachers would receive this gift through the laying on of the apostles hands. (Acts 8:17-20; 6:6; 19:1-6). See 1 Cor. 12:8-10.
- c. Sound and faithful teachers, since the 1st century, have become such through study and prayer. See Heb. 5:11-14; 2 Tim. 2:15).
- d. There are no infallible teachers today because there are no inspired teachers.

EPH 4:12 for the equipping [training] of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of [the] Christ;

1. “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service,”

- a. “katartismos” [kah tahr tee **smah**] - “equipment, equipping, training.”
- b. “Service” is from “diakonia” [dee ah kah **nee** ah] - “service, serving, ministry.”
- c. “in order to fully equip His people for the work of serving” - Weymouth
- d. “Saints” have been saved by Christ to serve. (Matt. 20:27, 28; Phil. 2:3,4).

2. “to the building up of the body of Christ” - “The body of Christ” is the church.

- a. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers had the responsibility to build up [edify] the church.

- b. Their gifts were not to be used for selfish reasons.

EPH 4:13 until [to the point] we all attain [arrive] to the unity [oneness] of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of [the] Christ.

1. “until we all attain to the unity of the faith”
 - a. “Unity” refers to oneness “of the faith.”
 - 1) Jesus wants His followers to be “one.” (Jn. 17:20-23). See 1 Cor. 1:10-13.
 - 2) Paul is also stressing the importance of this unity. (Eph. 4:4-6).
 - b. “the faith” - “tes pisteos” [tays pis teh ohs]
 - 1) “the faith” is once again a reference to the gospel, the word of God, the truth, the law of liberty, etc.
 - 2) It is not subjective faith. There can never be unity based on subjective faith.
2. “and of the knowledge of the Son of God”
 - a. God wants all in the church to have knowledge of His Beloved Son. This knowledge comes from a careful and prayerful study of the Bible. All we know about Christ is revealed in the Scriptures.
 - b. He earlier spoke of “the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge.” (Eph. 3:19). To know Christ includes knowing “the love of Christ.”
 - c. Paul intensely desired himself to know Christ (Phil. 3:10), and he wanted all to know Christ.
 - d. It includes knowing about Jesus and trusting and obeying Him.
3. “to a mature [fullgrown] man” - “mature” is from “teleios” [teh lay ahs] meaning “complete, adult, mature, fullgrown.”
 - a. The aim of teaching is that “all” will come to a knowledge of God’s Son and what He teaches.
 - b. One must be “in Christ” and obey Him to be saved. (Jn. 14:6; Lk. 6:46; Jn. 15:14; 14:15; Heb. 5:9).
4. “to the measure of the stature [maturity] which belongs to the fulness of Christ” - Christian maturity makes us more like Christ. The longer we live the more we should become like Christ. Maturity can be attained, but is never attained in the absolute.
 - a. Paul anticipated his readers would reach Christian maturity, and be able to distinguish true doctrine from false doctrine.
 - b. Christians should can and should reach maturity, but even mature Christians continue to grow and become more and more like Christ.

EPH 4:14 As a result [that, in order that], we are no longer to be children [infants, spiritually immature], tossed [like ships] here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine [teaching], by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

- “As a result” is from “hina” [**hee** nah] “that, in order that.”
- “nepios” [**nay** pee ahs] - “infants.” See NIV, Marshall.
- Paul used similar words in his letter to the church at Corinth. (1 Cor. 3:1,2). See also Heb. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:2.

1. “As a result, we are no longer to be children”

- a. We are to be children in some ways. (Matt. 18:3,4). See 1 Cor. 14:20.
- b. We are not to be children in the sense of being easily deceived or in other ways that are not becoming to Christians.

2. “tossed [like ships] here and there by waves”

- a. Children can be very gullible and easily swayed, but mature Christians must overcome that characteristic.
- b. Mature Christians are able to distinguish good from evil. (Heb. 5:11-14).
- c. This is accomplished by learning God’s will and letting it develop our ability to discern right and wrong.

3. “and carried about by every wind of doctrine” - The words “of doctrine” are a genitive of definition, and defines “every wind.” NIV “blown here and there by every wind of teaching.”

- a. This shows that what one believes makes a difference. One doctrine is not as good as another.
- b. We must grow up in the faith so that we be not led astray like children.
- c. We are to hold to sound (healthy) doctrine. (1 Tim. 4:6; 6:3; 2 Tim. 4:3; Tit. 1:9; 2:1).

4. “ by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming”

- “kubēia” [koo **bay** ah - “sleight, trickery, craftiness”

 - a. This sets forth that some false teachers are not honest and sincere. The New Testament makes reference to teachers who exploited the flock for selfish gains.
 - b. There may be some false teachers who are honest and sincere, but they are still dangerous.
 - c. False teachers, honest and sincere or not, may cause us to lose our souls. Poison is poison no matter the source or the provider.
 - d. The Bible warns against false teachers. (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:28-30; 1 Jn. 4:1; 2 Jn. 9-11).

EPH 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects [things] into Him, who is the head, even Christ [the Messiah, the Anointed One],

1. “but speaking the truth in love” - Greek is “aletheuo” [ah lay **thoo** oh] meaning “speaking truth, I am truthful, tell the truth.” The word may have the idea of doing truth as well as speaking truth.
 - a. “but speaking the truth” - The truth must be spoken. Only truth saves. (Jn. 8:32).

- b. “in love” - Truth must be spoken “in love.”
 - c. This does not mean there is never reproof (2 Tim. 4:1,2; Acts 8:19, 20; Gal. 2:11-14), but even reproof should come out of love.
2. “we are to grow up in all aspects [things] into Him” - Christians are to mature by practicing the all 9 characteristics listed as “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22,23), and the developing all the Christian graces (2 Pet. 1:5-11).
 3. “who is the head, even Christ”
 - a. Jesus “is the head” of the body. (Col. 1:18).
 - b. Jesus is Supreme. He is “the Lord of lords” and “the King of kings.”
 - c. He is “the chief Shepherd” of the flock. (1 Pet. 5:4).

EPH 4:16 from whom [Christ the head] the whole body [all the various parts of the church], being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

1. “from whom the whole body” - This is again a reference to Christ and to the church.
 - a. The body is dependent on Him, and has no life without Him.
 - b. This is true of each member [part] of the body.
2. “being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies” - “As a harmonious structure knit together by the joints” - Philips
3. “according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body” - The church grows when members harmoniously work together always submitting to the authority of Christ.
4. “for the building up [edifying] of itself in love.” Love builds up the church.

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