



Automated sermon transcript; please excuse typos and grammatical errors.

And given it's been some time since we actually covered Ephesians, it's always good just to have at least an idea of where we are at this point in the text. And the pretty neat thing about Ephesians is actually you can pretty much split it right down the middle. It's six chapters, the first three chapters is largely doctrinal. And then the last half of Ephesians, verses, chapters four through eight, it's largely application. And we are now in chapter four.

So we've made that transition from more doctrinal now to application. And in the beginning of this chapter, Paul was exhorting believers to walk in a manner or to live a lifestyle that is consistent with being called a child of God. And we've covered that in our study of a worthy manner. And then in verses four through six, Paul continues to exhort believers to express their love to God for the salvation by being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And when we get to verse seven, in something that we again, keep in mind Paul, and this is kind of the theme of Ephesians is he is expounding on the mysteries of God's will. He's doing that throughout this book. So he's taking things that we can't see. But he's gonna proclaim what is going on in a dimension that we can see. And it's all tied to the will of God. So that's what Paul does here in verse seven is he's going to shift his attention.

He's going to turn now and look at the mystery behind Christ. The mystery behind Christ's victory we know that Jesus died on the cross and rose again, right. But do you know there's more to it? It's just there's there's so much more and that's what we're going to endeavor to do in our study today. And we're going to see how that victory and it's consistent with the messages that we've, the messages in the theme that you've been hearing throughout the day is that God, right, Jesus sent His Holy Spirit. And as we'll see as a love gift to the church, and the spirits work wasn't done there.

So Paul is going to go into a spirit, he's gonna go into the lens into a spiritual dimension we cannot see. And he's going to tell us what took place in the heavenly places, and how that occur and what and how what occurred in that heavenly places, how it manifests itself, in reality, by the implementation or the beginning and the starting of the church. And then Paul is going to describe the various different offices in the church, as we'll see, and how Jesus chose to measure out the gift of the Holy Spirit in those various different offices. And I want to give a little disclaimer here, and we are at a portion in our text where when you kind of read it, I mean, I think it's quite common in a lot of scripts, right kind of reads it kind of goes over our head. Well, this one is even more so. Because when you read when you read through it, there's a lot there. So what we're going to do, we're going to do a lot of kind of Scripture referencing, because in order to understand the truth and reality that Paul is getting to here, we're going to need the aid of other scriptures alongside it, so that it'll bring the light and magnify the truth that Paul is getting at in our passage.

So as we're going through our study asked the Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit help me follow along with your word. And you know, just pay a little more attention that probably you're accustomed to on



this particular study. And if anything does kind of go over and not connect yet, then you can always refer back to this study at an later time. Sound good?

So now let's, let's get to the reading of our text Ephesians chapter four. We're going to begin at verse 7. And I'll be reading from the New American Standard. And we'll read through verse 13. Paul writes there, but to each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift, therefore it says when he ascended on high, he led captive a host of captives and he gave gifts to men. Now this expression He ascended, what does it mean that he also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is himself also he who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things. And he gave some as apostles, some prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ until we attain the unity of the faith, and have the knowledge of the Son of God to mature man to the measure of this stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Now, that's a mouthful, right? So let's kind of look at this beginning back at verse seven. Let's look at that verse one more time. Paul writes there, but to each one of us, Grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift and they met In previous studies, but is in a gating comment, so Paul just negated something. And in order for us to follow Paul's train of thought we will actually have to go back a few verses.

So let's reread a beginning at verse four. Paul writes there, there is one body and one spirit, just as you were called, in one hope of your calling one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, who is overall and through all and in all, so here's where Paul is getting at. He's saying, although there is only one body, and although there's only one Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and although we're called by the same one hope, one faith, one baptism, and although there is one God and Father of all, who is overall and in all right, and through all Paul says something interesting, but he just negated something. Yes, that's all true. But to each one of us, Grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

So here's the translation. We're all saved the same way, correct? We are, we're all saved by the same saving faith. We all have the same Lord, the same hope, the same. And here's another thing, we have the same deposit of the Holy Spirit, we have the same salvation. And that is true. And here's another kind of side note here. You can't pray for an extra deposit of the Holy Spirit. You can't say, Lord, fill me in such a way more so than you filled me before. What are you talking about? When we have been given, you know, saving faith. And when we have we have been faith and we receive the deposit of the Holy Spirit that is universally applied across to all believers. But Paul says something here, but not every believer has the same measure of Christ's gifts. And here's where we'll get into the Greek here.

So the Greek for measure is the word metron. And it's where we get our English word metric, and it's a measurement of something. So here's a distinction in the channel. Is that Jesus measures out how the gift of the Holy Spirit will be given not only to start the church, but to sustain the life of the church. And here's when he's going to get into those various roles in a few



verses later, but just know that this gift that is measured out by Christ is not going to be experienced the same by every believer. Got that?

So now let's look at verse 8. Therefore, it says, when he ascended on high, he led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men. Now, here's one of those verses are like, Okay, well, what's this all about? And we're gonna have to do a little digging here. And actually, Paul is quoting Psalm 68, in this passage here.

