

Title: Unity Through Spiritual Gifts

Text: Ephesians 4:7-10

Ephesians chapter 4, please. We are in a section that is the practical application of doctrine. In the first three chapters of Ephesians we talked about the church. That it has been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. We discussed some of the glories about it, and how we got the news about it, the revelation about the church. We learned that we need love in the body of Christ. And that it is produced by the Holy Spirit. And then in chapter 4 he builds his whole discussion for the next three chapters on the word "walk." "Walk worthy" he says in Vs 1. "Walk differently" in Vs 17. Chapter 5 verse 2 "walk in love." Chapter 5:8 "walk as children of light." Chapter 5 verse 15 "walk not as unwise men, but as wise."

WALKING is where it is at, dear friends. There are a lot of people who with their mouths profess to be Christians. Even saying that they are "born again." But their life style is not what the Bible teaches.

Ephesians 4-5-6 tells us what a godly life style should be like and how we should walk. And we must have unity.

We already have this unity. We really do. The moment you become a Christian you are already a part of it. You just may not be enjoying it. Or, putting it into practice in your life.

In order to preserve this unity that God says that believers have, ~~accordi~~ according to the Bible we need humility, and meekness, and patience. We need patience to put up with each other in love.

And the very next thing that Paul goes into is spiritual gifts. That God expresses and manifest this wonderful unity through the spiritual gifts that he has given to the body of Christ. And we are to use them to build each other up. That is where we are headed. Let's look, now, at vs 7-10

(READ VS 7-10)

Prayer

UNITY THROUGH SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

( ) Let's talk for a moment from Vs 7 about the provision of those gifts.  
AS TO WHO HAS THEM.

After mentioning that we should persevere the unity of the Spirit in Vs 3, Paul then says in Vs 7.. "to each one of us grace has been given". Every single believer in the Body of Christ has a spiritual gift.

Turn over to I Peter chapter 4 to illustration this truth. I Peter chapter 4. Every believer, the moment you receive Jesus, has spiritual gift. You do not by praying, or working hard, or training for, achieve a spiritual gift. A spiritual gift comes from God. He gives it to you. I Cor 12:11 that the "Holy Spirit distributes to each person just as He wills NOT AS YOU "WILL". BUT AS "HE" WILL.

That is why it is foolish for us to covet a gift that we do not have. We see someone else using a gift and we say, "Boy, I wish I had that gift." And you go out and try to have that gift and make a mess of it. You cannot do that.

And there are also some of us who say, "I don't have any gift." And when you say that you are frankly violating the Word of God. Because the Bible says that there is a gift that is given to every believer.

The Bible also teaches that you could have more than one gift. Some people have two or three gifts. But, everyone of us has at least one spiritual gift. And that gift is not an acquired ability. It is not a talent. As we often use the word. And it is not based upon education.

A spiritual gift is a gift given to you by the Holy Spirit the moment you come to Christ. And everyone of us has one.

Look at I Peter 4:10..."As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another."

The purpose of your gift is to serve other members of the body of Christ. PLEASE, DEAR FRIENDS, LEARN AN IMPORTANT TRUTH.

A spiritual gift is not given to you so that you can edify yourself. A lot of people believe that. That somehow you have the gift of singing. And signing in the bath tub is your thing. THAT IS NOT WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

Your gift is given to you to minister or serve other members of the body of Christ. There is no "self" in the gifts at all....No self edification No self-ministry....no self-use. IT IS FOR OTHER PEOPLE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST.

I think that is kind-of neat to remember. That when you became a christian you are needed within the body of Christ. You have worthy and value in the Body of Christ. You have something that God has given to you, And He wants you to use it.

Now, notice carefully in Vs 10 it says, "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

"Manifold" means "many sided or many colored." The point here is that there is a variety of God's grace that is distributed. Not everybody is the same. There are great differences. But everyone has a gift.

Now, come back, please, to Ephesians 4. And look at Vs 7 again...  
"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift." Now, the way I would put that is WHY DO WE HAVE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?  
WHO HAS THEM?....EVERY BELIEVER  
WHY DO WE HAVE THEM?....Well, according to the Bible it is a result of God's grace. And it is according to the measure of Christ's gift.

You don't have them because you are worthy of them...or that you did something to earn them...or that you worked hard for God and because of that He will give you some....NO!!

