

Series: Psalms
Title: Captivity Captive
Text: Ps 68: 18
Date: August 2, 2020
Place: SGBC, NJ

Psalm 68: 18: Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. 19: Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. 20: He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death. 21: But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.

We know this speaks of Christ. The Holy Spirit tells us that through the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4: 8.

Ephesians 4: 7: But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
8: Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Proposition: Christ conquered all our enemies and has ascended to the right hand of God, receiving all gifts which he gives to those he redeemed.

That means Christ provides for his redeemed church every gift of grace we have. Christ ascended because God is satisfied with his finished work of redemption. He conquered all our enemies—he led captivity captive. Christ gives every gift of grace we have, individually, as well as to his church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

CHRIST'S ASCENSION

Psalm 68: 18: Thou hast ascended on high,

The testimony of God our Father to the universe, that Christ accomplished the work of redemption for his people is Christ ascended on high. He raised him from the dead and Christ ascended on high to God's right-hand declaring God is satisfied with Christ and satisfied with his people in Christ. There is one in our nature that has ascended to God's right hand. It was a real ascension from earth to heaven; angels and men witnessed it. The apostle Peter declared it on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2: 29: Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30: Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31: He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32: This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33: Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 34: For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35: Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 36: Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Believer, this is all our hope and joy.

Hebrews 8: 1:...We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2: A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Romans 8:34: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

CHRIST'S VICTORY

Psalm 68: 18...thou hast led captivity captive:

First, it means he led our captor's captive—such as sin, Satan, the world, death, and every spiritual enemy. Christ conquered and triumphed over all our enemies.

When a king would win a victory, they would have a parade. The captives would be in chains and marched openly down the street before all. That is the picture here of Christ's victory over our captors in Colossians 2: 15.

Colossians 2: 13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15: *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Our victorious King, our Lord, is now enthroned in glory as the Conqueror over sin, hell, and death. Never did any earthly king return from the battlefield, bearing such spoil with such glory and acclamation, as Christ entered his glory. The Captain of our salvation has gotten the victory over every foe of his church.

The cross of Christ was no failure: in the greatest weakness, the lowest low, the most willing laying down of his life—and our Lord demonstrated His greatest strength. He is exalted the highest and crowned the most glorious. He is the death of death for his people and the life of life of his people. Angels cried, "Lift up your heads, O ,you gates; and be you lift up, you everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

Isaiah 40:2: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

This phrase "led captivity captive" also refers to his elect as the captives. He led us who were captive and made us his lawful captives; his willing bondservants. We were all by nature captives: captive under the curse of the law, captive under the power of the devil, captive to death's dominion.

But Christ led us who were in captivity to freedom. He freed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. Christ freed us from the power of the devil by crushing his head—the seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head; he defeated satan. He freed us from death because we were risen in him and sat down in him when he arose from the grave and ascended to heaven.

When Christ ascended on high, he led his captive people free and opened the kingdom of heaven to all those he ransomed from the fall. He literally took us captive by redeeming us. We are his purchased possession (Eph 1: 14). Christ is calling us out of bondage now making us his willing bondservants (Ps 110: 3). Christ is the Way we leave Egypt and make our way across this world's hot desert sand to heavens Jerusalem (Is 35: 8).

Brethren, Christ's triumph over all our enemies is what silences satan's accusations and removes the fear and unbelief which would destroy our peace. Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, Christ overcame. Now the weakest believer must obtain the victory. The battle may go against us, but not the war.

Romans 8: 37: Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

CHRIST'S GIFTS

Psalm 68: 18...thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also

God the Father has given gifts to Christ to give to his people.

Isaiah 53: 11: He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12: Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his

soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Like Joseph put over the storehouses of Egypt, Christ is over the whole storehouse of grace. Pharaoh said, "Go to Joseph!" God the Father says, "Go to my Son!"

Christ received the glory from the Father to send us the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. He gives us a new heart, a new spirit. Faith and repentance are gifts God gave him the glory to give. Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights from Christ our Everlasting Father. Notice, our Psalm. It speaks of gifts Christ give us.

Psalms 68: 12: Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil. 13: Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. 14: When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.

Here is what makes this all the more valuable to you and me. All who God choose, all who Christ redeemed, all to whom he sends the Holy Spirit were *rebellious children*: disobedient and unbelieving.

Titus 3: 3: For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. 4: But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6: Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

What else but pure, free, sovereign grace receives and bestows gifts upon rebels? Contrast the freeness and greatness of these gifts with the character of us to whom these gifts are given. Then we will see the exceeding riches of his grace. Christ gives the gifts of free grace to the ungodly. You and I were so alienated from God in our depraved minds that we considered Christ our enemy. We did not want any grace from him at all. We despised the gospel for declaring salvation is only by the unmerited favor of God's grace.

Yet, Christ magnified his grace by freely giving us these gifts through his blood. That Son we rejected, by the very authority we despised, used that very Authority to gift us with the gifts of his providence. Even as sanctified believers we still fail so miserably and mourn our failures.

Brethren, how painful to know we were rebellious children and that we still live in a body of death! The least thing can stir up unbelief and rebellion in us. We find ourselves murmuring against God's providence when we know God does not make any errors. We murmur against his chastening hand of grace at times when we know it is his faithfulness and love to correct us. I know every believer will agree, to a believer whose conscience is now made tender in God's fear, there is nothing worse than beholding our sin and ingratitude against a holy and wise God who has been so good to us. As believers we say to ourselves,

Romans 2:4: Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

But thanks to our successful Redeemer, he continues to give his gifts of grace and mercy to each one he perfected in his blood. What a word of comfort! It is not our meekness or humility or any goodness in us that makes him pour out his gifts of grace on us. If it were we would boast! We would be lifted up in pride if any gift were of our merit rather than his grace. It is only because God the Father has given all gifts to his Son to give to his people. They are given to you and me simply because of his blood and righteousness. Painful trials make us know that he continues to give more grace in the face of our sin and failings.

Some are even like Saul of Tarsus: called by grace, with gifts given to fit them to preach the Gospel to others. Paul said before he was a blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious; but God! And all in his church are given the gifts of Christ's ministers to preach the gospel to us.

Ephesians 4: 11: And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

CHRIST'S PURPOSE

Psalm 68: 18:...that the LORD God might dwell *among them*.

By this work now we are God's habitation and he ours.

Ephesians 2: 21: In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

John 17: 21: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22: And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world [his elect] may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

This is every believer's testimony concerning our risen Redeemer,

Ephesians 4: 19: Blessed *be* the Lord, *who* daily loadeth us *with benefits*, *even* the God of our salvation. Selah. 20: *He that is our God is the God of salvation*; and unto GOD the Lord *belong* the issues from death. 21: But God shall wound the head of his enemies, *and* the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.

Amen!