

EPHESIANS - Ephesians 4:1-2a
Message 61
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INTRO: The first unit of Scripture in Ephesians 4-6 dealing with the worthy walk of the saved deals with church unity in verses 1-16. We have looked at the call to unity and saw the reasons why there ought to be unity. There should be unity in the church because there is one body; and because there is one Spirit; and because there is one hope; and because there is one Lord and because there is one faith and because there is one baptism and because there is one God.

In verses 7-16, the next 10 verses, Paul will now tell us what God has provided by which to achieve this unity. These 10 verses are very complicated. Before I preach on a section I diagram it to find out as precisely as I can what the divine Holy Spirit had in his mind when He inspired the passage.

Bible interpretation is a huge task. Let me mention as well that one must distinguish between interpretation and application. There may be many different applications to any single Scripture but there is only one correct interpretation. One has only rightly interpreted a passage when one has in his own mind that which the Holy Spirit had in His mind when He inspired that passage.

I certainly would not want to give the idea that I think I am always right, but I can say this, I make every effort I know how to seek to interpret correctly. Then I seek to apply that passage to our lives whenever I can. The interpretation of the passage before us is difficult.

So Paul, having come alongside the Ephesians to exhort them to walk in unity in the church now further proceeds to explain what God has provided in order to achieve this unity.

III. THE WORTHY WALK OF THE SAVED (4-6)

A. Walk Worthy Of Your Calling (4:1-16)

1. The call to unity (4:1-4:6)
2. The provision for unity - Gifts (4:7-16)

a. God's means for unity

So, as we begin to look at God's provision for unity, we look first at God's means of unity. Then we will look at His method of achieving that unity. So we note that verse 7 begins with the word 'but'. In the original language there is a conjunction between our 'and' and 'but'. The conjunction 'and' does not give a contrast. The word 'but' gives a strong contrast. We have nothing in between, but in the original language of the NT there is a conjunction between those two which gives a slight contrast. It is the conjunction 'de'. That is what is used to start this new thought. In English it is translated as 'but'. So the first verse of this section begins with the word 'but'. Let me read from verse 4 and then note the 'but' in verse 7:

- 4 *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;*
- 5 *one Lord, one faith, one baptism;*
- 6 *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*
- 7 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

To give the thought of the word 'de' maybe I could express it with the words: 'and so'. Let me read it like that:

- 4 *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;*
- 5 *one Lord, one faith, one baptism;*
- 6 *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*
- 7 *And so to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

As I see it, Paul is saying that there ought to be unity in the church, and so, to achieve this unity, therefore to each member grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. In other word, to achieve unity in the church God gave gifts to the members according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Now notice first he says, 'to each one of us.' He does not say, 'to each one of you.' It is not just to each member in the Ephesian church that this grace is given but to every believer, to each one of us. Every believer has some gift. Furthermore, though the body is one, the words 'each one of us' indicates various members. So, though there is one body, there is a diversity of members and gifts.

Grace is a very big word. The word for grace is charis. Now the grace here is not saving grace. Paul was already saved. I had a hard time discerning if it speaks of the gift or the special ability to perform that gift. After much consideration, I think that when it says grace is given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift, that God gives to us the grace or the ability to do that which He has gifted us a gift for.

In Ephesians 3:8 Paul says, "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ..." He calls the privilege to preach to the Gentiles a grace. But it took the ability that God alone can give to carry out the task of preaching to the Gentiles. Many times his life was in jeopardy.

Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Many times Paul will have had to flee to God for help in time of need, and when God gives that, that is grace.

Now when it says here that grace is given to each one of us, I think it is speaking of the ability to perform those spiritual gifts. The context is that of spiritual gifts. The verse itself indicates that it refers to gifts when it says grace is given to us according to the measure of Christ's gift. It is further shown in verse 8 when it says that He gave gifts to men when He ascended on high. Then in verse 11 he enumerates some of those gifts such as apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers. Each of those are spiritual gifts.

These gifts are referred to in many passages as *charisma*. Charisma comes from *charis*, grace. From this we get the word 'charismatics'. The Pentecostal movement centers around spiritual gifts, and especially those of tongues and healing. So turn to 1 Corinthians 12, a passage we have referred to a number of times already.

12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts <charisma>, but the same Spirit.

