

## EPHESIANS CHAPTER 4

### **Ephesians 4:1-16 – The Unified Growth of the Church into Maturity**

Ephesians 2:11-Chapter 3 explains that Gentile believers and Israeli believers are now part of one new man. It is a new entity with unity as the main goal. In 4:1-16, Paul is emphatic about living up to this expectation; there must not any division in the church, and both Jews and Gentiles are to serve in this new administration unified by the doctrines of the apostles and prophets.

### **Ephesians 4:1-16 – Textual Observations**

Seven sentences in these 16 verses.

1. I exhort you to live in a manner worthy of the calling.
2. There is one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.
3. The grace was given to each one.
4. It says when He ascended on high, He captured those in captivity, He gave gifts to men.
5. What is this “He ascended?” If not that also He descended.
6. The one who descended himself is also the one who ascended.
7. And He Himself gave the apostles and the prophets and the evangelists and the pastors and teachers.

### **Ephesians 4:1-10 – Review**

Paul is not simply instructing them to live and serve in unity, he also lived it with them. His example demonstrated that it did not matter where they were from, what mattered is who they are in Christ Jesus, their qualifications as elders, and their dedication to the mission.

To walk worthy of the calling by which you were called is to have a life that clearly represents the truth of God in the gospel. This walk is to be done while keeping in proper godly character:

Thinking of others as more important than yourself and do not thinking too highly of yourself, while remaining tranquil in every circumstance, one who doesn't lose his temper easily. Also, bearing with one another, not out of obligation but out of unconditional, self-sacrificial desire and activity that is for the benefit of the other person. While having a sense of urgency for the preservation of spiritual unity of peace, tolerance is then being patient with others as they grow in doctrine or when they make a mistake and offend another believer. Personality conflicts should not divide if all parties are doctrinally unified.

We have a spiritual connection grounded in the truth of the Word of God. It is not a feeling that binds us but the truth. The result of solid, clear, consistent teaching is that all of us in this one body grow into maturity and speak the truth in love.

The “One” section in Ephesians 4:4-6 is emphatic about what is necessary for being unified: one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith (core doctrines of biblical truth), one baptism (spiritual, not water), one God and Father of all (referring to His attributes of sovereignty, transcendence, omnipotence, and omnipresence).

The main point of verses 7-10 is to state that when Jesus Christ ascended, He provided gifts to mankind and especially the church (John 14:16-18). Paul quotes a psalm, then explains that the psalm is Messianic, speaking of Jesus because if one ascends to heaven, he also must descend to the physical realm first.

## **Ephesians 4:11 – He gave...**

Literal Clunky Version –

And He Himself gave on one hand, the apostles, but on the other hand, the prophets, but on another, the evangelists, but on another, the pastors and teachers.

When Christ ascended, He gave these gifts to mankind and especially to the church. The typical misconception is that He gave to men the gift of apostleship, the gift of prophecy, the gift of being an evangelist, the gift of pastor and teacher. This is not the case, rather these “offices” were given to establish the church and help local bodies grow into maturity.

The construction of this sentence dictates that those in this list are not the same and they are not equal. The offices that follow the apostles have less authority. Prophets may have similar functions, but the words of a prophet are measured against the words of the apostles. If they disagree, then the prophet cannot be trusted; the words of the apostles are authoritative. Likewise, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are all subject to the words of the apostles. The words of the apostles are captured for us in the New Testament, the Bible.

Because of this standard set in Scripture, the offices of apostle and prophet (I believe) are closed, and anyone claiming to be an apostle or prophet must have the necessary characteristics or must be rejected.





*Evangelist* is a difficult concept due to its infrequent use. Either this was an office during the early church that is no longer in use, or this can also be a ministry of the church to proclaim the good news to unbelievers so that they could be added to the body. Because of the lack of protocol, I do not think it is appropriate to designate someone in an official capacity within the church, but if we chose to recognize someone as an evangelist, then I personally believe that they should meet the character qualifications of an elder and this philosophy is what we used to determine who is qualified to be an endorsed missionary.