So let's look at that. It's actually Psalm 68, verse 18. Let's read what he what, what's written there. You have ascended on high, you lead captive, your captives, you have risen See gifts among men, even among the rebellious also that the Lord may dwell there. Okay, really? Okay. Why is Paul quoting Psalm 68:18 right here in this passage? And actually for us, we actually got to understand, what is Psalm 68 about in order for us to understand why Paul, plug that in at this point in the Scripture? So let me just give it to you really briefly.

Psalm 68 is a psalm of David, a song. And here's what the song is about. It is it is about the promise that Messiah will one day get up from his heavenly throne. And when he appears, his enemies will scatter. The wicked will perish. The righteous will rejoice and sing praises at his coming and judgments. He will be a father to the fatherless and a judge. For the widows. Here's another feature of the Messiah. He will free those bound in prison so keep that In the back of your mind, rescue the poor and lead them to prosperity. It depicts how the kings and the armies of the nations they're going to flee before Messiah is very present, and how Messiah will plunder the kings and defy the spoils or bounty to his people. And after plundering the kings, and dividing the spoils of the bounty, it depicts Messiah returning and ascending back to his heavenly throne. That's what Psalm 68 is all about. And here's what Paul is doing. He is describing all of these truths behind Psalm 68, to Jesus Christ. After Jesus resurrection, he ascended back to heaven. And along the way, Ephesians four eight tells us he led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men. So then that's the question, what is what is behind that phrase, he led captive a host of captives.

So you got to keep that Psalm 68 imagery in your mind, but we're also gonna have to put another scripture verse right next to it, to bring it to light. So for that I want to cross reference Colossians two verse 15. Again, we're trying to answer the question, Who are these hosts of captives behind this imagery?

Paul writes there in Colossians 2:15. He says, when he and speaking about Jesus, when Jesus had this armed the rulers and authorities and these rulers of authorities and authorities, they had the power over death. He says there, he made a public display of them. And this is during his ascension, having triumphed over them through him and rulers and authorities in this verse, and then when we get later in in Ephesians, chapter six we'll know that rulers and authorities there it's in reference to fallen angels.



So we know that this he led captive a host of captives. We know that it includes these fallen angels in which he made a public spectacle of them. But there's actually another group of captives that Jesus is leading as well.

And again, keep in mind the Psalm 68. And that the imagery is really the victorious King imagery and this victorious King would also rescue and reclaim, catch this POW czar for those of us in the military, prisoner of war, right prisoners of war.

So the king right after plundering his enemies, the king would lead his army back to the city right after a successful battle, and he would return in procession back to his city. And the king would ride ahead and follow would be his soldiers. And then he would also take enemies from that enemy land, take them as prisoners, but also in that procession is the POW's who are following along and returning back with their king and they would be watching. And when they get back to the city, there would be this huge parade and they would welcome the king back to the city and the entire town will be in jubilation. There would be music, dancing, singing, you know, throwing roses, you name it, throwing their garments, whatever it is, they would welcome this victorious King and there would be this large procession, following him.

So if we were to keep the Psalm 68, victorious King imagery, the answer to the question, he led captive, a host of captives, it would certainly include the fallen angels, but I'll argue that it would also include the POWs that were rescued by their king. And as we're gonna see when we get to verse 11, the spoil of the victory.

And I want to tell you, I'll tell you, I'll tell you up front, when we get into understanding the gift of the Holy Spirit, it's gift singular, not plural, the Holy Spirit when we get the gift of the whole Spirit including our salvation. It's a singular gift that may measure itself another way, depending on how Jesus determined to measure out the spirit's gift in that believer's life, you kind of get that and kind of keep that in your mind as we're as we're going through our study there.

So, let's go into verses nine and 10. Paul writes, now this expression He ascended. What does it mean except that he also had to send it into the lower parts of the earth. He who descended is himself also he who ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things and in depending on your translation, but most translations will have verses nine and 10, in parentheses, and we kind of do that in our English writing, right?

Let's say you're writing something and you want to make a side note, you kind of put it in parentheses. The grammar is similar here, where Paul said something and now he's kind of putting these in parentheses. This is more of a side note to what he's saying. It signifies the Paul's making a side note. Verse eight. And then he also he ascended is in quotes. So you see that he ascended is in quotes. So Jesus ascension, I think we all can understand when Jesus ascended. And that imagery, right when that Jesus after he died, was resurrected, and was here for 40 days before he has ascended and taken back to the Father. I think ascension for us is pretty clear.



But where it's not readily clear, at least initially for me, was when Paul speaks of Christ, who not all also who not only ascended to heaven, but saying that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth. So that's the that begs the question, what does it mean that Jesus had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? And here's where it's going to get a little it's going to get a little heavy, I think.

And let's cross reference the scripture verse here to get the answer to the question. What does Paul mean when he says that this Jesus who ascended had also descended into the lower parts of the earth. And for that, let's cross reference First Peter, chapter three, verse 18, through 20. So Peter writes there, for Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that he might bring us to God here cuts this part, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit in which he also went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patients of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark in which a few that is eight persons who are brought safely through the water.

