

**Jesus, the Giver of Gifted Believers** (Ephesians 4:7-11)

Water of Life

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**Review of the Exposition:**

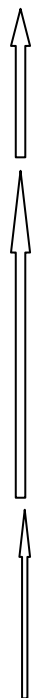
1:3-14: Gentile believers should bless the Father for the Trinity preparing, procuring, and protecting Jewish believers' inheritance first (and also for doing these for Gentile believers' inheritance)

1:15-23 Thus, Paul thankfully prays that God would enable these already-enlightened believers to know: (1) the hope entailed in the Father calling them, (2) their rich corporate inheritance, and (3) how the Father works on behalf of believers with the same power by which He raised and seated Christ above all powers.

2:1-10 And God enlivened, raised, and seated Jewish and Gentile believers together with Christ, though you and we were dead in trespasses, to display His grace in coming ages; specifically the by grace kind of salvation is an unmerited gift offering no basis for boasting, for the church is God's artifact, created in Christ Jesus to do good works pre-designed for it to do.

2:11-13 Thus Gentiles should remember their former alienation, but how they are brought near.

**2:14-22 As explanation Christ reconciled Jews and Gentiles by abolishing the Law (source of enmity), to (1) create one new man (the Church) from the two and (2) reconcile both to God; so both have equal access to the Father, thus Gentiles are no longer and aliens, but are built together with Jewish saints upon Christ (the cornerstone) and upon the foundational [ministry] of apostles and [NT] prophets into a holy temple [the church] indwelt by God in the Spirit.**



3:1-7, 13 **[FOR THIS REASON]** Paul [asks them not lose heart at his imprisonment] on behalf of Gentiles, because they know of the grace (spiritual gift) given to Paul: God revealed the previously unrevealed mystery to apostles & NT prophets [that any Gentiles would be fellow-heirs, of the same body, and fellow partakers.

3:8-13 As explanation, God gave unworthy Paul a grace (gift) to (1) proclaim to Gentiles God's rich inheritance, and (2) enlighten everyone concerning the mystery that the Creator had hidden from creation, so (through the revelation given to apostles and prophets) the church would be the instrument by which angelic powers would learn of the mystery (God's eternal plan accomplished by Christ who emboldens us for ministering the mystery—so Paul's imprisonment is not a cause for losing heart.

3:14-21 **FOR THIS REASON**, Paul prays to Christ's Father (who is also Father of the Church) that He would strengthen the Ephesians that Christ might indwell their assembly so they (who were established in God's love) would know the extent and depth of Christ's love with the ultimate goal that they would manifest God's character in its fullness.

3:20-21 Believers should praise the Father forever who works exceedingly [on behalf of the body of Christ] doing for it what we never could have imagined, let alone, asked for.

4:1-6 [In light of God joining Jews & Gentiles in one body (1:3-3:21)] believers ought to live in keeping with God calling them into His Church by humbly bearing with one another in love, by preserving the unity the Spirit effected through a jointly-bound peace [treaty], because the one body [the Church] matches how the one triune God has called the church in one way.

4:7 [In mild contrast with the unity that characterizes the Church] the Holy Spirit gave a spiritual gift to each believer in proportion to the number of gifted people Christ gave to the church

Step 1	Step 2
HS <b>gives</b> a believer a spiritual <b>gift</b> (4:7a).	Christ <b>gives</b> gifted-believer <b>as a gift</b> to the Church (4:7b, 11).
The Spirit is the <b>giver of spiritual gifts</b> .	Christ is the <b>giver of gifted believers</b> to the Church

He gave gifted apostles, gifted prophets, gifted evangelists, gifted pastors & gifted teachers (4:11), HS gave apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, pastoring, and teaching].

## Ephesians 4:9-10 Is Parenthetic

This means that the passage flows well, even skipping verses 9-10, when reading:

<sup>8</sup> Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high [Psalm 68:18], He led captivity captive, and gave [gifted believers as] gifts to men [specifically, to the Church]."

*<sup>9</sup> Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended to the lower parts of the earth?<sup>10</sup> He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.*

<sup>11</sup> And He Himself gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers...

4:8 speaks of men being given as gifts to men [i.e., to the Church].

4:11 continues, speaking of certain gifted believers being given as gifts [to men: to the Church].

**(4:8) In a victory procession the triumphant Christ parades His captives whom He gave to His army [the Church].**

The verse cites (but does not quote) Psalm 68:18, which refers to a victory procession.

