

Ephesians Chapter Four - Verses 7 thru 10

Verse 7

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

The measure of Christ's gift from the Father (speaking of His humanity) was “the name above every name” (Philippians 2:9). In connection with all the power that was given to Him in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:19), He has given each one of us grace or gifts as He has seen fit.

Every Christian is given grace - The favor of God; meaning here that God had bestowed upon each sincere Christian the means of living as he ought to do and had in his gospel made ample provision that they might walk worthy of their vocation. The “grace” referred to here, most probably means “the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit,” or his operations on the heart in connection with the use of the means which God has appointed.

According to the measure of the gift of Christ - Grace is bestowed upon all true Christians, and all have enough to enable them to live a life of holiness. Yet we are taught here:

That it is a “gift.” It is “bestowed” on us. It is not what we originate. To equip the church for unity and service every believer has a spiritual gift-a spiritual ability to be used in service to God’s people for the expansion of His kingdom. The same grace is not given to all, but to all is given enough to enable them to live as they ought to live.

that measure is the gift of Christ, or what is given in Christ. It comes through him. It is what he has purchased; what he has obtained by his merits. All have enough for the purposes for which God has called them into his kingdom, but there are not the same endowments conferred on all. All this has been obtained by Christ; and one should not complain that another has more distinguished endowments than he has. We are all saved by grace through faith, and God’s Holy Spirit has individually and selectively conferred different and individually selected gifts and graces on all His children, so that we are enabled to live by grace and serve Him in newness of life, by grace. And the heavenly grace that we receive has been given to each one, in proportion to the measure of Christ’s immeasurable riches and His eternal bounty.

Question...how does the measure of grace relate to us being “one body?”

Verse 8

Therefore, he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” The giving of these gifts was dependent upon His ascension into heaven. The citation is from Psalm 68:19. “Captivity” itself (sin and death) was captured by the victorious Christ and He divides the spoils with His followers.

Because of His victory, God was enabled to bestow gifts and graces on ALL those who trust in Him. Every member of Christ’s body is endowed with a variety of spiritual gifts. To each one He gives abilities to function in different ways, for the benefit of the whole body. Every believer has his own individual spiritual gift/s, so that each is enabled to function in the way that God has chosen.

The Holy Spirit is the Giver of spiritual gifts and graces. Every member of Christ’s body is gifted in a unique way and each is expected to use their spiritual gift/s to function in the church - so that the whole body is edified, built up and works together in godly harmony.

Handout...let’s look at the spiritual gifts given to the body

Verse 9

(Now this, These words introduce a statement that will explain the preceding verse. **“He ascended”**— This implies a previous descent, which must be from heaven, as Jesus said, “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven” (John 3:13). **What does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?** Ascent does not always imply descent, as it does here. For example, the fact that Elijah ascended into heaven does not imply that he previously came down from heaven. But Paul here speaks of Christ, who “made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant and coming in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7).

We are aware that Jesus descended to earth at His birth and ascended after His resurrection from the dead. We are also aware that He gave spiritual gifts to men (and women) who believed on Him, on the day of Pentecost, when the Church was born. But what did Paul mean, and why did he add: "He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?"

To understand "He Ascended", we need to also consider the meaning of "descending into the lower parts of the earth", which can be understood in three ways. But it is important that we do not go beyond the context of the passage.

The **FIRST** interpretation is that Jesus came down from heaven at His incarnation. He descended from heaven to earth at His birth - He came down to the lower region of God's creation from the upper region, i.e., he came down to live on earth from His eternal abode in heaven above.

The **SECOND** suggestion is that Jesus descended into Hades - a part of the earth, which is lower than the plane on which we live. This took place between His death and resurrection, during the time that His physical body lay lifeless in the tomb. This place of the dead, is often called 'Abraham's bosom' or 'Paradise'.

The **THIRD** option is that the body of Jesus descended into the sepulcher that Joseph of Arimathea provided when Pilate permitted him to take the dead body of Jesus for burial, i.e., the tomb, against which was rolled the great stone.

Both grammatically and contextually scholars consider the third to be the most probable meaning - although all three have merit. Jesus ascended from the **TOMB**, at His glorious resurrection from the grave. He ascended into the heavenly realm when He returned from earth, as the triumphant Victor over Satan, sin, death and hell and He ascended to His Father's throne, where He holds His present position of authority - seated on right hand of the Majesty of High. His threefold "ascension" qualifies **JESUS** to be the One to give spiritual blessings to the Church and heavenly gifts to **ALL** who will believe on His name.

Question...do any of you have any thoughts as to which interpretation might be true?

Verse 10

He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) The One who "fills all in all" (1:23) is the One who is able to "fill all things." He who first *descended* to take upon Himself flesh and shed His blood for the remission of sins, has now *ascended* back into heaven where He rules supreme over the nations and is the head of His church. In connection with this He gives gifts to His inheritance.

He that descended - And he who descended so low is the same who has ascended so high. He came to the lower parts of the earth - the very deepest abasement; having emptied himself; taken upon him; the form of a servant, and humbled himself unto

death, even the death of the cross; now he is ascended far above all heavens - higher than all height; he has a name above every name. Here his descending into the lower parts of the earth is put in opposition to his ascending far above all heavens. His abasement was unparalleled; so also, is his exaltation.

That he might fill all things - That he might be the fountain whence all blessings might flow; dispensing all good things to all his creatures, according to their several capacities and necessities; and, particularly, fill both converted Jews and Gentiles with all the gifts and graces of his Holy Spirit.