

who is the head.

Then when every part of the body is working together, the body will grow and build itself up in love.

Yes, Jesus loves His church. He has given us all the gifts we need to be what He wants us to be. The church lacks nothing. Jesus has given us everything!

If you believe that, you will oppose every addition which man tries to make to the perfect organisation of the church. Christ has given us what we need to be perfect. Man's additions can only ruin that perfection. Praise God for His wonderful grace. May we trust in Him enough to desire nothing else.

Questions:

- 45. T F Christ gave gifts to His church so that the saints can be equipped for service.
- 46. T F The saints are equipped through the teaching of the word of God.
- 47. T F The Scriptures do not contain all we need to be perfect.
- 48. T F The body of Christ is built up by big church buildings.
- 49. T F The body builds itself up in love.
- 50. T F Every member must work in order to build up the body of Christ.

Student's Name _____
Address _____

THE CHURCH IN EPHESIANS
a Correspondence Course – Nine Lessons by Paul K. Williams

Lesson 6: The Working Body

The Working Body–Ephesians 4:7-16

- I. Jesus gave gifts to men, 4:7-8**
 - A. To each one “grace” was given.
 - B. According to the measure of Christ’s gift.
 - C. He did this when He ascended on high.
- II. A parenthesis of praise, 4:9-10**
- III. The gifts are the men to fill the teaching offices in the church, 4:11.**
- IV. Their work is to equip the saints for the work of service, 4:12**
- V. The final result is unity of the faith, maturity, growth of the body, 4:13-16**

I. Jesus gave gifts to men, 4:7-8

A. To each one “grace” was given.

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.” (Ephesians 4:7) The first six verses of chapter four stress the unity of the church. Some might think that because different people have different jobs, talents and opportunities that the church is not united. Paul here is telling us that the unity of the church is made possible by the different gifts given to different people.

The word “grace” as it is used here means “that which is wonderful though not deserved.”

B. According to the measure of Christ’s gift.

The fact that this grace is given “*according to the measure of Christ’s gift*” stresses the fact that whatever differences there are between Christians, all our abilities and opportunities come from Christ. The differences between us should not, therefore, produce disunity. The differences have been made by Christ for the purpose of producing a united, working body.

In 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 Paul shows that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given by the one Spirit, “*distributing to each one individually just as He wills.*” In Ephesians Paul is not talking about the individual gifts each Christian may have, but the result of those gifts—the work which is done by each Christian. We will find this work in verses 11 and 12.

C. Jesus did this when He ascended on high

“Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.”

In order to prove that the gifts came from Jesus, Paul in this verse refers to Psalm 68:18. That psalm is a psalm of triumph, where the placing of the ark on Zion is celebrated as if it had been a great victory. Paul shows that, in its deepest meaning, this psalm celebrates the victory of Christ.

The psalm says that “He *received* gifts from men,” whereas Paul says, “He *gave* gifts to men.” In Bible times when a king won a great victory he would lead his captives away to his own city and would receive the possessions of his conquered enemies as gifts. Not said in the psalm, but referred to by Paul in this verse, is the fact that the conqueror would then distribute gifts among his victorious army.

So the picture is this. Jesus is the conqueror over Satan. When He was crucified and was raised from the dead He won the battle. He led the forces of Satan into captivity, took their possessions, and distributed gifts to His

Every saint has a work—the work of service. Each one needs to be equipped to do that work. How can he be equipped?

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16) Therefore when the evangelists, pastors and teachers teach the Scriptures which have been given by the apostles and prophets, the saints become equipped for the work of service. And the Scriptures will equip the saints thoroughly because they make the man of God adequate (perfect). The body of Christ will then be built up by every member working together, directed by the word of God.

V. The final result is unity of the faith, maturity, growth of the body, 4:13-16.

“Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

When those whom Christ has given to the church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) do their work properly, the saints will grow up into the unity of the faith by learning and loving the truth. They will attain the knowledge of the Son of God and become a mature man. As a result they will not be led astray by false teaching because they will be rooted and grounded in the truth, and they will themselves be speaking the truth in love, continuing to grow up in all things into Christ

messenger and minister to Paul in Rome (Philippians 2:25).