The only reason why we have a gift is because of God's grace giving to us what we do not deserve. And that is based upon the "measure of Christ's gift." And the word "gift" in that verse is referring to "the free gift of Christ." The one that was achieved when Jesus died on the cross. "THE MARVELOUS GRACE OF OUR LOVING LORD.

God's grace reached down to us and saved us. And his grace has also given us a gift. And all of this is undeserved.

Turn over to Romans chapter 12 and let me show you this in relationship to a "LIST OF GIFTS." Romans chapter 12 verse 3...I just want to emphasize again that the reason why we have gifts is because of God's wonderful grace.

Romans 12:3.."For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think".....

Obviously, pride is ruled out, if God's grace has given you your gift. You can never say that you did anything to deserve it, or earn it.

Then he goes on to say, Vs 3, "to have sound judgement, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith."

That is simply talking about the fact that when you believe in Christ, a measure of the blessing that God has granted to you was given to you when Christ died on the cross. NOT EVERYTHING. But some of it. Based on your faith in the Lord. That means that you have a gift.

Now, look at Vs 4.."Just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another,"

That means that not one of you can walk alone. You may try, but you are not going to make it. We all need one another.

Vs 6..."And since we have gifts that differ".....Aren't you glad that everyone is not the same? Imagine running into 36 people have the same exact same gift that you do and use it in the exact same way.

Now, unfortunately, a lot of us demand that of people, when we talk about gifts. Let me give you an example.

Take the gift of teaching. This is a true story. There was this man who was teaching adults. And he was discussing the gift of teaching with a person who was teaching children. And in that discussion the person who was teaching adults was trying to show the person who was teaching children that he did not have the gift of teaching or he would be teaching adults.

Now, any of you who have ever taught children know that it is probably a greater test of your ability than teaching adults. Some of you have been down with the 2's and 3's and can really appreciate that, right?

OH, listen, dear friends, the gift that God has given you can be used in different ways. Plus the very extent of that gift can be different. One person may be great at teaching a 100..another person maybe better at teaching 3.

And just because the one that teaches 3 and he doesn't teach a 100, does not mean that he doesn't have the gift of teaching. Our spiritual gift can be used in different ways.

WHO CAUSES SPIRITUAL GIFTS? Should one look at another person and say.. "OH, YOU DON'T HAVE THE GIFT LIKE I HAVE"..

No Way! According to Vs 6.."gifts differ according to what?....the grace given to us."

Dear friends, do not forget that. Whatever ministry that God has given to you, is his grace. You have never received anything in your life that God didn't make possible himself. So, we all have a gift.

Now, come back to Ephesians , again. Paul even knew this in his own life. Look at Eph. 3 verse 7. In talking about the revelation that was given to him as an apostle he says in Vs 7.."I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power."

Paul knew that his ministry was a result of God's grace in his life.

Now, come back to chapter 4 and let's look at Vs 7 again. "TO EACH ONE OF US"....Who has the gifts? Each one of us. AND WHY DO WE HAVE THEM? GRACE. Literally, "THE GRACE WAS GIVEN ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF CHRIST'S GIFT,

So, the provision of spiritual gifts is clearly outlined. In order to have the unity function and see it manifested in the body of Christ, God gave gifts to use so that we can build up the church and encourage one another. That is how your unity will be seen.

When a brother or a sister senses that another brother or sister needs them, you will discover more unity, obviously, then if you say, "I don't need you. I can handle it by myself."

That is the purpose of spiritual gifts, We all need one another to build up one another in the Lord.

( ) Now, the proof of all of this comes out of the O.T. Out of what some have called the most difficult and controversial passage in the Bible.

I am not sure that is true. But a lot of people feel that way. This is a hard passage. What does it mean when it says "Christ ascended, let captive a host of captives; and then he descended". WHAT DOES ALL THAT mean?

THE PROOF FROM THE O.T. This is a quotation, in Vs 8, from Psalms 68. Will you turn there, please. Psalms chapter 68.....Verse 18...

Now, reember, this whole passage in Ephesians is dealing jwith the unity of the jbody through the use of spiritual gifts.

Psalms 68 verse 18....."Thou hast ascended on high, Thou has led captive thy captives; Thou hast received gifts among men, Even among the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell there."

Now, here is a great triumphant statement. You have ascended on high, you have led captive. And notice you have received gifts.

In Ephesians 4:8 it says, "He gave gifts."

So, some people accuse the Bible, here, of contradicting itself. Psalms 68 says that "he received gifts." And Ephsians 4:8 says that "he gave gifts." IS THERE A CONTRADICTION? I don't believe so.