Now, again, just try to stay with me on this one. spirits in prison in First Peter 3:19. These are specific spirits and priests in prison, and they are priests precisely those who did not obey in the days of Noah. You can read the Noah account when the Sons of God saw that the daughters of men are beautiful and cohabitated with them these they left their domain, those fallen angels, who did those wicked acts back in Genesis chapter six. These, right, are spirits now in prison. So just kind of keep that in your mind because this is who Peter is referring to, in this specific passage, so that we can clearly see that after Jesus died on the cross, and before His resurrection.

So here's kind of we're kind of getting into the under the unseen realm here. So when Jesus died, he was dead for three days, right? And on the third day, he rose again, where was Jesus? What was going on? And Paul is actually giving us insight into what happened between during that period. Now this is for another study, but I'm going to say this, and just know this. Yes, there's fallen angels, but not all fallen angels are bound in prison. We know that Noah, right, the fallen angels that sinned in the days of Noah, that Peter alludes to hear that they are kept right in prison. We also know that Satan prowls around like a roaring lion seeking to that that which he may devour. So we know that there's also fallen angels who aren't in prison. So that's for another study, but just keep in mind that there is a distinction there.

So in that prison, that these fallen angels or demons who have sinned from Noah's days they are being kept there. And what is that place called? Where are they we hear spirits now in prison here but what the scripture have something else saying we actually get another clue on to those the prison that's holding these fallen angels and let's cross reference Luke chapter eight, and you'll recall the setting here we had a man who was possessed by many demons and you'll remember when Jesus asked the demons What's your name? They said, Legion, for we are many.



Here's where we're gonna get a clue into this prison that we were just talking about. Look at their response to Jesus after Jesus asked for their name and we'll see that in Luke 8:31. They the Legion of demons, or imploring Him Jesus, not to command them to go away into the abyss. So you follow me? Spirits in prison, abyss, same place, where these fallen angels are kept in prison. And where the Legion of these legion of demons were imploring Jesus not to send us there were the other spirits are kind of connecting that. But here's where Okay, we got that.

Okay. Spirits in prison. Some fallen angels there. It's also the abyss. Here's where it gets a little heavy, I would consider it it's not just That the Abyss is also a designation of something else. And let's look at Romans 10, verses six through seven for that. And it's a very familiar passage to many of us. But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven, that is to bring Christ down, or who will descend into the abyss that is to bring Christ from the dead.

So the Abyss is not only a place of utter darkness where certain fallen angels are bound, but the Abyss is also a designation of the place of the dead or the grave. So here's the spiritual truth that Paul is getting to in Ephesians, four verses nine through 10. Here's what he's saying, When Jesus died, he was made alive in the spirit and this is some mysterious way Jesus died. Yes physically by made alive in the spirit. He's the Holy Spirit who never dies, he is eternal. In fact, even our spirits won't die, it is eternal. But yet in this mysterious way, he was made alive in the Spirit. He went to the abyss, this spiritual dimension we cannot see. It's a spiritual prison. It's a place of the dead or the grave. And Jesus went to the abyss and proclaimed his victory over sin and death to the fallen angels who are bound in prison for their wicked involvement in the days of Noah.

So the side note Paul is making in Ephesians, four verses nine through 10. Is that this Jesus who ascended back to heaven, and here's where we got to kind of kind of picture where Paul is getting at here, in all of creation, that which is seen and unseen. All of creation what is the farthest extremity of all of creation? How far can creation go if there ever was an end It would be heaven. It would be the throne. It would be where God is, right? If you were to go to the polar opposite, the farthest part of creation, the depths of creation to the very dregs, if there was a polar opposite, what would that be? It would be Hell. Another place, it would be the abyss. It would be this place of utter darkness, it would be the grave. It would be death because God is life. So what we're going to see now, and this is where Paul is getting at, he's like, Look, Jesus went to the highest extremity. He went to the lowest extremity, He descended into the abyss and he came out victorious.

And now we're gonna see how the gift of the Holy Spirit and I mentioned that it's a love gift. It's a spoil of this victorious King. Jesus is called he's a conquering King. He's victorious. Now he's gonna give spoils of that victory to the church and, and I think we got to kind of get get this imagery in our head. I mean, it was meant to kind of a sporting event. Yeah, I'm like where your game things like that. Who loves those free t shirts? Where you know, they put those things. You're like, oh man, that was just right there. I almost got a like, You're like - gimme, right? They're giving out spoils like, give me a free gifts in that kind of same way. Jesus who is



victorious, he's giving spoils of that victory. But not everyone is going to get the measure of that gift....

Thank you for listening to the Truth Matters Church podcast. Today we heard about how our victorious King Jesus Christ defeated evil powers, freed captives of sin, proclaimed victory over the power of sin and death, and how he measured out the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Christ's victory literally reaches to the farthest edges of creation from the depths of the abyss to the throne of heaven. Please be sure to download part two of this message for the conclusion of this study. If you enjoyed today's message, please consider subscribing to this podcast and sharing it with a friend. And as you feel led, you can support our ministry online at [truthmatterschurch.org/give](https://truthmatterschurch.org/give) Contending for the faith one verse at a time. This is Truth Matters Church.