No titles

Jesus said, ""But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. *"And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."* (Matthew 23:8-12) This means that though we have different jobs in the kingdom of God, we are not to exalt some with special titles. Those in the family of God are all brothers and sisters, and our real Teacher is Jesus Christ.

Denominations love to use religious titles. They call men "Father," "Reverend," "Bishop," etc. Such titles of honour are not from God. Especially offensive is the title "Reverend." This word is found once in the King James Version of the Bible (Psalm 111:9) where it says, "*He hath sent redemption unto his people; He hath commanded his covenant for ever: Holy and reverend is his name.*" God's name is reverend (to be held in awe and respect); certainly no man should wear that title!

Questions:

41. T F The qualifications for deacons are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
42. T F Deacons are trusted servants in the local church.
43. T F The church may select other servants for special jobs.
44. T F Preachers should be addressed as "Reverend."

IV. Their work is to equip the saints for the work of service, 4:12.

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."
(Ephesians 4:11-12)

army, the church. The existence of the church and all of the blessings it has are evidence that Jesus has conquered Satan.

Jesus is King

"When He ascended on high" tells us that Jesus was the triumphant King when He ascended to heaven after His resurrection. Peter affirmed His kingship in his sermon on Pentecost. *"Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. . . Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."* (Acts 2:30-31,33-36)

Jesus is "Lord and Christ." That means He is king NOW. He is on David's throne, seated at the right hand of God. We who are His church are His kingdom, into which we were transferred when we were saved from the power of Satan. (See Colossians 1:13) Let us rejoice that we are in the kingdom of the all-powerful Lord, Jesus Christ. Let us not think that we must wait until He comes again before His kingdom will be here. It is here NOW. He is ruling NOW. He has ASCENDED on high.

Questions:

1. T F Grace means what we have earned by working.
2. T F In the church different members have different jobs.
3. T F Because Christians have different abilities, they must join different churches.
4. T F In Ephesians 4:8 Paul refers to Psalm 68.
5. T F Jesus conquered Satan.
6. T F Jesus went to heaven because Satan defeated Him.

7. T F Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God in heaven.
8. T F Christians have been transferred into the kingdom of Jesus.
9. T F The kingdom of Christ has not yet been established.

II. A parenthesis of praise, 4:9-10

Verses 9 and 10 are placed in parentheses and are therefore not a part of the argument. The thought presented in the quotation from Psalm 68 is that Jesus ascended to heaven. This causes Paul to break forth in praise: “(Now this, *“He ascended”* --what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

Paul does not want us to forget the sacrifice which Jesus made. He “descended” from heaven to become a man. There he suffered and died for our sins, being put into the grave (the lower parts of the earth). His ascent to heaven is therefore filled with glory, and He deserves to be above all the heavens, filling all things. Praise be to our Saviour, Jesus Christ!

III. The gifts are the men to fill the teaching offices in the church, 4:11

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”

Jesus made sure His church would be properly equipped to do what He wanted it to do. For this purpose He appointed certain offices to be performed and He equipped men to perform them. These are the gifts which Christ gave to men when he ascended on high.

A. Apostles and prophets—the foundation.

Ephesians 2:20 says, *“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.”* On page 8 of Lesson 3 you will find a discussion of this verse. If you will reread that section you will be reminded that the work of the apostles and prophets was to reveal, prove and write down the word of Jesus Christ.

spirit teach a man in private.

James 3:1 contains a warning: “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.” Those who are in positions of responsibility will receive great condemnation if they abuse their position. Jesus spoke of certain scribes (Jewish teachers) in Mark 12:40: *“who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”* The teacher must be an example in life and must be a careful student of the Bible. When he or she teaches, they must be sure they are teaching the truth.

Questions:

37. T F Teachers will be judged strictly.
38. T F A woman may be a preacher.
39. T F Older women should teach younger women.
40. T F The teacher should be an example in life.

E. Deacons and other servants

Since Paul is dealing with the ones given to the church for teaching, he does not talk about deacons and other servants of the church who may not teach. But since we are talking about the organisation of the church, let us consider these people as well.