12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts <charisma> of healing by the same Spirit;

12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts <charisma> of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

12:30 Have all the gifts <charisma> of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

12:31 But covet earnestly the best gifts <charisma>: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Each time the word 'gift' occurs it is a charisma. It is a gift of grace. So when it says to each one of us a grace is given, it is in the context of spiritual gifts. Gifts are not only such as speaking or singing or healing etc... but such things as being helpful in various things is a gift and is called the gift of helps. Some

people are like that. They are helpful wherever help is needed. That is a gift.

Now we have to set these grace gifts in their context in Ephesians 4. Paul has spoken of the unity in the church. The church is the 'one body' he has spoken of in the previous verses. In the body God has given many members. You cannot have a body with only one member. And these variously gifted members of the church is what operates the church, just like the members of the body operate the body.

Now we have the task of explaining just what a charisma is. Does God, at the moment of salvation give spiritual gifts to a person? Are spiritual gifts things the Christian did not possess before, but now that he is saved God grants these gifts to each person?

As I view it, grace gifts are of two kinds. Let us say a person is a gifted singer before that person becomes a Christian. I believe that when the person who becomes a Christian brings that gift under the control of the Holy Spirit, now it has become a charisma.

We go to 1 Corinthians 12 once more. It is the chapter on spiritual gifts or gifts of the Spirit, or charismata. We'll read verses 1 and 4:

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

Verse 4:

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

In verse 1, in the original language, the word translated 'spiritual gifts' is literally *spirituals*. The translators have translated this as *spiritual gifts*, which is the idea. In verse 4 they are just called gifts, and the word is *charisma*. So I think that as soon as a person's gifts, the ones he was born with come under the control of

the Holy Spirit, they are spirituals, or spiritual gifts.

But I also believe that if God so chooses, He can endow a person with gifts that person did not have before. For example in Acts 2, the disciples spoke in various languages they had never learned. And the people marveled and wondered how they heard them speak in their own language the wonderful works of God. To hear a person speak in various languages was not something new. But to hear ignorant Galileans speak in languages they could not have naturally known, this they could not understand.

Now in our passage we notice that these gifts are given to each person according to the measure of the gift of Christ. The word for measure is *metron*. Can you tell what word we get from that? Yes, it is the word *metric*, which means a measurement. So verse 7 says:

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Now, since Christ is the head of the body, He gives grace according to the measure of His gifts. And it seems to me that when Paul thinks of this another picture comes to his mind and so he quotes from Psalm 68:18. So we go to verse 8 which says:

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

One cannot settle the original occasion for Psalm 68. Was it an occasion when the ark of the covenant was taken along to battle and brought back to Jerusalem? Or was it when David brought the tabernacle to Jerusalem and for the first time it had arrived at its final resting spot? It would seem most appropriate in light of how Paul pictures verse 18 that the latter was the case.

There lies now before us a much debated question. There are two views presented if the words, 'He led captivity

captive'. So before we look at verse 8 we'll look at briefly at verses 9-10, because the interpretation of verse 8 depends on what interpretation one takes of verses 9-10. Later we'll look at verses 9-10 more fully. These verses say:

9 *(Now this, "He ascended" – what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?*

10 *He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)*

There are two interpretations given of these verses. It is held by many, including the Catholic Church and even the Apostle's Creed that when Jesus died He descended into hell. When I showed how I believed that David Raegan was wrong in his interpretation that hell is a place where people burn for a while and then are annihilated, I spoke of this.

Here is the view. Before Christ died sins were not yet paid for. So those who were saved before Christ died went to one part of hades called paradise. Here they waited until their sins were paid for, which happened when Christ died for them. When their sins were paid for, Christ, in the three days He was physically dead went to hades and preached deliverance to the captives there. Then He took the paradise side of hades up to heaven and now it is in heaven.

Go now to 1 Peter 3. So when this verse says that Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth, it means he went to hades. He went to the hell side and preached to them. For support of this they go to 1 Peter 3:18-20. It says:

18 *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,*

19 *by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,*
20 *who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine*
longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while
the ark was being prepared, in which a few,
that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

So some teach that during the time Christ's body was in the grave He descended into hell and He preached to the lost; then went to the paradise side and took it up to heaven. From then on, those who die go to heaven.

I do not subscribe to that view. When it says Christ descended to the lower parts of the earth, it means 'the lower parts, which is the earth'. It is possible that the words 'lower parts of the earth' could mean the grave, although I think it means He came from heaven, and the lower parts means the earth. Jesus said in John 3:13, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."

