

v7-10 – Grace gifts result from the resurrection & ascension

7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." Eph. 4:9 (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

1. Christianity rests on firm foundation

'If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless'

Remember you cannot prove anything to 100% certainty.

There are principles used by historians to test the authenticity of a historical event.

Multiple independent sources, attestation by an enemy, embarrassing admissions, Eyewitness testimony, Early testimony close to the event in question

We see all of these in the evidence for the resurrection

1. Jesus' death by crucifixion

1. non Christian sources (Josephus, Tacitus, Lucian, Talmud)

- a. Josephus 'When Pilate upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing among us, had him condemned to be crucified'
2. Critical Scholars will admit this 'That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be' John Dominic Crossan (Jesus Seminar)

2. Disciples belief that Jesus appeared

Paul, Oral Tradition (creeds etc), Written tradition (early church leaders) all testify

Clement bishop of Rome (AD 30 – 100) who knew the apostles wrote 'Therefore, having received orders and complete certainty caused by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ...'

Paula Fredriksen of Boston University comments 'I know in their own terms what they saw was the raised Jesus. That's why they say and then all the historic evidence we have afterwards attest to their conviction that that's what they saw. I'm not saying that they really did see the raised Jesus. I wasn't there. I don't know what they saw. But I do know as a historian that they must have seen something'

3. Conversion of church persecutor Paul & Jesus' brother James

- a. So what , many people convert? Paul however claims his conversion was due to an appearance of Christ – not second hand. We know for a fact he went on to die for this claim. He is a primary source
- b. As for James. We know he was an unbeliever (mark 3:21) and we know that he converted to faith in Christ due to an encounter with the risen Jesus (1 Cor 15:3-7). Note some scholars argue that this early creed was written within 2 years of Jesus' resurrection.

4. Empty tomb

- a. No non Christian critic claims that a body was produced (eg Celsus second century critic). Instead they point to disciples as having stole the body (but why die for something you know isn't true)

b. Women found discovered the empty tomb. In 1st century women could not even testify in court – it's madness to invent them as witnesses.

For more information see 'The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus' by Gary Habermas & Michael Licona

2. Ascension of Christ unlocked resources of heaven

“as great as the resurrection as past fact, it's significance as present and eternal power is even greater.” Rufus Mosely

The image is of a conquering king who on his return to his homeland would take the riches plundered from the enemy and distribute freely among the people. This is a powerful image. Christ, our conqueror has defeated Satan and the hosts of wickedness and distributed gifts.

Jesus Christ descended to earth, defeated the enemy through his death & resurrection and unlocked the resources of heaven through his ascension.

Who has he conquered?

Col 2:15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him

What gifts has he released?

i) Gift of the Spirit Acts 2:33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

Qu: Have you received the gift of the Holy Spirit. He comes as...

Comforter 'In the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied' (Acts 9:31)

Convictor John 16:8 'The Spirit will convict the world'

Counsellor (helper), When the helper comes..' *John 14:26)

Empowerer 'by the Spirit of God I cast out demons' (Matt 12:28 & Acts 1:8)

Life giver 'It is the Spirit who gives life' (John 6:63)

Possessor of gifts 'varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit' (1 Cor 12:4)

Revealer of Jesus 'The Spirit bears witness about me' (John 16:13)

Teacher 'The Spirit will teach you' (Luke 12:12)

ii) Gifts of people

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

(this is not an exhaustive list of gifts, but these are foundational ones)

a) Apostles (sent ones).

Can refer to the 12 original disciples of Christ who were witnesses of the resurrection (Acts 10:40)

Paul here is speaking of apostles (with a small a) sent out by churches to help start new churches, mobilize churches for mission, lay foundations & care for churches, appoint elders & raise up leaders.

b) Prophets

Not to be confused with OT prophets who spoke with infallible accuracy the words of God (Jeremiah 23:16-32)

Prophets impart the express purpose or words of God into our current situation. Their words are powerful but must be tested (weighed)

c) Evangelists

Effectively reach masses for Christ and equip the church to be witnesses. (A good comparison is a barrister to a witness)

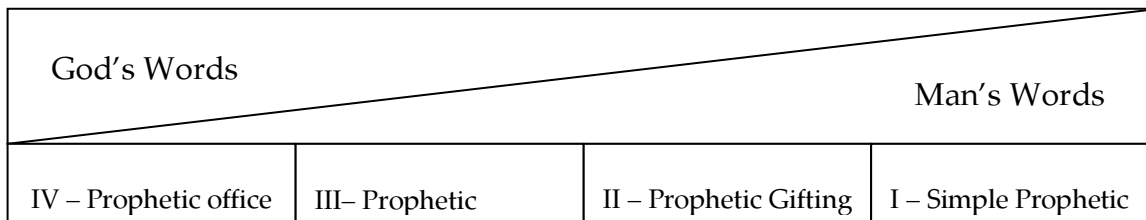
d) Pastors (Shepherds)

Tend and care for the church corporately and individually.

e) Teachers

Help the church discover the principles of life, service and worship etc from God's word.

There are levels of gifting (with all the gifts)



Example from the prophetic

Notice the role of these gifts is

(v12) to equip the church to serve not do all the work themselves

(v12) not to lord it over the church but to serve and build up the church

(v13) to seek unity

(v13) to help bring the church to maturity

(v13) to reveal Christ

(v14) to protect the church from error (particularly from false teaching)

3. To form a new love-fueled, Christ centered community

15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, *16* from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

- God's aim from before the foundation of the world is to create this community – founded on Christ and held together by love
- We see it's fulfillment in Revelation 21:3