Deacons are special servants of the local church to serve under the direction of the elders. They are mentioned with the elders in Philippians 1:1, and their qualifications are given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Since the word means “servant,” and since they have to be exceptionally good men, we can see that they are specially trusted servants.

At the same time, other jobs need to be done for which servants can be chosen. In Acts 6;1-6 the church at Jerusalem chose seven men to take care of the poor widows in that congregation. In Romans 16:1 Phoebe, a woman, is called *“a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.”* Messengers were chosen by churches to carry their money to Jerusalem for the poor saints (1 Corinthians 16;3), and Epaphroditus was Philippi’s

30. T F Pastors must be older men.
31. T F The elders oversee the local church.
32. T F The bishop in Christ's church oversees a diocese containing many local churches.
33. T F The only organisation God has given His people is the local church.
34. T F It is right for local churches to be under the oversight of a district headquarters.
35. T F Each church should have more than one pastor.
36. T F According to 1 Timothy 3:1-7 an unmarried man can be an elder.

D. Teachers

Let us read Ephesians 4:11 again: "*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.*" teachers have been placed in the church by Christ.

Evangelists and pastors are teachers, but there are teachers who are not evangelists or elders. They may teach privately, as Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos (Acts 18:24-26), or they may teach classes. Both men and women are to be teachers. Older women are to teach younger women (Titus 2:3-5), and Timothy was commanded: "*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*" (2 Timothy 2:2) The word "MEN" IN THIS VERSE IS FROM A Greek word which can mean "person" without regard to sex, and certainly does in this case.

There is, however, a restriction concerning women teachers. "*I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.*" (1 Timothy 2:12) It is not wrong for a woman to teach a man, because we have the example of Priscilla and Aquila teaching Apollos (Acts 18:24-26), but it is wrong for a woman to be in charge of a class where she is over a man. She cannot be a preacher for this reason, and she cannot be an elder because an elder exercises authority over men. She can teach classes of women or children, and she can with a meek and quiet

This word is the foundation of the church.

Jesus gave apostles and prophets to us so that the church could be made strong. He gave the Holy Spirit to them to guide them into all the truth (John 14:26; 16:13) and to give them the power to perform miraculous signs so that we can know they had been sent from God (Mark 16:17-20). Jesus gave us the apostles and prophets—truly wonderful gifts.

Remember that their work was to be the foundation. There are no living apostles today because the foundation has been laid. We have their work finished and preserved in the New Testament. There is nothing more for apostles and prophets to do on the earth. If you doubt this statement read and ponder 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Jude 3. Everything we need to please God has been furnished by the scriptures revealed and written by the apostles and prophets. Those scriptures make up the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints, never to be changed.

Questions:

10. T F The gifts Jesus gave the church are earthly riches.
11. T F There are apostles and prophets of Jesus living on the earth today.
12. T F The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all the truth.
13. T F The apostles and prophets are the foundation.
14. T F The word of God has been completely revealed.

B. Evangelists—preachers of the gospel

The work of *revealing* the gospel is finished, but the work of *preaching* the gospel must continue until this world is burned up. Therefore Jesus gave *evangelists* to the church.

The Greek dictionary says that the word "*euangelistes*" means "*a preacher of the gospel.*" It is used only three times in the New Testament including the verse we are studying. In Acts 21:8 Philip is called an evangelist, and in 2 Timothy 4:5 Timothy is instructed to "*do the work of an evangelist.*"

Two letters were written to Timothy instructing him concerning his work. From them we can see what kind of life an evangelist must lead and what work he must do.

The life of an evangelist.

We find that the evangelist must lead a life of example. *“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”* (1 Timothy 4:12) If you examine each of those qualities you will see that an evangelist must be someone who has been tested and found to be of good reputation. (See Acts 16:1-3) He must be a man of faith. (Timothy had learned the scriptures from an early age, 2 Timothy 3:14-15.) Since faith comes from hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), the evangelist must know the scriptures. In fact he must continually study the scriptures. *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* (2 Timothy 2:15)

There are no educational qualifications given in the New Testament except that the evangelist must be able to teach the gospel. Denominations sometimes require a man to get a degree from a theological seminary in order to be ordained an evangelist. Jesus did not give such a requirement. But He *does* require the evangelist to be a good student of His word.

