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The Gifts of Messiah to His Church
4: 7-11

The gifts of Messiah to His Church DIG: What is your spiritual gift (s)? Are some gifts more important than others? Why? Why not? What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? Who gives these gifts to the Church? What is the difference between a talent and a spiritual gift?

REFLECT: Why is it so important for you to use your spiritual gift in the Body of Messiah? How do you feel when you exercise your spiritual gift(s)? Why is it impossible to brag about your spiritual gift? What role do you see your particular gift(s) building up the Body?

Your spiritual gifts were not given for your own benefit, but for the benefit of others,
just as other people were given gifts for your benefit.



The essence of the Gospel is not in what we should do for **God**, but what **God** has done for us. The B'rit Chadashah, like the TaNaKh, contains many commands, but they are not the heart of our faith. They are simply what **YHVH** calls and enables us to do for **His** glory in response to what **He** has done for us through our **Lord Yeshua Messiah**. Every book in the B'rit Chadashah teaches what **Messiah** has done for believers, and every B'rit Chadashah encouragement is built on that foundation of **ADONAI's gracious** provision through **the Savior**. **God** gave the

supreme **gift** of **grace** and **His** children are to respond in faithful obedience: **For we are God's workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (2:10 NIV).**

Rabbi Sha'ul begins this passage by referring to what **Ha'Shem** has done for those who have trusted in **His Son**. **Paul** has just described **the walk** of the believer (**to see the link click Be – Walking Together in Unity**), which is carried out through the ministry of **the gifts** that **God** has given us. Here, **the apostle** first assures us that every believer has been individually **gifted**; then **he** shows us how **Messiah** obtained the right to give **gifts**; and finally **he** mentions some of **the gifts** through whom **the Lord** blesses the entire Church.

The apostle moves from the unity of believers to the uniqueness of believers when **he** says: **Each one of us, however, has been given grace to be measured by the Messiah's gift (4:7). God** has provided **His** redemption to us through **His grace** at the moment of salvation (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Bw – What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith**), but that's not where it stops. **He** has also equipped us with a **gift** drawn from the abundance of **Messiah**. The Greek word for **grace** (*charis*), is the same word used to describe our experience of **Yeshua's salvation (2:8)**. As our redemption is a free **gift** of **God**, so too is **the grace gift** a free present from **the Father**. Every believer has a certain *charisma* **(grace gift)** for service in **His** Kingdom. The verse here implies that we were given differing abilities based upon **Messiah's** equipping. Although **the gifts** vary, **the Rabbi** is quick to point out that each believer, without question, is the recipient of at least one **grace gift**.[154] No one person has all **the gifts**, but most people have a very strong primary **gift**, and a secondary **gift**. There are other lists of **gifts** in the B'rit Chadashah (see the commentary on **Romans Dc – Responding to the Mercies of ADONAI: spiritual gifts**) and (see the commentary on **First Corinthians Ch – Unwrapping Your Spiritual Gifts**).

There are similarities and differences between talents and spiritual **gifts**. Both are **gifts** from **God**. Both grow in effectiveness with use. Both are intended to be used on behalf of others, not for selfish purposes. **First Corinthians 12:7** states that spiritual **gifts** are given to benefit others and not ourselves. As the two great commandments deal with loving **God** and others, it follows that one should use their talents for those purposes. But to whom and when talents and **spiritual gifts** are given differs. A person (regardless of his belief in **God** or in **Messiah**) is given a natural talent as a result of a combination of genetics (some have natural ability in music, art, or mathematics) and surroundings (growing up in a musical family will

aid one in developing a talent for music), or because **God** desired to give certain individuals with certain talents, for example, **Bezalel** in **Exodus 31:1-6**.[155]**This is why** the Scriptures say: **After he went up into the heights, he led captivity captive and he gave** spiritual **gifts to mankind (4:8). The apostle** highlights a parallel passage from the TaNaKh that predicts the giving of **grace gifts**. The original context of **Psalm 68:18** speaks of **King David**, after a victorious military campaign, giving **gifts**, or spoils, to **his** troops. Some literalists might object to **the apostle's** use of this passage in the context of spiritual **gifts**. However, as a trained Pharisaic **rabbi** of **his** day, **Sha'ul** was making use of some common interpretive methods used within first century Judaism. It was summarized by the acronym **P**a**RD**e**S**, which means garden or paradise. The four Hebrew letters, however, stand for the following: Pey/**P** for *peshat* (a literal interpretation), Resh/**R** for *remez* (a hint and represents an implied meaning of text which usually has a deeper meaning), Dalet/**D** for **darash** (means searching), and Samech/**S** for **sod** (hidden meaning). Here in **Ephesians 4:8**, **the Rabbi** is making a nice rabbinic point by the use of of *remez*, a hint of **the Messiah** through the deeper meaning of **David's** experience.[156]

