

Psalm 68:18
HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE

- I. The figure.
 - A. A king ascends a hill to take his throne.
 - 1. He does so after conquering an enemy which had previously held him a captive.
 - 2. This picture has prisoners following him as he ascends to his throne.
 - 3. Many gifts are given to the king as he ascends approaching his throne – tokens of reward, submission, and honor.
 - B. Two possible occasions for this scene.
 - 1. The elevation of David to the combined throne of Judah and Israel.
 - 2. The bringing of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem.
 - C. Both occasions displayed God's ascending to a position of triumphant rule.
- II. Jesus was victorious after first descending (Eph. 4:8,9).
 - A. He descended from glory.
 - 1. He came down from heaven to assume our flesh and blood.
 - 2. This was necessary in order to do battle with that which held His people captive.
 - B. Sin's captivity is broken only by sin's punishment being endured and satisfied.
 - 1. Jesus entered into the prison house of death and divine wrath when He came in our flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14).
 - 2. And He establishes, by His Spirit, a rule in us so we realize that we do not have to sin, that we can put it off.
 - C. In raising Jesus from the dead, God declares that Jesus (in our flesh and blood) may ascended to God's right hand.
 - 1. He leads a great band of captives, as trophies of His almighty grace – justified.
 - 2. He makes the former captives free to serve Him willingly in His kingdom – sanctified.
- III. The result is covenant communion: "Jehovah God might dwell among them."
 - A. The rebellious (all of us, by nature) are now ruled by Jesus.
 - B. When He dwells with us, He distributes to us the gifts He receives.
 - 1. Paul is inspired to interpret our text this way: Jesus first received gifts and then distributes those gifts to His people.
 - 2. The gifts consist primarily of the means to communicate the gospel as the means of grace (Eph. 4:11).
 - C. Notice that all of Jesus' enemies are forced into submission, as an effect of the gospel.
 - D. Acknowledge Jesus' ascension by putting ourselves under the preaching of the gospel.