

He Is Our Peace

Paul's Letter from Rome to the Ephesians

6. We All Have One Lord

Ephesians 4:1-16

4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." 9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

The urging of spiritual unity

▼ This is a prisoner's plea for unity

Ephesians 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you

▼ There is a Christian calling to unity

Ephesians 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

▼ There is a loving lifestyle of unity

Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

▼ There is a spiritual structure of unity

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

The giving of spiritual gifts

▼ Consider Christ's marvelous grace

Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

▼ Consider Christ's mysterious goings

▲ Christ ascended

Ephesians 4:8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." [from Psalm 68:18]

- ▶ A first-century audience would understand the picture of a triumphal procession: a conqueror leading captives in his train.
 - ▶ That conqueror would return home after a territorial victory and would lead a celebratory parade through the city.
 - ▶ He would lead behind him in chains captives enslaved from the territories which had been conquered.
 - ▶ And he would have the spoils of war with him, treasures *received* from the conquered territories, from which he would *give* gifts.
- ▶ Psalm 68:18, in its original context, painted a picture of God's return to Jerusalem, or perhaps to heaven, after defeating Israel's enemies.
- ▶ Now, the Apostle Paul understands Psalm 68:18 as messianic prophecy and applies it to Christ's spiritual victory.
 - ▶ Christ, after accomplishing victory over sin and death through his life, death, and resurrection, ascended to heaven in a victory parade.
 - ▶ Consider the ascension of Jesus from some of the New Testament descriptions.
 - Mark 16:19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.
 - Acts 1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.
 - Acts 1:10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.
 - Hebrews 1:3 After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.
 - Ephesians 1:20 he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority,
 - 1 Peter 3:22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.
 - ▶ Following Jesus in his ascension parade were his defeated former foes (like Paul) who now followed to share in his victory.
 - ▶ And some believe this ascension parade to have included the transfer of the Old Testaments saints from paradise to heaven.
 - ▶ Paul had written in 2 Corinthians 2:14, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ..."

▲ Christ descended

Ephesians 4:9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?)

- ▶ The descending of Christ to the "lower, earthly regions" has been interpreted in three primary historical contexts:
 - 1) his incarnation, descending from heaven to earth to be born, live, be crucified, and be raised from death (Philippians 2:5-11);
 - 2) his descent to paradise between his crucifixion and resurrection, to preach to the captives (Luke 23:43; 1 Peter 3:19; 4:6);
 - 3) his presence through the descent or sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4; 2:33).

▲ Christ is well-traveled

Ephesians 4:10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

▼ Consider Christ's ministry gifts

Ephesians 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

The move to spiritual maturity

▼ Listen to leaders

Ephesians 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

▼ Serve the saints

Ephesians 4:12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

▼ Grow in godliness

Ephesians 4:13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

▼ Devote to doctrine

Ephesians 4:14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

▼ Link and lift with love

Ephesians 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.