The very word "receive" is referring to the fact that he "received in order to give."

An example would be: Genesis 34:4 it speaks of Judah taking a wife for his son. And obviously you are taking or receiving a wife in order to give to your son.

When the conquer had defeated his enemy (and there are many examples of this in the O.T.) when he defeated them he took all the spoils...that is, he ~~receive~~ received gifts in order to distribute them among those who helped him in the conquest. And that dear friends, is the basic idea behind Ephesians 4:8.

Jesus Christ has conquered in some sense. And he received gifts which he in turn gives....THAT IS VERY IMPORTANT.

Because the gifts that Christ is giving to us in the body of Christ, that he has recieved, obviously, from the Heavenly Father. Those gifts are different than the individual gifts that every believer has. AND I WILL SHOW YOU THAT IN JUST A MOMENT.

Come back to Ephesians 4, again....

So, the O.T. text which is quoted here in Ephesians 4:8 really says two things. Both of which, he says, happened when Christ ascended on high.

The same thing as when a conqueror defeats his enemies, at that point two things happen. He led the captives captive and he gave gifts to his men.

Now, let's take each one of those and ask ourselves, WHY DOES THAT APPLY TO JESUS CHRIST. AND HOW DOES THAT AFFECT THE BODY OF CHRIST AND UNITY?

(1 ) Number one, When it says that he led captive a host of captives...I don't know if any of you have really studied that verse. But when you start looking at what has been written ..man!...there are lots of views. And some of those views are really wild. It is no wonder that some folks call this the most difficult passage in the Bible. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Well, I would like to bring that down to two main views. And both of these views are pretty good. But, we must make a decision here. And it affects what we believe about the passage.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN IT SAYS THAT HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES.

(1 ) The first view, which the majority of Bible teachers, until the present time, taught. The view that most Bible teachers took. Here it is: They said that it refers to Jesus conquering his enemies. That the captives who are led captive are like: satan, sin, death, demons, everything. So, when Jesus ascended...at that point...His victory was declared over satan, sin, death, and demons.

You can understand why people taught that. Because it was through the death and resurrection of Jesus and His ascension that his victory over Satan was announced.

However, there are a few problems with that. According to vs 8 it says, "HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES." And if you would notice, carefully, it says "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH."

And according to Vs 10 when it says that he ascended he went far above all the heavens.

My problem here, with this view is that how in the world did Christ take to heaven Satan and demons and sin and death.

First of all, Satan already had access to heaven. And why would God say that Christ when he ascended took with him to heaven SIN. I don't understand that at all.

Another problem that I have with this is that that little phrase "led captive" refers to a "moment of time." And if it means as a lot of people say "victory over satan" and when you believe in Christ that victory is yours, WHAT BOTHERS ME A LITTLE BIT IS THAT THIS HAPPENED AT THE MOMENT OF HIS ASCENTION, BUT SATAN, NOW, HAS APARANT FREEDOM. HE IS THE GOD OF THIS PRESENT AGE. AND THE EFFECTS OF SIN AND DEATH ARE STILL GOING ON. Now, did he do this or didn't he?

The text says he did it at a moment of time. Well, it doesn't look like he did a very good job because Satan and sin and death are still out there. They are still in the world.

So, some jpeople just say that "Positionally it happened." And the moment you believe in Christ it is true of you. You have conquered Satan, you have conquered sin.

Let me ask you. Have you conquered sin? Have you had a problem or two this past week with sin? HAVE YOU?

I think there are some problems with this view. If led captive means my salvation. That the Lord Jesus led me captive. AND that the captives that he conquered adre SIN..DEATH..SATAN, It seems to me that it would be hard to believe that at that moment ~~of~~ time it covers everybody who in the future would become christians, as well as thoughts in the past who had become believer in the O.T. Because this said that it happened at a moment of time.

If it wanted to suggest that all of us in the fsture would become captivaes of Christ, it would have to use a different tense in the Greek which means that "he continues to led us all captive the momment we turn to Christ" because he conquered Satan. But it doesn't say that. It says that the time He ascended at that moment he led ~~the~~ these captives captive.

(2 )So, there are many jproblems with this view. Therefore, I would like to suggest that the second view, which is held by the fewist Bible teachers, but more of them in the present time, then in the past, And it also frankly sounds a little wride at first. So, please bare with me.

You say, "that is nothing new, We do that every week" ....