The work of an evangelist: Preach the gospel and appoint elders.

The duties of an evangelist are summarized in 2 Timothy 4:1-2: *“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”* He must preach whatever is in God’s word even if it makes others angry. He must preach God’s word, even if it means he must rebuke the elders (overseers of the church—see the section on “pastors.”) 1 Timothy 5:19-21 says: *“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you*

Elders in every church.

In every reference to elders, it is clear that there must be more than one in each church. (See Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) There are “pastors” in every church. The New Testament knows nothing of the modern practice of having only one man in the local church called the pastor.

Denominational organisations

There is a major difference between the organisation of the New Testament church and the denominations of men. Men have greatly corrupted the simple organisation of Christ’s church by adding pyramids of offices and organisations. The Bible knows nothing of a pope, a cardinal, an archbishop, a bishop over churches, a district superintendent, a president or executive secretary. You cannot read of a district headquarters, a synod, a missionary society, or a seminary. These inventions of men are distortions of the gospel of Christ and lead people from the simplicity which is in Christ. (See Galatians 1:6-9)

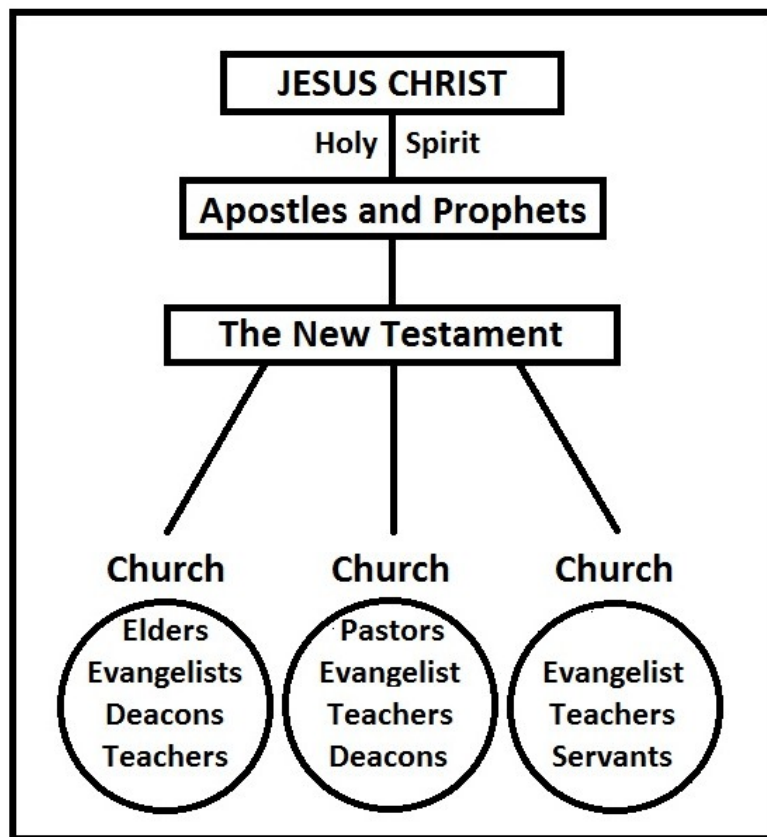
Qualifications for pastors

The office of elder is so important that God has given stringent qualifications for the man who is appointed. Paul uses a list of qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and a similar list in Titus 1:5-9. The list starts with the phrase, *“An overseer, then, must be. . .”* (1 Timothy 3:2) No man is allowed to take this office unless he meets all the requirements given by Christ. I hope the student will take the time to read the verses given above. The fact that the elders must be such fine men is proof that the office is very important. It is no wonder that we are commanded, *“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”* (Hebrews 13:17)

Questions:

26. T F Pastors are elders.
27. T F Elders are bishops.
28. T F Evangelists are bishops.
29. T F Pastors must feed the flock of God.

New Testament. Each local church is separate from every other local church and completely independent. It has its own elders (pastors, bishops) who shepherd the flock of God which is among them.