Kefa tells us that between **Jesus'** death on the cross and **His** resurrection, our **Lord** was **put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit. He was spiritually alive** but physically dead. Sometime during those three days **He went and preached to the spirits in prison (First Peter 3:18-19).** With **Messiah** dead on the cross **the demons** must have been celebrating **their** seeming victory only to have the living **Messiah** show up and make a triumphant announcement that **He** had conquered death. **Rabbi Sha'ul** mentions the same thing when **Messiah descended into the low, earthly regions of sh'ol (Ephesians 4:9).** The TaNaKh refers to the place of the dead as **sh'ol (Deuteronomy 32:22; Job 26:6; Psalm 16:10).**

One part of **sh'ol** was a place of torment and agony, occupied by the unrighteous dead and by the demons **who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built (1 Pet 3:20a).** However, another part of **sh'ol** was a place of contentment and rest, inhabited by **the righteous** dead who had put **their** faith in **God**. **Abraham's side (Lk 16:22)** was a common name for that side of **sh'ol** at the time of **the Messiah**. **They** resided there until **Yeshua** had paid for **their** sins on the cross. Then, after declaring victory over those very **demons, the Lord of Life** liberated **the** godly **captives** and **led them** to heaven **when He ascended on high (Eph 4:8).** Among those

who went with **Him** were Adam, Eve, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, **Noah** and all **the righteous of the TaNaKh** before the cross, including **those** mentioned in the hall of faith in the book of **Hebrews** (see my commentary on **Hebrews CI – The Hall of Faith**).

The point is that after **Messiah's** ascension, **He** would then give **spiritual gifts to mankind**.

The One who went down, Yeshua Messiah, is Himself the One who also went up, far above all of heaven, in order to fill all things (4:10). Paul is quick to point out the expression **"He went up"** cannot mean anything except that **"He also went down."** Since, as seems clear, **"He went up"** refers to our **Lord's** being taken up to heaven, then **"He went down"** must refer to **His** descent into **sh'ol** sometime during the three days that **Messiah's** body lay in the tomb. **The Lord** was first lowered, and then exalted **(Philippians 2:4-11)**.

Furthermore, He gave some people as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as shepherds and teachers (4:11). Messiah not only gives spiritual **gifts** to individual believers, but also to the total **Body**. The **gifts** are the people. How does a believer discover and develop such **gifts**? **Gifts** are not toys to play with; **they** are tools to build with. And if they are not used in love, they become weapons to fight with, which is what happened in the Corinthian church **(First Corinthians Chapters 12** to **14).** Believers are not to live in isolation. The writer to the **Hebrews** tells us that we **should not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day of the Lord approaching (Hebrews 10:25),** after all, we are members of the same **Body**.[157]

*Dear Heavenly Father, Praise **Your** great and Awesome love and wisdom! **You** not only gave the fantastic gift of redemption thru **Messiah's** blood **(Ephesians 1:7)** but you also wisely gave gifts to your children **to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (Ephesians 4:12).** I am amazed at **Your** great love and also at how wisely **You** planned for the Church to be built up, after **Messiah** was resurrected and returned to heaven. **You** did not leave **Your** children alone, for **You** gave them **Your Ruach ha'Kodesh**. **But the Helper, the Ruach ha'Kodesh whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything and remind you of everything that I said to you (John 14:26).***

*To the praise of **Your** glory, **You** perfectly planned **(Ephesians 1:10)** for both the marvelous redemption of those who love **You**, and also how to help them to become mature in **You (Ephesians 4:13).** Thank **You** for **Your** wise and wonderful love that gives gifts to **Your** children to mature and unite them together **in Messiah**. **In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22).***