
The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON LXXI : UNITY AND DIVERSITY WITHIN THE CONGREGATION OF BELIEVERS (4:1-16)

Ephesians 4:7~10 —

Vnto every one of vs is geuen grace acordinge to the measure of the gyft of christ. Wherefore he sayth: He is gone vp an hie and hath ledde captivitie captive and hath geuen gyftes vnto men. That he ascended: what meaneth it but that he also descended fyrst into the lowest parties of the erth? He that descended is even the same also that ascended vp even above all hevens to fulfill all thinges. (Tyndale's New Testament, 1524)

But vnto euery one of vs is giuen grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, Whe he asceded vp on hie, he led captiuitie captiue, and gaue gifts vnto men. (Nowe, in that hee ascended, what is it but that he had also descended first into the lowest partes of the earth? Hee that descended, is euen the same that ascended, farre above all heauens, that hee might fill all things) (Geneva Bible, 1599)

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) (King James Version, 1769)

and to each one of you was given the grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, wherefore, he saith, 'Having gone up on high he led captive captivity, and gave gifts to men,' — and that, he went up, what is it except that he also went down first to the lower parts of the earth? he who went down is the same also who went up far above all the heavens, that He may fill all things — (Young's Literal Translation, 1898)

But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men. (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) (Revised Version, 1885)

But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men. (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) (American Standard Version, 1901)

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) (Revised Standard Version, 1952)

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended" — what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) (New King James Version, 1982)

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 except 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.) (New American Standard Version, 1995)

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) (New International Version, 2011)

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) (English Standard Version, 2011)

Ἐνὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ διὸ λέγει· Ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν καὶ ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὸ δὲ Ἀνέβη τί ἐστὶν εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη πρῶτον εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς ὃ καταβὰς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα (Stephanus Greek NT, 1550)

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αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. τὸ δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα [μέρη] τῆς γῆς; ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα. (NA28 Greek New Testament)

INTERESTING VERSES . . . — We are entering a couple of interesting verses, some of the most controversial verses not just in Ephesians but in the whole New Testament. In these next few lessons we will consider several topics which effect these verses to one degree or another, including:

- *Did Jesus Christ go to hell for three days? If so, why?*
- *What is hell (sheol – qeber – hades – gehenna)?*
- *Did the Old Testament saints go to heaven or to some intermediary holding state?*
- *Where did Paul get his quote in v. 8? Why did he use this quote?*
- *Who or what are the captives in v. 8?*
- *What is meant by ‘the lower parts of the earth’ in v. 9?*
- *How are we to understand the NT authors quoting non-Scriptural sources?*

Some of the above questions cannot be answered with simplicity nor with dogmatism. While we each may have our own particular opinions, these are questions that are still being asked after having the Scriptures for 2000 years. We should recognize there are good men who disagree on these verses. I repeat a life-lesson the Lord taught me many years ago:

There are three positions on all doctrinal issues:

- *Teachings of which I would agree*
- *Teachings of which I would not agree but is a possibility and does not violate the Scriptures*
- *Teachings which are against the Scriptures and heresy*

Part of growing as a believer is to be able to accept others’ opinions with respect while also knowing when to separate from those whose interpretations violate core Scriptural principles. For example, did Jesus Christ go to hell for three days after His crucifixion? Some would say He did not while others would say He did, and both opinions have been held by believers throughout church history. But there are those few who believe Jesus went to hell to preach a ‘second-chance’ to those who had died, or that the OT saints could not be saved until Jesus preached salvation to those in hades. Those teachings cross the line of ‘different opinion’ and violates the Scriptural doctrine of no salvation after an individual dies.

It should be an interesting couple of weeks and I am looking forward to the lessons to come.