Let me just comment yet on Peter's words when he said: *by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison.* In the context, 'by whom' refers to the Holy Spirit. I believe that the Lord preached the message to the people of Noah's day by the Holy Spirit. He used Noah to do the preaching as He uses preachers today. And I think it could read like this: *by whom also He went and preached to the spirits (who are now) in prison.* In Noah's day He preached to those who are now dead, thus they are spirits in prison.

So let me give some quotes from others. The website, Gotquestions.org says:

Some have the viewpoint that Jesus went to "hell" or the suffering side of sheol/hades in order to further be punished for our sins. This idea is completely unbiblical. It was the death of Jesus on the cross that sufficiently provided for our redemption. It was His shed blood that

effected our own cleansing from sin ([1 John 1:7-9](#)).

John Gill says: "...this the Papists (meaning Catholics) understand of his descent into a place they call Limbus Patrum, which they make to be contiguous to hell (it borders on hell); and where they say the patriarchs were detained till Christ's coming; and that he went thither to deliver them out of it; and that these are the captivity he led captive; all which is fictitious and fabulous: for certain it is, that the place where Abraham was with Lazarus in his bosom was not near to hell, but afar off, and that there was a great gulf between them, [Luke 16:23](#) and the spirits or souls of the patriarchs returned to God that gave them, when separated from their bodies, as the souls of men do now, [Ecclesiastes 12:7](#) nor did Christ enter any such feigned place at his death, but went to paradise, where the penitent thief was that day with him; nor were the patriarchs, but the principalities and powers Christ spoiled, the captivity he led captive and triumphed over: some interpret this of Christ's descent into hell, which must be understood not locally, but of his enduring the wrath of God for sin, which was equivalent to the torments of hell, and of his being in the state of the dead..." end quote.

Let me read what I think is a most helpful comment by Lloyd Jones. He says:

"This brings us to a final comment on what we may call the mechanical aspect of this great statement before we go on to draw out the great doctrine which is taught here. The final phrase reads, 'he led captivity captive'. There has been a teaching which regards 'captivity' as referring to the Old Testament saints. It maintains that they were children of God, that they were saved, but that they were held in a kind of captivity. What the Lord Jesus Christ did after His death, they argue, was to go down to Hades

and bring them out of their captivity and introduce them to a higher sphere. That is the teaching of the Roman Catholics at this point. They talk about what they call the 'limbus patrum', where the fathers remained until after Christ brought out of their captivity. I reject that as an entirely false interpretation here, because the picture is one of triumph over enemies, one of the leading of enemies in triumph.

In ancient times, if a king or a prince or a great military captain waged successful warfare, when he came back to his own country there was always a kind of victory parade. The conquered kings and princes and military chieftains and captains were all made to walk in the procession in their chains. The conqueror was 'leading captivity captive'. He had taken his foes captive and was now making a public display of them. At the same time he threw gifts to his own people. He was riding in his chariot distributing his largesse among the acclaiming people, and he was leading these conquered men as captives at the same time. That is undoubtedly the picture here. So we must not interpret this in terms of some liberation given to the redeemed saints of the Old Testament. It is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ leading in His triumphal train the devil and sin and death - the great enemies that were against man and which had held mankind in captivity for so long a time.

The princes which had controlled that captivity are now being led captive themselves. The Apostle is telling us that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to deal with and to conquer our enemies, and having finished His campaign, and having routed them, He has returned to heaven leading all these enemies captive, and showering His gifts upon us, His acclaiming people. The Apostle was not content to leave it at that point, as we shall see; but the great thing we must hold in our minds is that the principle of

unity is emphasized by the fact that Christ is the dispenser, the giver of all the gifts. He is the great heavenly Captain and we are His people. Having routed His enemies, He dispenses and showers His gifts upon us. But all the gifts, ever, always, come from Him" end quote.

So Jones later says, "There are those, I say, who believe that Paul's words teach that our Lord, after His death and burial, went down into hell and did certain things, and in particular that he conquered there the devil and all his hosts. Others say that when he did in Hades was to set at liberty the saints of the Old Testament who had been held in a kind of captivity ever since their death... Others believe our that what our Lord did when He descended into hell was to proclaim salvation to certain person who were there" end quote. And here he gives the Peter passage we read earlier.

But what we can say with certainty is that Christ came to earth to defeat Satan. Immediately after He was born Satan began to try to kill Him. In that very wicked king Herod he found his first tool. But His Father in heaven protected Him by having His parents take Him to Egypt. Not long later Herod died and Jesus' parents brought Him back to Israel.

Then when Jesus was thirty years old and His ministry was about to begin, He met the three greatest temptations, and He overcame those. Later in His ministry He sent out the 12 disciples and then the 70. We have an interesting account when He sent out the 70.