The Organisation of Christ's Church

observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.”

The evangelist has a very important job, but it is not an easy one. He must be careful to preach only the truth because if one teaches error *“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.”* (2 Timothy 2:24-25)

Under the authority of Christ, not men.

I want to stress that the evangelist is under authority to Christ. He must preach what Christ says. If the elders do not want him to preach those things, he must still preach the truth. There is no one on earth who has the right to write a book and tell the evangelist that this is what he must believe and teach. There is no denominational headquarters with the right to supervise him and tell him what or where he is to preach. The evangelist has been given his instructions by Christ Jesus and he must not deviate from them. He must preach the gospel—and nothing else.

In addition to preaching he has one other duty. In Titus 1:5 Paul said, *“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.”* The evangelist appoints elders (after the congregation selects the men, Acts 6:1-6). This duty is referred to in 1 Timothy 5:22 when Timothy is cautioned: *“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.”* The evangelist must be careful to appoint (lay hands on) only those men who are qualified to be elders.

What is NOT the work of an evangelist.

There is one duty which is NOT given to the evangelist, the duty of *“oversight.”* The job of making decisions for the congregation is given to the elders (pastors). The evangelist is the preacher of the gospel, not the overseer of the congregation.

Nor is the evangelist given any special duties to visit the sick or entertain

the young people. He has the same duties as other Christians and must do those things as he has opportunity, but they are not his job more than they are the job of other Christians.

One of the gifts Jesus has given to the church is “*evangelists*.” His wisdom has provided that these men always should be here to preach the gospel which will save our souls. Let us be thankful for His gift.

Questions:

15. T F The word “evangelist” is found six times in the New Testament.
16. T F An evangelist is a preacher who travels from place to place.
17. T F Timothy was an evangelist.
18. T F An evangelist must be a good Example to other Christians.
19. T F A man must graduate from a seminary in order to be an evangelist.
20. T F The evangelist must be careful to please men when he preaches.
21. T F The evangelist must preach the truth even when men do not like it.
22. T F The evangelist must never rebuke an elder.
23. T F The evangelist must not be quarrelsome.
24. T F The evangelist must preach what his denomination says he must preach.
25. T F The evangelist is the overseer of the local church.

C. Pastors–Shepherds of the church

The people of God are often described as sheep. Sheep need to be cared for, and those who care for them are “shepherds.” The Greek word “*poimenas*,” which is here translated “pastors,” is defined in my Greek dictionary simply as “*shepherds*.” This verse (Ephesians 4:11) is the only place in the New Testament where the translators have translated it as “pastor.” In every other place it is translated “shepherd.”

Pastor is not the only word used for this office. In Acts 20:17 and Acts

20:28 three different words are used to refer to the same group of men. “*From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.*” (Acts 20:17) In Acts 20:28 Paul addressed these elders and said, “*Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*” ELDERS are OVERSEERS and SHEPHERDS. To complicate the matter further, in the King James Version the word “overseer” is translated “bishop” (Philippians 1:1). Therefore pastors (shepherds) are overseers (bishops) and elders. The three words are used to describe the same office.

These words tell us the work of these men. They are elders because they are older men, respected for their wisdom and example. They are shepherds because they are to feed the flock and protect it from “wolves.” The feeding is done by teaching the word of God, and the wolves are false teachers. They are overseers because they must guide the local church, making sure that the church carries out the instructions of Jesus.

A local church office

One very important thing to notice is that this is an office in the local church. “*And when they had appointed elders for them in every church.*” (Acts 14:23) “*He sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.*” (Acts 20:17) “*Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers,*” (Acts 20:28) “*Appoint elders in every city.*” (Titus 1:5) “*I exhort the elders among you. . . shepherd the flock of God among you.*” (1 Peter 5:1-2).

Local churches only.

This tells us something about the organisation of Christ’s church. Each local church has its own elders. A church is not under the bishops of another church, nor is a bishop over many churches. In fact, the only organisation you can find in the New Testament is the LOCAL church. There is no supervisor of the churches, no headquarters on earth, no missionary society. Christ is our head, and He rules through His word, the