PAUL’S POINT: CHRIST’S AUTHORITY TO DISTRIBUTE THE GIFTS — While looking at the details we must be careful not to miss the main point of these next few verses. Paul began this portion of his letter (remembering the original letter did not have chapter / verse divisions) emphasizing the unity of believers within the local church, the importance of humility, patience, and forbearing with one another in love for the glory of Christ (vv. 1~3). He then goes down what we might call today a ‘hit list’ of unifying factors, reasons why we are united or should be united (vv. 4~6). Having emphasized our unity, Paul then hastens to clarify that while we are united, we are all different in our gifts, abilities, and what we bring to the church. Rather than being divisive, our gifts should serve to allow the body to function as it was purposed. In v. 7 Paul says that we are each gifted according to the sovereign pleasure of Jesus Christ Himself, not just as to what our gifts are but also to what degree we have those gifts. He then brings forth a proof-text from Psalms 68 to support Christ’s right and authority to distribute these gifts (vv. 8-10). **Important to remember: while controversial to us today, Paul originally gave these verses to clarify and support the sovereign right of Christ to distribute gifts to His people as it pleases Him!** “Verses 8-10 appear to complicate the argument unnecessarily. How then do they fit into its structure? Verse 8, with its citation of Ps 68:18, functions as a scriptural confirmation of the notion of the exalted Christ giving gifts with ‘he ascended’ and ‘he gave gifts’ as the key supporting terms from each line of the citation. There then follows an interpretation of each line. Verses 9,10, which in many texts and translations are placed in parentheses and then treated by many commentators as a digression with little agreement about their purpose, provide a midrashic interpretation and identification of the psalm’s words about the one who ascended. Possibly the most likely explanation for the details of the midrash is that, since the psalm mentions only an ascent in connection with giving gifts, [Paul] felt it necessary to show that the ascent also implies a descent in order to establish his point that the Christ who ascended is the giver of gifts in the Church. In this way the midrash fulfillfills a typical function of Haggadah, filling out possible gaps in the meaning of a text.” [Lincoln, 225f]

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS — some words we will be using in the following studies:

Torah — literally ‘instruction, teaching’ and typically restricted to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible written by Moses (‘the law’). It could also refer to the entire Jewish Bible (to non-Jews that would be the Old Testament, to the Jews that would be the written Torah or the Tenakh).

Tenakh — also *Tanakh, Tenak, Tanach*. The canonical collection of Jewish texts (the Old Testament).

Haggadah — literally ‘telling’; plural: *Haggadot*. The Jewish text that sets forth the order of the Passover Seder.

Reading the Haggadah at the Seder table is a fulfillment of the Scriptural commandment to each Jew to ‘tell your son’ of the Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt as described in the Book of Exodus in the Torah.

Targums — The Targums were at first oral renderings with a diversity of readings from synagogue to synagogue; later these were reduced to writing, and finally an official Targum evolved.

Midrash — Rabbinic interpretation / commentary on part of the Hebrew scriptures meant to fill in the gaps of the Torah. They are used to resolve problems in difficult passages. The earliest Midrashim come from the 2nd century AD, although they find much of their content in older oral traditions.

wherefore, he saith (YLT) / Therefore it says (ESV) — διὸ λέγει — [dio legei] — ‘**THEREFORE**’ — ‘*therefore, for this reason.*’ Paul just made a statement about the giving of gifts to each believer and is about to give a quote in confirmation of his statement.

WHY DO THE VERSIONS VARY BETWEEN ‘IT’ SAYS AND ‘HE’ SAYS? — As one reads the different versions listed at the beginning of this lesson, one might have noticed differences in the way Paul begins his quote:

‘*Wherefore he saith*’ or ‘*Therefore He says*’ — Tyndale’s New Testament, 1524; Geneva Bible, 1599; King James Version, 1769; Young’s Literal Translation, 1898; Revised Version, 1885; American Standard Version, 1901; New King James Version, 1982; see also these commentators that recognize the meaning could be either ‘*he says*’ or ‘*it says*’ and makes the reference to either ‘*He (God) says*’ or ‘*it (the Scriptures) says*’ — Gill; JFB; Hodge, 152; Barne’s NT Notes; Moule, 106.

