



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Ephesians 4:11-13

(11) And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for *the* work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying of the body of Christ; (13) Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ;

*A Faithful Version*

A key to understanding God's intention for the church appears in the letter to the church of Ephesus. To understand the context for the word "gave" in verse 11, we must back up to verse 7: "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and *gave gifts to men*" ([Ephesians 4:7-8](#); emphasis ours throughout). In other words, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are *given as gifts* by [Jesus Christ](#). He gives these gifts to edify—build up—the Body of Christ.

One implication of this, however, is that as long as the Body needs edifying—as long as it has not achieved "the unity of the [faith](#) and of the knowledge of the Son of [God](#)," and its members are not yet up to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"—God will continue to work through such men to bring about that edification. The structure and cohesiveness may be more rigidly defined at some points in church history than at others, but where Christ's Body is found, there will be structure. Certainly, God works through isolation at times, but those times are limited, for members begin to die spiritually when severed from the rest of the Body.

The prophetic books of Zechariah and Revelation indicate that before Christ's return, a definite structure will be in place. Revelation records a vision of "the Lord's Day" ([Revelation 1:10](#)), that is, the time generally

known as the Day of the Lord. As the vision begins, Jesus tells the apostle John to write what he sees and to "send it to the *seven churches*." Turning to see the Speaker, John sees Jesus "in the midst of the seven lampstands," symbolic of the seven churches. It is critical to notice that each letter contains language that ties it to the end time—the period around the Day of the Lord. Thus, one application of the letters found in Revelation 2-3 is that they are seven distinct groupings, all in existence during the Day of the Lord.

This end-time aspect of Revelation 1-3 is strengthened by a vision given to Zechariah:

Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." . . . Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?" Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth." ( [Zechariah 4:1-4](#), 11-14; cf. [Revelation 11:3-4](#))

While we may not fully understand all these figures until they begin shaping up, it is plain to see that a definite structure to the body of believers exists at the end time. There are still churches—groupings, congregations, or other forms of organization. The seven lamps all receive their oil from the same place. This is not a description of complete dissolution or maximum entropy but one of order and providential care of the organized Body by the Head. To use the analogy in [1 Peter 2:4-5](#), the stones are fitted together here, not isolated or standing on their own.

The church of God is a spiritual organism, and though corporate designations will come and go, there will always be a unity of the Spirit ([Ephesians 4:3](#)). Also, Jesus' disciples will always be known by their [love](#) for one another (

[John 13:35](#)). These attributes cannot exist in isolation. Physical organizations may be built up and dissolve away, but the church will prevail against the gates of Hades. Though all the living stones will never be in the same place until the resurrection, they will also never be very far apart.

— David C. Grabbe

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