

Equipped to Build up the Body of Christ

Read Ephesians 4: 7

- This passage is talking about Spiritual gifts and not grace for salvation.
 - There were gifts given to the first century church to help minister to the Body. Are gifts given today in the same way?
 - No, this was only given during the transition period from the Old Covenant to the New Covenanting. This transition was 40 years. Starting at Pentecost and ending with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70. You can read about this transition [here](#)

Read Ephesians 4:8-13

- Vs 8 – Paul here is borrowing from Psalm 68:18
 - This Psalm is talking about Moses and God delivering the Israelites out of Egypt. Paul makes [6 changes](#) to this text and is using it to refer to Christ and His victory returning from earth back into Heaven.
- Vs. 9 – There is a lot of speculation on this verse about Jesus descending into [Sheol](#) or [Hades](#) (the Greek translation of Sheol), but that is not what it means. The NIV and Complete Jewish Bible get the translation correct. Ascended to Heaven and Descended to Earth.

- Now this phrase, "he went up," what can it mean if not that he first went down into the lower parts, that is, the earth? Ephesians 4:9 CJB
- Vs. 10-13 – Jesus came to free the captives in sin and give them gifts, just as Paul quoted back in verse 8. The gifts Jesus gave were gifts to help spread the Gospel and again are not gifts given today.
 - This new Gospel was a new message and needed special attention to help spread the message. [Christians today are the largest religious demographic in the world](#). The Spiritual Gifts are no longer needed in the same capacity they were in the 1st Century.
 - These Spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues (different languages that are not your native or learned language), healing and raising people from the dead, this was to “build up the body of Christ.” To help Christians at this beginning stage to become mature, to understand the full mystery of God. We know the [mystery of God](#) today.

Read Ephesians 4:14-16

- Paul is continuing in this idea of maturing the early churches understanding of the Gospel, why Christ came to earth and died and was resurrected and ascended back into Heaven. Vs.14 mature in your understanding of the mystery of God and increase your faith to grow from a childlike understanding to an adult understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

The 1st century did not have the NT scriptures, so letters like this one and the OT scriptures was all these young Christians had but, that was enough to get them to maturity.

- Vs 15-16 – Speak the truth of Gospel to the unbelieving world with love and continue to mature and grow in every way into Him that is the head of the church.
 - Today we have the full Word of God and can study it to become mature in Christ and mature in God's word. Then we can use that knowledge to speak to the unbelieving world. We do not need to heal, speak in tongues nor raise people from the dead because God speaks through His word.
- The Body with the Head is held together and equipped so it will grow to maturity and build itself up in love. To show the 1st century world this new idea called Christianity. For the first time in history a message of putting others above self was pursued. This was a new concept in the first century. Culturally, Greeks, Romans and Jews put themselves above anything else.

Matthew 5:38-48

Read Ephesians 4:17-19

- Vs 17 – walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.
 - Who are the Gentiles?

- Sometimes it means non-Israelites. Sometimes “Gentile” could mean the 10 dispersed tribes of Israel. Sometimes those that do not know Yahweh. Sometimes the “nations”. In this passage it is used as someone who does not know Christ
- Futility of their minds. Futile and Futility are sometimes used in the NT to denote idolatry. Wrong lines of conduct follow from wrong ideas about God and lead to a senseless mind darkened to the true nature of the God of the universe. [The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians \(The New International Commentary on the New Testament\)](#) Pg. 354
 - Here Paul is using the word "mataiotes" which means "the inability to reach the goal of its intended design". It cannot achieve what it was intended for. It is not able to fulfill its purpose. Solomon had tried to find meaning through knowledge, through wealth and all that it affords, and through the pleasures of music and art and women. He had houses and lands with beautiful gardens and ponds. But none of it brought meaning to life. He observed that even if you have all of these things, you live a few years and then die. It is all futility, striving

after the wind (Eccl. 2:17) [Commentary on Ephesians by David](#)

[B. Curtis](#)

- Paul is telling them to not live as the world. The world will never live up to its potential because the mind is futile, but the mind of Christians is different, and we can and through Him change the world so it can live up to that potential.
- Vs. 18-19 – The world is dark to them that do not have understanding of God. Alienated from the life of God because they do not have the Spirit that gives knowledge. The world does not except Christ and therefore is ignorant of truth. The Gentile world had been “alienated” from God for so long they did not realize what they were doing is wrong.
 - Sensuality – They would sleep with women of the temple of Aphrodite. The Greek world would practice pedophilia and believed it was their right. All kinds of impurity was practiced during this time because that is what their world view had taught them. Leave babies in the trash, kill the unwanted, consume as much as you can and live for you.
 - Christians changed all of these things. Hospitals, Orphanages, Schools...

Read Ephesians 4:20- 24

- Vs. 20-21 – Paul is saying this as an assurance. You learned about Christ and assuming that you heard about Him. It could be better read as of course you have heard about Christ and were taught about Him and the truth that now lives in you.
- Vs. 22-24 – Because of the Spirit that lives inside you, and you now know the truth of God, put off those old ways of thinking, the sensuality, the impurity and the idea of living for yourself. Gain a new mind regenerated by the Holy Spirit which is who God really is. Through Christ we have gained the knowledge of God, who He is and now the mystery has been revealed. Live in this understanding and in this newness of life and watch how the world around you will change.

Read Ephesians 4:25-27

- Vs. 25 – Therefore takes us back to the previous verses about old and putting on the new. Being new to the idea of others before self and the truth about God. Paul will go on from here and outline 6 ways Christians should put on life in Christ. This is called the “Worthy Walk”.

- “Speak truth with his neighbor”. Paul is quoting from Zechariah 8:16.

Now why would Paul only use part of a scripture?

- “In Paul's day the great teachers used a technique which is today called "remez or hint," in which they used part of a Scripture passage in discussion, assuming their audience's knowledge of the Bible would allow them to deduce for themselves fuller meaning.” – [David B. Curtis commentary on Ephesians](#)
- Speak truth with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Do not lie to anyone, but especially members of the Body of Christ. We are all members of one body.
- Vs 26 – Here the Christians of Lycus Valley are being told to be angry but not to sin. Paul again is using a quote from the OT. Psalms 4:4. Anger is not a sin; it is a God given emotion. Emotions are not sins unless we let them control us and do things that are sins. Anger is a good motivator for people, and some are angry as part of their condition. Paul could be saying here for people that are angry use it for good, but don't harbor it and let the sun go down on your anger. Some think this is a command from Paul, but I do not think that is the case here because Psalms 4 is not about being angry.

- Vs. 27 – Paul only uses the word devil twice in Ephesians and in 1st and 2nd Timothy. The rest of his letters he uses Satan. He could be talking about Satan here, but there are 2 meanings of the Greek word diabolus (English translates devil) Satan or one who slanders.

Read Ephesians 4:28-32

- Here Paul begins telling the Christians in Lycus Valley and us today the remaining 6 ways to put on Christ and live new. For others and not for self.
 - Turn from lying to telling the truth in Christ verse 25
 - Self-control and do not let anger overtake you verse 26
 - If you are a thief steal no longer. Do honest work so that you may share your fruits of your labor with anyone in need verse 28
 - No longer speak hurtful words to people. Speak life and uplifting words that edify the Body of Christ or draw others to Christ verse 29.
 - From bitterness to love verse 31
 - From sexual desires to a thankful acknowledgement of God's good gifts verse 5:3