‘*Therefore it is said,*’ ‘*Therefore it says*’ or ‘*This is why it says*’ — Revised Standard Version, 1952; New American Standard Version, 1995; New International Version, 2011; English Standard Version, 2011; see also these commentators which prefer ‘*it says*’ – Abbott, 110; Lincoln, 242; Hoehner, p523f; O’Brien, 288; Muddiman 188. There is a reason for the preference of ‘*it says*’ as we will see in the following lessons.

Why the difference between ‘*he says*’ or ‘*it says*’? Are some translations denigrating the Word of God by saying ‘*it says*’ instead of ‘*he says*’? That is not the case at all; rather the issue is simply an opinion on how the verb should be translated. *(We do understand that all translations are a commentary in a sense, do we not? Words in every language have ‘circles of meaning’ and there are always choices as to how they should be translated in any given context. How one chooses to translate a word depends upon one’s theology. Examples could be the word for church, election, baptism, and even in our verse, ‘he says’. That is why as a general rule a translation by a group of translators is considered more reliable than a single-person translation.)* To understand this, let us look at how Greek verbs are used (*please forgive the Greek detail but I believe it necessary if one is to understand the situation here*). The Greek verbs have forms (conjugations) which tells us five things about the verb:

person (first – ‘*I, we*’; second – ‘*you*’; or third person – ‘*he, she, it, they*’)

number (singular or plural)

voice (active, passive, middle)

tense (present, perfect, future, aorist, etc.)

mood (indicative – *certainty*, imperative – *commands*, subjunctive – *probability, desire*, optative – *a wish, prayer, potential statement*)

What is particularly interesting as it relates to our verse is that Greek verbs do not need a corresponding noun to act as its antecedent; for example, our verb would be conjugated as follows:

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
1st person	lego	‘ <i>I say</i> ’	legomen	‘ <i>we say</i> ’
2nd person	legeis	‘ <i>you say</i> ’	legete	‘ <i>ye say</i> ’
3rd person	legei	‘ <i>he, she or it says</i> ’	legousin	‘ <i>they say</i> ’

Note the change in the verb’s endings determines how the verb is used. What this also shows is that a verb could stand by itself without an antecedent and it would work fine in a Greek sentence (which is exactly what our verb is doing in this verse). Note that the verb used in our verse is also used elsewhere where the antecedent is not questioned:

Δαβὶδ λέγει [Dabid legei] = ‘David says’ (Rom 4:6; 11:9)

Ἡσαΐας γὰρ λέγει [Ēsaiaś gar legei] = ‘for Isaiah says’ (Rom 10:16, 20; 15:12)

Μωϋσῆς λέγει, [Mōusēs legei] = ‘Moses says’ (Rom 10:19)

ὁ νόμος λέγει. [ho nomos legei] = ‘the law says’ (1 Cor 14:34)

In our verse there is no antecedent and therefore it is the translator’s choice as to translate it as ‘*he says*’ or ‘*it says*’. Either

translation is acceptable and whichever a translator chooses, neither violates any doctrinal principle. *More will be said about this in the coming lessons.*

PAUL'S USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT — As we continue to consider Paul's verbiage here, I will be quoting extensively from the following book: **E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* [Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene OR] 1981.** This book is a recommended resource and was used by several of the commentaries from which I studied as I prepared this lesson.

GENERAL FACTS ABOUT PAUL'S QUOTATIONS —

- Paul quotes the OT 93x, about 1/3 of all NT quotes of OT are made by Paul. While the quotes are from 16 OT books, nearly 3/4 of them are from the Pentateuch (33 quotes), Isaiah (25 quotes) and the Psalms (19 quotes). [Ellis, 11]
- 51 of Paul's quotes are in absolute or virtual agreement with the LXX, 22 of which are at variance with the Hebrew OT (mostly from Genesis and Isaiah); 4x Paul follows the Hebrew against the LXX; and 38x he diverges from both. [Ellis, 12]
- The LXX is the principle source from which the NT writers quote the OT. [Ellis, 12]
- Of 94 passages quoted Messianically in the NT, only 44 were interpreted in the same manner in Jewish writings. [Ellis, 57]