Turn to Luke 10. I had a new vision of how incapable we are against Satan. If we do not learn to recognize Him, and learn to stand against him he will defeat us. And without Christ we cannot recognize much of what demons do and we cannot defeat them. When Jesus sent out the 70 He gave them authority over the demons. I believe the

Lord gives authority to true believers to overcome Satan. So look at verse 1:

1 *After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.*

Well, they did that and returned so we go to verses:

17 *And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.*

18 *And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.*

19 *Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*

20 *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.*

These disciples were amazed at the fact that the demons were subject to them through His name. And Jesus said, "I beheld Satan fall like lightning." Now the imperfect tense is not used very often but it occurs in verse 18. It could be translated like this: "I was beholding Satan fall like lightning..." When the disciples were out working with people and they addressed the demons, Jesus beheld them falling like lightning.

We go now to John 12. We are nearing the time of the cross. We begin in verse 27. Jesus said:

27 *"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.*

28 *"Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."*

29 *Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."*

30 *Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake."*

31 *"Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out."*

Well, not long later Judas came with the Jewish and Roman authorities and they apprehended Jesus and by the next evening Jesus was in the grave. Three days and three nights later He was raised out from among the dead, and 40 days later He ascended to heaven and led captivity, captive. And in His victorious entrance He distributed gifts to His own and the beginning of that we see in Acts 2.

Paul writes this in Colossians 2:13-15:

13 *And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,*

14 *having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*

15 *Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*

At the cross Christ disarmed principalities and powers. And then he says the Christ made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. That pictures the words, "He led captivity, captive." He made captives of those who had made captives of others.

So with that, I want to go back now to verse 8. Paul said:

8 *Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."*

The Lord's ascension to heaven and His triumph over Satan, leading captivity captive, and his giving gifts to His people is likened to the victor in battle here on earth. The ark, either when it was first taken up to Jerusalem or when it returned after having been taken to war, being taken up to Jerusalem is a picture of Christ ascending to heaven after His victory over Satan.

Let me make one other point. Psalm 68:18 says:

*18 You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive;
You have received gifts among men,*

Ephesians 4:8 words it slightly differently. It says:

*8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led
captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."*

Psalm 68:18 says, "you have received gifts among men" and Paul says in verse 8 that He gave gifts to men. Is this a contradiction? I can't improve on what Jones says. He writes: This seems to conflict with the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scripture. How can we say that the Apostle is definitely writing as one inspired when he misquotes an Old Testament Scripture? The clever critic argue that this disposes of our claim for the authority of the Scripture and especially of the infallibility of the Scripture. But our answer is quite clear, and it is that there is no contradiction here. It is true to say of the Lord Jesus Christ that He both *received* and *gave*. The Apostle Peter said on the Day of Pentecost at Jerusalem, 'Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear' (Acts 2:33). He has received, and He has given; it is one action. The same Person receives and gives; the giving presupposes the receiving." (IV:152). End Quote. He gives more but I think that is sufficient.

With that we come back now to verses 9-10. Now these verses are put in brackets. That is because they are given by way of further explanation to verse 8. So I'll begin with verse 8:

8 *Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."*

Then by way of explanation he says:

9 *(In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?*

10 *He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

When Paul, wanting to speak of spiritual gifts, finds a related passage in Psalm 68:18, I look at the connection he made and wonder how much there is in the OT we have not yet seen. But in referring to Psalm 68:18 which speaks prophetically of Christ's ascension, Paul now zeros in on the significance of Christ's ascension. If Christ ascended, that means He went up, which we know is to heaven where God the Father is, and where He is now seated at God's right hand. And if He went up, that means He had to first come down. That is because He was up in heaven first. So it is perfectly logical if He ascended that He descended first.

We have spoken before of His descension to the lower parts of the earth. So what is behind His ascension is His coming to earth first, and He came by way of conception and birth as a human baby. And even His experience on earth was a descension in a sense. Philippians 2 says He made Himself of no reputation, and took on Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. He became one of us. Talk about descending.

And here on earth He would fight a battle with the evil one. He met Satan as soon as He entered His ministry. He was tempted for 40 days and He overcame. Then He preached the Gospel and lived a perfect

life. As He did His work Satan tried to do away with Him more and more as time went along. And finally Satan was able to induce Judas to betray Him and through that betrayal He was crucified. And so Philippians 2 says that being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.