## **Pastors and Teachers**

Before we talk about pastors, let’s address whether this is one office/function or two. Is this “pastor, (kai) that is teacher” or is it two separate offices—pastors and teachers? Here is why this is taught as a single unit in this section:

1. The change in grammar – “men...de” to “kai”
2. One article with two nouns joined by a “kai” – Granville Sharpe rule
  - a. “When the copulative KAI connects two nouns of the same case, if the article HO or any of its cases precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle; i.e., it denotes a further description of the first-named person.”
  - b. This would then mean that *teachers* is descriptive of *pastors*.
  - c. It does not mean that all teachers are pastors; this means that pastors are intended to be teachers.

Here is the issue with the word *pastor*. It is never listed again as an office of the church. Here is the word group:

- ✓ ποιμην *poimēn* shepherd
-  ποιμήν *poimēn*  shepherd
-  ποιμαίνω *poimainō*  shepherd
-  ποίμνη *poimnē*  flock
-  ποιμνιον *poimnion*  flock
-  ἀρχιποίμην *archipoimēn*  chief shepherd

The word for *pastor* in Ephesians is the word used for *shepherd* 17 of 18 times (only Ephesians translates it differently). 13 times it refers directly to Jesus (Matthew 25:32; John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25). Four times it refers to shepherds (Luke 2). One time it refers to a church leader.

The verb form means to act as a shepherd. In John 21:15-17, Jesus tells Peter to “shepherd My sheep.” I find it very interesting that Jesus does not say “shepherd your sheep.” Acts 20:28 – Paul tells the elders to hold carefully yourselves and the flock...the Holy Spirit has made overseers to shepherd the church of God. This states that shepherding is a role of overseers. The verb is next used in this vein in 1 Peter 5:1-4, where elders are now told to shepherd the flock of God, and then Jesus is called the Chief Shepherd.

Let’s examine the two words used that are responsible to shepherd the flock of God.

ἐπίσκοπος *episkopos* – Literally “to watch over” (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:7)

πρεσβύτερος *presbyteros* – Someone older, used commonly with the leaders of Israel (Matthew 15:2, 16:21; Acts 4:5). This position in the church we find is used a few times (1 Tim 4:14, 5:17; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

Possibilities

1. Some state that pastor is a particular one within the elders
2. Some state that overseer and pastor are functions of the elders
3. Some state that all three describe the same position

Personally, I think that all three words describe the same position within the church. The language does not support that *shepherd* in Ephesians 4:11 is what the elder does, but it appears that they are the same. Paul uses the words for *overseer* and *elder* interchangeably.

To repeat my concern, I do not like calling these offices and I am convinced that it is wrong to call these gifts to individuals. Most of our ilk state that pastor/teacher is a gift. Once identified, a pastor is a pastor for life, and if not a pastor, they are not utilizing their gift. I see no evidence for this in the text.

In Ephesians 4:11, pastor/teacher is not an office or a gift given to a person. Rather it is a role given to the church that is filled by qualified persons. It is a voluntary role, and the qualifications and responsibilities are clearly defined.

1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:1-2; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4 – Obviously, godly character is vital, but one thing consistent in these roles is teaching: characterized by being taught, able to teach, skilled in the word of God. Because of 1 Timothy 5:17, it is clear that some elders focus on teaching while others do not. Those who do not focus on teaching are still leaders and they teach in less conventional ways (example, discussion, etc....).

What is not stated in any list of qualifications is gift identification, divine ordination, or anything of the like. Ordination of men as elders, overseers, and shepherds is done by men who are themselves qualified and their judgment is trusted. Timothy is even warned about being hasty in his approval of elders and overseers (1 Timothy 5:22).

I believe that we, your elders and teachers, are filling a role. We do not carry authority; we simply are the ones who are dedicated to the spiritual wellbeing of the people in this church. We dedicate ourselves to the Word of God so that we can convey it properly and answer questions based upon the words and principles found in the Bible.

In the next lesson, we will begin with what these roles are supposed to help the church do and remind ourselves how those goals are accomplished.