I believe what this is saying is that it refers to O.T. saints, or believe who are taken from the place called SHOEL(a Hebrew word for 'grave') which is also HADES in Greek...translated "HELL" in the N.T.

I believe that the O.T. Saints were taken captive from the place where they were held in captivity(Shoel or Hade). I believe they were taken to Heaven.

Now, everyone who dies as a believer does not go jto SHOEL OR HADES as the O.T. taught. But, they jgo to Heaven. 2 Corinthians 5:8 says "absent from the body, at home with the Lord."

Now, let me explain this..(if I can)

Turn over to Luke chapter 16. Luke chapter 16. When an O.T. believer died, what happened to him?

This is an interesting teaching of Jesus. Because He lays out the particulars of what was true in the O.T. And while it may seem a little strange, it definitely is clearly taught as to what the situation was in the O.T. before the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Notice it please.

Luke 16 verse 19....(READ Vs 19-22(stop at word "bosom"))

Now, Abrham is the father of the Jews, the father of the messianic line. His "bosom" would be his descendance. The Godly line who have come through belief in Messiah. According to the Bible the poor man died and he is with the righteous saints...ABRAHAM'S BOSOM.

Now, let's continue...."the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades If you have a K.J. translation it would read "HELL" at that point.

"Hadaes" simple means "the place of the departed dead".

Vs 23.."In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment."

Now, the poor man is carried by angles to Abraham's bosom. The rich man is in Torment.....(READ VS 23b-31)

Now, obviously, that is dealing with the eternal consequences of the Gospel. The unbelieving rich man was in torment, in flame. The believing poor man, Lazarus, is in Abraham's bosom being comforted. And there is a great division fixed between them.

THAT IS STEP NUMBER ONE IN IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM..

Now, will you turn to Luke chapter 23, please Luke chapter 23.

On the cross Jesus was crucified with two thieves.

Vs 39 says .....(Read Vs 39-43) (emphases vs 43)

Now, vs 43 is a jvery interestingsstatement. "TODAY, YOU SHALL BE WITH... ME...IN...Paradise."

Now, that day was the day that he died on the cross. According to the Bible, he was in the tomb three days and three nights. And jon the third day he arose from the tomb.

Yet, Jesus said on the day he died that thief would be with him in Paradise. The O.T. believer when he died went to Abraham's bosom, the family of the believers. And it was Paradise.

But, I would like to show you now that according to the Bible there has been a change in location of PARADISE.

Turn, please, to 2 Corinthains chapter 12. I am trying to go as slow as I can. This is a hard passage. But it is a very important passage for your christian life.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 12 we have a clear indication by Paul who is now writing some 20 or so years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. And Paul makes an interesting statement. In Vs 2 he says...."I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows- such a man was caught up to the third heaven."

Paul is talking about himself. "Caught up to the third heaven." There are three heavens.

One, the atmospheric heaven around the earth where the birds and clouds are...Two, the clestral heavens where the plants and stars are located. AND the third heaven where God dwells.

Vs 3.....(READ VS 3-4)

Now, the think that I want you to notice, here, is that in Vs 2 Paul says that he was caught up to the third heaven. Vs 4 says that he was caught up into PARADISE.

Yet, Jesus said to the thief on the cross that "today you shall be with me in Paradise."

The O.T. believer goes to Abraham's bosom, or Paradise, in a place called sheol which simply mean "the grave." And Jesus said to the thief who would be a part of the O.T. age, for Jesus had not yet arisen from the dead, nor has the Holy Spirit come on the day of Pentecost. He said to the thief "I will be with you there this day."

Yet, Paul says that Paradise is now in the third heaven. I believe this says that there is a change in location.

Let me give you something else to think about. Turn to Matthew chapter 27 verses 50 to 53....This is the time once again when Jesus is on the cross. Matthew 27 verse 50.....says "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit." There is the actual death of Jesus.

Now, what happened next? Vs 51..."And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.'

Very unusually. It would take supernatural power to pull that off... "and the earth shook; and the rocks were split; and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many."

You know, it is interesting when you read commentaries on this. Most commentaries just flesh right by this passage. They don't try to explain it at all.