INTRODUCTORY FORMULAS — How does Paul introduce his quotations? Here is a summary of what Paul does:

- most common of Paul's introductory formulas is *'it is written'* (γέγραπται, gegraptai), 29x [Ellis, 22]
- second in frequency is *'the Scripture says'* (ἡ γραφή λέγει, hē graphē legei), 6x [Ellis, 22]
- other formulas using *'____ says'*; e.g., *'David says'* – Rom 4:6; 11:9; *'Isaiah says'* – Rom 10:16, 20; 15:12; *'Moses says'* – Rom 10:19; *'the law says'* – Rom 7:7; 1 Cor 14:34 [Ellis, 22f]
- important to our present verse: 6x *'says'* (λέγει, legei) is used without a subject (an antecedent) and could therefore mean *'he says'*, *'she says'* or *'it says'*: Rom 9:25; 10:21; 15:10; Gal 3:16; Eph 4:8; 5:14 [Ellis, 23-25] ***Some say this does not imply a scriptural citation but it has that significance in Hebrews, Philo and the Mishnah.*** [Ellis, 34] Note that while this exact phrase is used but 3x in the NT (Eph 4:8; 5:14; James 4:6), the passages in Ephesians have no antecedent but in the James passage the obvious antecedent is God.
- sometimes Paul quotes without giving any indication he is doing so:

'Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor"' (Eph 4:25, quoting from Zech 8:16)

"Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath' (Eph 4:26, quoting from Psalm 4:4)

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." (Eph 5:31, quoting from Genesis 2:24)

"Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." (Eph 6:2,3, quoting from Deut 5:16)

PAUL'S QUOTES WHICH DO NOT APPEAR TO BE FROM THE OT — The passages most often questioned:

'But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."' (1 Cor 2:9 NKJV) The introductory formula used here is *'it is written'* (γέγραπται, gegraptai) [Ellis, 34] Theories as to the origin of this statement has been apocryphal writing, an apocryphal phraseology of OT texts, a Jewish anthology of OT passages, and a free paraphrase of the OT by Paul. [Ellis, 35]

'Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."' (Eph 4:8 NKJV) The introductory formula used here is *'he/she/it says'* (λέγει, legei) [Ellis, 34] Paul is probably following an OT text or interpretive paraphrase familiar to his readers. [Ellis, 36]

'Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."' (Eph 5:14 NKJV) The introductory formula used here is *'he/she/it says'* (λέγει, legei) [Ellis, 34] Theories as to the origin of this statement has been generally assigned to an exegetical paraphrase or summary of Isa. 60:1, 19ff (cf. Isa 9:2; 26:19; 52:1) by the older commentators, or to an apocryphal source (Jerome). More recent commentators attribute it to an unwritten statement by Christ or more often an early Christian hymn. [Ellis, 34] Paul is probably following an OT text or interpretive paraphrase familiar to his readers. [Ellis, 36]

Probably these should also be added to that category:

'And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.' (1 Cor 15:45b NKJV) The introductory formula used here is *'it is written'* (γέγραπται, gegraptai) [Ellis, 34]

'For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his

wages.”’ (1 Tim 5:18b NKJV) The introductory formula used here is ‘*the Scripture says*’ (ἡ γραφή λέγει, hē graphē legei) [Ellis, 34] Bible Gateway gives the first quote as being from Deut 25:4, the second from Luke 10:7.

