

CALL to PRAYER - Pray against "Pride Month" Psalm 12:8 / Prov. 14:34; 28:4 / Is. 3:9 / Jer. 6:15 / Phil. 3:19

## *Ephesians 4:7-10 - Leading Captivity Captive*

*Intro* - "JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!" That is an essential element to any Christian confession. Jesus is Lord of heaven & earth and has the keys to death & hell. Jesus is the King over His creation, and He rules over all His creatures (angelic, human, animate, inanimate...). Jesus is not running for office and hoping to get enough votes to be King...No! Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. Every Christian confesses that Jesus Christ is the Lord God of life, but every Christian also confesses that Jesus Christ is the Lord God of his own life. Jesus rules the world, but He also rules in heart of every believer. Christians bear the name of Christ upon their lives. The Good Shepherd has stamped every sheep; He has branded every believer. Every believer is a captive of Christ, and every believer is also captivated by Christ. Our text today mentions "captives." It also mentions *captives who are taken captive*. This passage describes Jesus Christ as a conquering King who descends from heaven to engage in warfare. In the process of winning the battle He frees many captives. The Lord Christ then ascends back into heaven and these newly freed ones are now His captives. But King Jesus is a gracious Conqueror for He doesn't subjugate His captives as their former master did. He gives gifts all those He has taken captive <sup>Eph. 4:8b</sup>. We live in a world at war. It is at war with God. Rebellious angels have subjugated sinful humanity and both battle against the Holy One of Israel. This cosmic battle has many captives. Many have willfully submitted to the shackles of sin & pride while others have been captured by Christ. The question is not if you are a captive but to whom are you captive.

### *JESUS DESCENDED FOR CAPTIVES*

- There is a hymn in the blue hymnal (#438) called, "Heaven Came Down"
  - That hymn conveys some marvelous truth
    - Our life in the dark shackles of sin
    - Jesus coming down from heaven to bring light, forgiveness and freedom.
  - Jesus descended from heaven - 4:9
    - John 3:13    Heaven came down
    - Jessu descended to set the captives free
- Man is not free.
  - Man is a captive                          Eph. 4:8 - "...He led captive a host of captives...."
  - Sinful man loves to claim his absolute freedom - freedom to do as he wills and be a god to himself. (Satan's original lie - be as God...be a law to yourself...you define good & evil)
    - Man thought sin/rebellion was freedom... it was subjugation
    - Like an addict who becomes captive to that which he freely chooses
  - John 8:34    1 John 5:19    2 Tim. 2:25-26
    - Prov. 5:22    Eccles. 8:8
- Heaven came down to "throw down" the rule of sin and Satan
  - Christ came down to do battle and to bind the "strong man" - Matt. 12:28-29
  - He demonstrated this by casting out demons and freeing people from sin & Satan

- Jesus plundered Satan's house and freed those who were Satan's captives.
  - John 8:36                      He frees them by forgiveness - Col. 2:13-14
  - Jesus raided His rebels in the great work of redemption - Col. 2:15
- Jesus descended for captives.

### **JESUS ASCENDED WITH CAPTIVES**

- Jesus freed those captive to sin & Satan and He makes them His own captives.
  - 4:8 "...He led captive a host of captives..."    "took many captives" (NIV)    "led captivity captive" (NKJV)
  - We are not our own. We are bought with a price.                      1 Cor. 6:19-20
  - Redeemed = purchased.
    - Christians are a double possession - taken in battle and bought with a price
    - Jesus has put His name on us. He marked and branded every believer
- Christians are slaves of Christ...captives of Christ
  - We have been freed from sin & Satan to serve Christ.                      There is a new Master
  - Rom. 6:14 "...sin shall not be master over you..."    Rom. 6:17-18 freed from sin slaves to righteousness
  - Rom. 6:22 - "...having been freed from sin and enslaved to God..."
- Jesus' ascension was a declaration of His rule                      He ascended to the Throne
  - Christian confession - Jesus Christ is Lord. He rules the world and all of life
  - Christian confession - Christ is King and He rules in my life
- Christ's captivity is the ultimate liberty                      (freedom from the power and rule of sin)
  - If the Son sets you free then you will be free indeed - John 8:36
    - Free from sin to serve the Lord Christ.
  - 1 Cor. 6:9-11
    - All Christians used to be captive to those corruptions - (but now rescued - Gal. 1:4)
    - But now we are captive to Christ - Eph. 5:8
  - Christians no longer identify with their sin...they identify with Jesus Christ
    - They are baptized.    Washed new and carry a new name
      - Believers have a new allegiance and serve a new Lord.
- Christians are a captive of Christ, and they are captivated by Christ
  - Christian love Jesus and want to serve Jesus - Eph. 6:6

### **JESUS DISTRIBUTED GIFTS TO CAPTIVES**

- ❖ Christ is such a gracious and compassionate conqueror.
  - Christ has graced every captive He has taken captive.                      Eph. 4:7
  - They are not subjugated...they are inundated with gifts.
- ❖ Jesus gifts everyone of His slaves that He has taken captive -    Eph. 4:8
  - It is a picture of a conquering King returning from a victorious battle
  - He has plundered His enemy and taken his goods & possessions
    - Then He distributes the bounty to the citizens of His country.
  - But Christ makes His captives His citizens and lavished gifts on His slaves.
- ❖ *Jesus descended for captives...ascended with captives...and now distributes to captives.*
  - To every captive Jesus has crafted a gift specifically designed for that individual
  - In His ascension He has distributed grace and gifts....What a King!