Now, I know that it is strange. And I know that people don't want to comment on it. But, it seems to me that that ~~fit~~ fits quite well with the view that I am giving you about Ephesians 4:8. And that is that the release of a few O.T. saints was implying at least the spiritual release of all of them. The fact that the O.T. captive believers were taken captive to heaven by Jesus. There was a visible manifestation of the promise that was in the O.T. that the O.T. believer would be released from that bondage and be taken into his eternal home. I think the visible manifestation was the release of a few O.T. believers (Who by the way also died again) But, I think that God was demonstrating the victory that was there. And the promise that He had made to his O.T. believers that they would not be forgotten.

So, I believe it is referring to O.T. believers who are taken captivity by Jesus, himself, to heaven. NOW, COME BACK TO EPHESIAN 4

And the reason this is so important is the next statement. First of all he led captive a host of captives. And the next statement says "HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."

The reason why it says that God is giving gifts to men is because the O.T. age has ended. These "gifts to men" are "gifted men" according to this passage. And the O.T. saints and leaders have now ended. The O.T. prophets and Priest are gone now.

So, the question is: what will the believers do in this new age. Now that all these O.T. believers are gone. These leaders that have guided God's people through the ages.

The answer is that Jesus when he ascended He took the O.T. believers up to heaven with him, fulfilling God's promise to them. But, now, in this N.T. age he gave gifts, also, to men. NAMELY(VS 11) Apostle, prophets, evangelist, and Pastor-teachers to equip believers to use their ministeries to build up each other and have unity.

Dear friends, I hope you are following me. It is very important.  
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( ) Let's just take a look at this matter of "gifts" for a moment. There are four major words used in the N.T. for "gifts".

Many of you have heard the word "charismatic." Charismatic gifts are referring to the individual gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to the believer the moment you come to Christ.

( ) But, the word in Vs 8 of Ephesians 4 when it says that he gave "gifts" to men is not the word "charismatic". It is the Greek word "DOMA". Which simple means "the thing given". Christ gives these gifts. The Holy Spirit gives the charismatic gifts.

The reason why Christ gives these gifted leaders- Apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastor-teachers- is to equip the believers who have been given individual charismatic gifts by the Holy Spirit. To equip them with the knowledge of God's Word so that they will use their gifts correctly in conformity with the purpose and plan and will of God.

He gave gifted leaders to men.

Now, look at Ephesians 4 verse 9. There is a little explanation here. He says Vs 9.. "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, that He might fill all things.)

Now, if you believe view number one that I gave you, You would say that the descending is when Christ came into the world as a baby. He lowered himself to come to this earth as a human being. He descended. The "lower parts of earth" would simply mean that "mankind is low, sinful, and needs Christ to come., and save them".

But, in view number two the descention of Christ is referring to when he between the time of the cross and the time of the resurrection. He descended into the lower parts of the earth referring to HELL itself.

Now, let me show you what I mean. In vs 9 and 10 what we really have discussed is the purpose of spiritual gifts as it relates to Christ. The giving of gifts is to exalt Jesus. He is the head of the church. And in order to prove this point it will show that by how He descended, and how he ascended. (1) Let's take, first of all, His descention. What are we talking about. Turn to I Peter chapter 3. I Peter chapter 3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN IT SAYS THAT CHRIST DESCENDED INTO THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH? I believe that is referring to HELL itself.

This view corresponds with several passages in the Bible. And I Peter is one of those passages. I Peter 3:18 says "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."

Now, notice that please. The last phrase of Vs 18 says that he was made alive in the spirit. The phrase before that says that he was put to death in the flesh. Then Vs 19 says "in which he went"..

Obviously, he did not go in the flesh. Where was his body. It was laying in the tomb. He went in the spirit. Where did he go? ~~Vs 19.. "He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison"~~

Vs 19 says "in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah."

O.K..You say, what in the world is this talking about? '

(1 ) One, Jesus went there not in the flesh but in the spirit. That coincides perfectly with His statement to the thief on the cross, "today you shall be with me in Paradise."

Even though his physical body was placed in the tomb, He, himself, in spiritual presence was there with that thief in Paradise.

WHAT DID HE DO IN THAT PLACE WHERE THE O.T. BELIEVER AND THE UNBELIEVER WERE SEPARATED BY A GREAT GULF? The Bible says that he proclaimed the message to the spirits in prison....meaning "they were captive."

He, also, at the same time takes the believing O.T. saints, captive with him to heaven. And that is where they are right now. With all the rest of us who die and immediately go home to be with the Lord.

WHAT DID HE PROCLAIM? AND WHO ARE THESE SPIRITS?