PROBLEMS WITH QUOTES FROM NON-SCRIPTURAL SOURCES — While we realize not everything in the Bible is true (***TAKE THAT IN THE CONTEXT IN WHICH IT IS GIVEN!*** — e.g., Satan said to Eve, ‘*You will not surely die.*’ – Gen 3:4. ***That was a lie yet it is accurately recorded in Scripture!***), we have to be careful how we explain the NT writers quoting from non-Scriptural sources. Examples:

‘Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith’ (2 Tim 3:8 NKJV) Who is Jannes and Jambres? Where do we find them resisting Moses in the Scriptures? The answer is we do not find them in Scripture and it is generally agreed Paul was quoting a long-standing Jewish tradition that they were the two chief magicians who withstood Moses and Aaron in Exodus 7. They are mentioned in the Talmud and in several Midrashim. “The mention of Jannes and Jambres in 2 Tim 3:8 is probably no more than a convenient labeling from Jewish oral tradition. ***Whether Paul regarded the names as genuine is impossible to say*** but there is no reason to refer his use to an apocryphal book; the appellation, with slight variation, was widespread, and Paul’s ascriptions are entirely within the Biblical narrative.” [Ellis, 55]

‘Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”’ (Jude 14,15 NKJV) Jude credits his source as being Enoch, and some have even considered the apocryphal Book of Enoch as Scripture because it was quoted by Jude. Almost all reject that reasoning but we are left with the same problem as Paul in 2 Tim 3:8.

‘Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”’ (Jude 9 NKJV) Again, while not credited by Jude, this quote has been credited to the apocryphal book of The Assumption of Moses.

We must remember that just because something is quoted by a New Testament inspired author, that does not mean that from which it was quoted is inspired; for example:

‘for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, “For we are also His offspring.”’ (Acts 17:28 NKJV) This is credited as being a quote from the Greek writer Aratus.

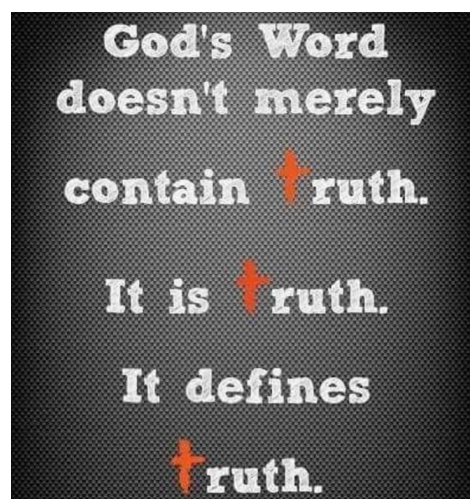
‘Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”’ (1 Cor 15:33 NKJV) This is credited as being a quote from the Greek writer Menander.

‘One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”’ (Titus 1:12 NKJV) This is credited as being a quote from the Greek writer Epimenides.

While this is a difficult topic and while we may not have all the answers, here are some thoughts considering such quotations:

- even though a NT writer quotes from a non-canonical book, it does not mean they accepted the whole book as true; they were only quoting a particular statement with which they agreed. In like manner, I could quote Catholic authors on something with which I would agree without supporting what Catholicism teaches as a whole.
- the use of a quotation from an uninspired source does not negate the inspiration of the one who uses it
- while we would not regard certain quotes as authoritative, did the NT writers? We do not know and we must be careful how we answer this question.

Whatever the problems with non-Scriptural quotes, be careful not to answer as follows: ‘Paul and the other NT writers were just making accommodations for their culture.’ THAT IS AN INCREDIBLY DANGEROUS RESPONSE TO THIS ISSUE!



Let us follow that statement to its logical conclusion: “Paul and other writers were just accommodating their blood-sacrificial, homophobic, patriarchal and superstitious anti-evolutionary culture. Therefore we should ignore all Scripture which speaks of atonement by the blood, bigotry against women, homosexuality as a sin, and anything relating to creation.” In fact, using that argument as a premise, what part of the Bible can we not just ignore since they were just ‘speaking to their culture’? WITH ONE CLEAN SWEEP WE HAVE REMOVED ALL AUTHORITY FROM THE SCRIPTURES!!!

We cannot answer all the problems we have discussed this morning; that is acceptable, the Scriptures are infallible, not us. But regardless of how cultures change throughout the centuries, the Word of God remains pure and true and applicable to every culture in every age. The Scriptures have authority over all of humanity, not the other way around!

Sola Fide – Sola Scriptura – Solus Christus – Sola Gratia – Soli Deo Gloria!