So Jesus' descension to the lower parts of the earth includes His birth, life, death, and burial. But in order for Him to ascend, He had to be raised from the dead. In some ways His resurrection, which we will commemorate not too long from now, is the most momentous time of all human history.

I told you about John Lennox's debate with Richard Dawkins. And when Lennox was allowed a few moments for concluding remarks, he spoke of the most important thing to him. He said: "And the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a miracle, something supernatural, for me constitutes the central evidence upon which I base my faith..."

Let me reread for you what Dawkins said: "Well, that conclusion rather gives the game away, doesn't it? All that stuff about science and physics and the complications of physics and things it all, what it really comes down to is the resurrection of Jesus. There's a fundamental incompatibility between the sophisticated scientist which we hear part of the time from John Lennox, and its impressive and we are interested in...(it?) and then having produced some sort of a case for some kind of a deistic God perhaps some God that adjusted the laws in the universe, and that's all grand and wonderful and then suddenly comes down to the resurrection of Jesus; it's so petty, it's so trivial, it's so local, it's so earthbound, it's so unworthy of the universe."

The most important thing that has happened in all of human history, Lennox calls the central thing to his faith in Jesus Christ and Dawkins calls it

petty and trivial and local and earthbound and unworthy of the universe. And what does he believe? Evolution!

So Jesus descended, came down to earth, lived, died, was buried and resurrected. If He had remained in the grave He would not have ascended back to heaven. At the beginning of His ministry He was tempted for 40 days by the devil. Forty is the number of testing. He overcame the wicked one there. At the end of His ministry He was alive on earth for forty days after His resurrection. Why? Listen to Acts 1:1-3. Luke writes:

- 1 *The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,*
- 2 *until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,*
- 3 *to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*

When it says He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs, the word for infallible is *tekmeerion*. This word occurs only once in the NT. The onlinebible says it means:

- 1) that from which something is surely and plainly known
- 2) on indubitable evidence, a proof

Indubitable evidence is evidence so great it is not to be doubted. I told you a while ago that the evidence of the resurrection is so great that an objective law court would have to say the resurrection happened. If the resurrection happened, then of course Christ could ascend, and if the resurrection happened, the Lord Jesus defeated Satan in His time here on earth. Our salvation is secured.

So we go to verse 10:

10 *He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.*

The One who descended is the one who ascended, and it says, 'Far above all heavens.' How can you ascend higher than all heavens? Is there something beyond the heavens? We have another expression somewhat like this in Hebrews 7:26 which says: "For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens."

Let me quote from John Gill's commentary. He says, and I quote: "...up far above all heavens: the visible heavens, the airy and starry heavens; Christ ascended far above these, and went into the third heaven, the holiest of all; and this is expressive of the exaltation of Christ, who is made higher than the heavens..." So ascending higher than the heavens is higher than the heavens we see to the one we cannot see.

And last, in our verse, He ascended that He might fill all things. We have a similar expression in 1:22-23 which says:

22 *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,*

23 *which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

When it says He fills all in all, who are the 'all' He is speaking about? Well, verses 22-23 speak of His body, which is the Church. And His body is made up of believers. So He fills all believers.

However, the way Ephesians 1:23 and this verse are written in the original is quite different. The key word is the one translated 'to fill'. It is the word 'pleerow'. This word is used 90 times and is translated in the KJV as to fulfil 51, fill 19, be full 7, complete 2, end 2, and 9 times it has been translated miscellaneously.

I think the meaning here is that the words, "that He might fill all things" means He ascended to heaven that He

might fulfill all things. In 51 of its 90 occurrences in the NT, that is how the KJV translates it. Various views are given but Calvin says: "To fill often signifies to Finish, and it might have that meaning here..."

John Gill comments like this: "or 'fulfil all things'; that were types of him, or predicted concerning him; that as he had fulfilled many things already by his incarnation doctrine, miracles, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead; so he ascended on high that he might accomplish what was foretold concerning his ascension to heaven..."

CONCL: So we have looked at a rather large and difficult section of verses, verses 7-10. We discussed once more the view that some hold that during the time of His death He descended down to Hades and preached to the spirits in prison and then went to the paradise side and took the captives there to heaven with Him when He ascended to heaven.

I do not think that is a biblical view. He had defeated Satan by the final things He suffered which ended in His death, but which resulted in His resurrection. Having defeated Satan, His resurrection made it possible for Him to ascend to back to heaven and thus He fulfilled all things that were set out for Him to accomplish. The ascension of Christ resulted in His gifting His Church, and that is the main thing Paul wanted to teach here.