I believe the spirits are angels...not people. The proclamation is not to tell them the Gospel so that they will be saved. For that would require a Greek word meaning "EVANGELISM." And that word is not there. It is simply a public proclamation of both judgement and announcing His victory.

And who did he announce this to? To Spirits. Hebrews 1:14 says "the angels are ministering spirits." He announced to the spirits who were in prison. The ones who were disobedient at the time of the flood in the days of Noah.

Take your Bibles and turn to 2 Peter chapter 2 and look at Vs 4.... (You are probably wondering if I am going to come out of this message O.K. I am beginning to wonder about the same thing)

2 Peter 2 verse 4.."For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell(that is the Greek word "Tartarus" meaning the "lower parts") Does that make a connection, now, in your minds?

Angels sinned and they were cast into hell "and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment, and did not spare the ancient world but Noah."

Notice, it is the same kind of context as I Peter 3.

Now, turn over to the book of Jude. Three or four books to the right. The book of Jude and look at Vs 6..According to the Bible angels sinned at the time of the universal flood. They are spirits. They are in prison. And at the time Christ died he went down there and preached and proclaimed to them both judgement and victory.

Look at Jude verse 6..(Read Vs 6-7) Very interesting.

Now, turn over to Genesis chapter 6, please. Genesis chapter 6 verse 1...

(Read Vs 1-6)

What is that talking about? Two views...

- (1 ) The sons of God refer to the Godly line of Seth. That is one view.
- (2 ) The second view is that the sons of God in the O.T. is the number one phrase that refers to angels. That angels, spirit beings like demons, inhibited unbelieving men, had sexual intercourse by desire. And this resulted in a tremendous ~~1/4~~ period of immorality and wickedness. And God then brings judgement. God judged those unbelieving angels. And they are now in everlasting chains of darkness says Jude, undergoing eternal fire.

They are an example to all of us as to how God deals with an immoral generation.

So, when Jesus died on the cross He went down there to proclaim to them what they did is going to result in the judgement of God. And they tried to defeat God's purpose. Which was to bring a Messianic line. They tried to confuse it with immorality and sin. They tried to stop God's plan under the encouragement of Satan himself. And Jesus Christ proclaimed to them by his own presence that they lost. The he has the victory.

In fact, Colossians chapter 2 verse 15 is referring to the same thing when it says this: "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them having triumphed over them through Him."

He led captive, a host of captives. He gave gifts to men.

Psalms 68:18 uses that of a victory who has conquered his enemies. He receives the gifts and now gives them back to those who helped him

Well, let's go back to Ephesians 4 and try and put all this together.  
WHAT ARE WE SAYING?

We are saying that when Jesus Christ died on the cross he immediately descended taking the thief with him (who would be a part of the O.T. saints), down into Sheol and Hades where believers and unbelievers are separated by a great gulf. He at that time proclaimed to the lower parts of the earth, he proclaimed to the spirits, those angelical beings who had sinned back before the judgment of the flood. He reminded them that he had the ~~victory~~ victory. He proclaimed his judgment and victory to them.

At the same time he takes the O.T. believers to heaven. That is why, today, when you die you do not go Abraham's bosom, Paradise is not in Sheol, IT IS IN HEAVEN ACCORDING TO 2 Corinthians 12. In this church age when a believer dies he is absent from the body and present with the Lord.

Christ descended. Thus proved who he really was.

And friends, by his ascension he also proves who he is. For the Bible says in Ephesians 4:10 that "He ascended far above all the heavens."

And that means that Jesus is absolutely exalted. He has total victory. He is the conquering KING OF KINGS...LORD OF LORDS.

And we are simply awaiting the day when He will return to this earth in power and great glory. Jesus Christ is coming back. And he is exalted above the heavens. He is above all rule and principalities. He is the head of this church. And we will never have unity until we recognize the priorities of Jesus Christ in everything that we do. He is number one. That is what it is all about.

And not only in his position, but the Bible, also, says in Vs 10, in his PRE-EMINENCE. "That He might fill all things."

It is Jesus that this is all about. You cannot discuss this church without Jesus. Colossians 1:18 says that "he is the head of the body, the church." That in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Jesus should all fullness dwell.



I say to you, as many of you are saying in your hearts right now...~~PRAISE~~  
PRAISE THE LORD. HE IS LORD OF ALL...

And I trust he is your Lord...That you have bowed the knee to Jesus,  
And you have ask him to jcome into ;your life. And you are ndow serving Him  
all the rest of your life.

SHALL WE CLOSE IN PRAYER