

#48 Ephesians (4:7-12)

Date: April 7, 2024

Text: Ephesians 4:7-13

Title: “He Ascended Up”

Purpose: Encourage by the ascended Lord

Scripture: Ephesians 4:4-12 – Steve

Hymn: #9 In Christ Alone

Colossians 3:11

Intro:

Chapter four begins a lengthy series of exhortations (4:1-6:9)

4:1-6 – Maintain unity

4:7-12 – Edify one another

The means to edify: Christ’s ascension.

You’ve heard: “to the victor go the spoils”
After an enemy is defeated, their wealth is plundered.

Jesus is the victor, what are His treasures?
Before thinking on that...

[Ps 24:1-3, 8-10]

[Acts 1:6-11]

V7:

“But unto every one of us” –

V6: 4x Paul says “all” –

1st 3x – παντων = all the body of Christ

4thx – πασιν = each or every –

From all inclusively to each individually

The 1st phrase in V6 expands the thought and becomes more precise.

Lit. But/Now to every single one of us

Not one of us is left out

“is given” – διδομι = to give, entrust

Ar/pass = was given

“grace” – Lit. η χαρις = the grace

God’s saving favor conditioned exclusively on Christ.

Grace is earned, applied & revealed w/o us moving muscle.

V1:6, 7; 2:5, 7, 8; 3:2, 7, 4:7, 6:24

Grace appears 155x in NT

Almost 100 of these in Paul’s letters

Electing grace – before creation

Justifying grace – in union with the Cross

Calling grace – by regeneration and the Gospel

Preserving grace – from calling to final glorification

Growing in grace – desirable and essential

Glorifying grace – to change our vile bodies to be as

Jesus fit for eternity

Greeting “grace” – 1:2/6:24

Saving “grace” – 1:6 linked to 2:5, 7, 8 by a definite article

Serving “grace” – 4:7 (seen in 3:2, 7)

“according to the measure of the gift of Christ” –
“measure” – μετρον = an abundant and generous measure

“gift” – της δωρεαν – the gift

God’s gifts for service are by His grace.
They are sufficient for a any congregation.
They remove all room for pride.
They differ for the functioning of a body.

V8:

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high,
he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” –
[Ps 68:18]

“ascended up on high” – Christ’s ascension to heaven
(Acts 1:9)

“he led captivity captive” –
Indicating the victories of Christ over sin, Satan,
death, the grave.

“and gave gifts unto men” – ministry-gifts

V11: Paul names some of the gifts

Others: Ro 12:3-8; 1 Co 12:4-31

V9-10:

Paul’s emphasis is the Person of Christ – “He”

(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also
descended first into the lower parts of the earth?” –
Jesus descent to earth preceded His ascent to heaven.
[Phil 2:5f]

Meaning to “lower parts of the earth”? –
Catholics say Jesus went to preach in hell
(1 Pet 3:19; 4:6)

Paul is referring to Ps 63:9 – “lower parts of the earth”
//Ex 32:18, 24

He does not use “Hades” or “Gehenna”

Here’s what is revealed:

Jesus entered humanity.

Jesus entered to preach the gospel.

Jesus entered death not hell.

Jesus entered heaven.

We must not say more than is revealed.

“He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.”

Heaven is always “up” (Acts 1:10)

Earth is always “down”

“that He might fill all things” –

[Ep 1:23]

“fill” – πληρωση – ar/subj, that he might fill

What does Paul mean: τα παντα – the things?

[Ro 8:28] “all things” are a thing

Both declare: sovereignty, dominion, supremacy

“might” – Jesus had to humbly descend then victoriously ascend.

When He ascended He....

V11:

“And he gave” –

“he” is emphatic = “He Himself”

“gave” – διδωμι – ar/act – when He ascended to heaven

Pentecost events (Acts 2) authenticate this.

In this first phrase: “some apostles...prophets”

Placed together: Ep 3:5

“some” – a Greek mechanism: μεν...δε –

“on the one hand...on the other hand”

[A marker of correlation (BGAD) (Lex of NT Greek)]

Does “some” refer to men or the church?

YLT, NASB, ASV, NIV – “some as, or some to be”

meaning some men as

Could Paul mean...

“to some” of the church

Early in the church He gave on the one hand

“apostles” and on the other hand He gave “prophets”.

Named first because they were given first.

“apostles” – αποστολους = messenger

A runner between military leaders in battle

Limited to the twelve chosen by the Lord.

Acts 1:22 – limited to witness of Jesus’ resurrection

Acts 1:23-26 – the selection of Matthias to replace JI

1 Co 15:5-8 –

Paul was late to seeing resurrected Christ

(Acts 9:4-7) (2 Co 12:2-9)

“prophets” – προφητας – a foreteller and a forth-teller

OT: Record of prophets and prophecy ceased from

400 BC till 1st century

NT: Acts 11:27-28; 13:1; 15:32; 21:10

2 Cor 12:12 – signs of an apostle

1 Co 13:8-10 –

V8: “shall fail” – fut/mid – of themselves

“shall be done away” – fut/mid –

The period of “apostles & prophets” passed w/the passing of John at the end of the first century. With them passed “signs and wonders”.

Prophets and Prophecy were replaced by Scripture and ceased.

The offices through the church age...

“evangelists” – ευαγγελιστας – preacher of the gospel

Three references:

Acts 21:1 – “Philip the evangelist”

Here

2 Tim 4:5 – “do the work of an evangelist”

“and some, pastors and teachers” – ποιμενας και διδασκαλους

These two go together:

ποιμενας – poimen – shepherd = cares for and tends to the sheep (1 Pet 5:1)

και διδασκαλους – didaskalos = teacher

This office or function will endure the church age.

Acts 6:4 – “given to the ministry of the word”

1 Tim 2:7 – “a teacher of Gentiles in faith and verity”

Not a work or office to be sought...

James 3:1 – “be not many masters (teachers)...”

Yet...

2 co 4:1 – “seeing we have this ministry”

We teach & preach & minister.

V12:

“For the perfecting of the saints” –

“For” – for the purpose of – repeated 3x

“the perfecting” – καταρτισμος – equipping, completely furnishing

Only time in the NT

Equipping is what Paul did with Timothy

2 Tim 2:1 – “heard...commit to faithful men...teach others”

“of the saints” – the redeemed, justified ones

“for the work of the ministry” –

“work” – task that requires labor = gospel labor

Paul spoke of sending Epaphroditus

Phil 2:30 – “Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me”

“for the edifying of the body of Christ” –
“edifying” – οικοδομη – oikos = a home; demo = to build

To building up, to promote spiritual growth

[Ep 2:21] The ultimate goal of all gifts.

Conclusion:

Here’s an outline of the passage:

The Fact of the Ascension (V8) “when”

The Triumphs of the Ascension (9-10) “fill all things”

The Gifts of the Ascension (V11)

The Purpose of the Ascension (12) “for” 3x

Our Lord died bearing the sin of God’s elect.
He earned righteousness paying the price for their redemption and establishing righteousness for their justification.

God accepted and imputed the ransom price and perfect righteousness to their eternal and spiritual account.

HS reveals this certain salvation through the preaching of the gospel.

Believers become a church for the purpose of spiritual growth, fellowship and glorifying the Lord.

The church was given two “ordinances” baptism, Lord’s Table to commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.