Many imagine that Paul was sloppy, because they wrongly think he was trying to quote it.

Ephesians 4:8b When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and **gave** gifts **to** men.

Psalm 68<sup>18</sup> You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have **received** gifts **among** men.

Even *from* the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell *there*.

Explaining the relation between **receiving gifts among men** and **giving gifts to men**.

Psalm 68 speaks of God vanquishing Israel's enemies, receiving spoils of war [including captives], parading the spoils, and then sharing those spoils with His victorious army. Thus, **captives were received among men** for the purpose of **giving those captives to men**. Psalm 68:18 speaks of the former, but implies the latter (cf. Psalm 68:12b: *And she who remains at home divides the spoil.*)

In Eph 4:8 Christ receives captives from Satan's army as those people believe. The former captives are received among men [the Church] and are then those believers are given as gifts to serve the Church.

In Psalm 68, God has won a great victory on earth, so He triumphantly ascends to Mount Zion.

**(4:9-10) The assertion “He ascended” [in verse 8] implies that Christ had already descended [from heaven] to the lower *of-earth* parts, so He might [again] ascend to heaven.**

The fact that Christ ascended triumphantly (4:8)—on Palm Monday and in His ascension—implies that a descent—His descent from heaven in the incarnation—happened first.

We must consider **of** in Eph 4:8: *He descended to the lower parts of earth*. The word **of** has sent many preachers off after a red-herring. The word **of** should not cause such confusion here.

Unfortunately, the word **of** is extremely flexible, having 30+ distinct meanings.

The petition in Psalm 68 is that God would descend to earth, so He could ascend Mt. Zion in a victory procession (and implicitly He will return to heaven).

In order for Jesus (who is God) to ascend, Paul says that He must have first descended (from the upper parts = heaven), to the lower *of-earth* parts (at the incarnation).

This use of the word **of** is called a *genitive of apposition*. The word apposition means that two words referring to the same thing are placed next to each other. The term genitive of apposition means that the word **of** (a genitive) appears within the construction. Despite the presence of the word of, the two terms within the construction are equivalent. Examples:

The cities **of** Sodom & Gomorrah = the cities, *which are* Sodom & G. (2 Peter 2:6)

The feast **of** Tabernacles = the feast, *which is* Tabernacles. (John 7:2)

The sign **of** circumcision = the sign, *which is* circumcision. (Romans 4:11)

The promise **of** [eternal] life = the promise, *which is* [eternal] life. (2 Timothy 1:1)

The lower parts **of** earth = the lower parts, *which is* earth. (Ephesians 4:9)

The sanctuary **of** His body = the sanctuary, *which is* His body. (John 2:21)

Jesus descended from the upper *of-heaven* parts in the incarnation  
to the lower *of-earth* parts. (Eph 4:9)

so He might ascend far above the heavens... (Eph 4:10)

What do we call someone who makes a round trip (heaven to earth and back to heaven)?

Why is it important to Paul’s argument here that Jesus is God?

**(4:9-10) The assertion "He ascended" [in verse 8] implies that Christ had already descended [from heaven] to the lower *of-earth* parts, so He might [again] ascend to heaven.**

Paul reminds us that (as God) Christ's ascension requires that He had first descended to earth in the incarnation. As God, He has the right to give gifted people to the Church.

The fact that He is God and has the right to give people as gifts to the Church is a good reason for Paul including the parenthesis (Eph 4:9-10). On the other hand, those that think this passage speaks of Jesus descending into hell have no good explanation for Paul including such an idea in a parenthesis. It would contribute nothing to the discussion of the giving of gifted people to the Church.

Paul says that the purpose of the ascension is in order that Christ might fulfill all things.

John 16:7 [among other such passages] says that the Holy Spirit could not come, unless Christ first ascended.

There is a simple reason. John 14:18 in context [among other such passages] promises not to leave believers stranded as orphans. Thus, forty days after Christ ascended, the Holy Spirit descended, so we are not left as orphans.

As we look at all the ministries of the Spirit in Ephesians, it was vital for Jesus to ascend far above every angelic power, so Jesus could send the Spirit to minister to and through us.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high [Psalm 68:18], He led captivity captive, and gave [gifted believers as] gifts to men [specifically, to the Church]."

[ <sup>9</sup> Now this, "He ascended" —what does it mean but that He also first descended to the lower parts of the earth?<sup>10</sup> He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. ]

<sup>11</sup> And He Himself gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers...