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Because He descended and ascended ...

Introduction

- The life of Christ:
4 major events
 - Incarnation — from Heaven to Earth
 - Crucifixion — from Earth to Hades
 - Resurrection — from Hades to Earth
 - Ascension — from Earth to Heaven

Historic Events to be reflected in our personal experiences!

- Teaching of the NT Epistles —
To identify with Christ ...
Crucified ... buried ... risen ... seated with Him
(Rom 6:3-6; Eph 2:6)

All spiritual blessings are because of this identification —
Eph 1:3

Prophecy: Psa 68:18,19 ... *ascended ... gifts ... dwell ...*
“daily benefits”

The primary benefit is **LIBERTY**.
i.e SALVATION (vv19,20)
Eph 4:8 ... *captivity captive ...*

“Captives of Satan become captives of Christ!”
This is a military language!
That’s why Christ is called the “*Captain of our Salvation*”
(Heb 2:10)

Seven Facets of Liberty thro’ Christ —

1. Liberation from Carnalism

- Since Christ *suffered in flesh ...*
no longer to *live in flesh ... lusts ...*
1 Pet 4:1,2,3,4
No more *licentiousness .. lusts ...* (v3)
Under grace (Rom 6:14)
— No more slavery to sin! (vv6,7)
eg) Baptism — What it symbolizes ... Rom 6:3-6
Noah — saved from a world sold to carnality & corruption
(1 Pet 3:20-22)
- Death of Christ — From **penalty** of sin (Past) (Rom 6:23)
Resurrection — From **power** of sin (Present)
“If Christ not risen, still in SIN” (1 Cor 15:3,17)
Return — From **presence** of sin (future) (Heb 9:27,28)
- Christ’s farewell address in Heaven:
“a body ...” (Heb 10:5-7)
He kept it pure & presented it to His Father on the Cross.
Similarly our *bodies a living sacrifice* — Rom 12:1,2
Unlike an animal or bird that’s killed.
What does this mean?
A renewed and transformed thinking in line with
God’s will (Rom 12:2)
Similar to Christ ... *“To do Your will”* (Heb 10:7)

2. Liberation from Materialism

- When Paul met the Risen Christ on the Road ...
“God forbid ... glory except in Cross”
Gal 6:14
“The WORLD is crucified”
→ to me & to it ←

Paul's tears for the *enemies of the "Cross"* —
Phil 3:18,19 (Preachers)

- When "spiritual" blessings satisfy us,
"material" blessings don't allure us — Col 3:1-3
eg) Abraham —
booty of King of Sodom
vs.
bread of King of Salem (Gen 14:18-23)
- The Health & Wealth Gospel — most popular
Jesus spoke against it —
Jn 6:58-66 ... Heavenly *manna* ... *Earthly bread*
(vv60,66) *Many left Him ... Do you also want to go?*
(v68) Peter ... "**Words** of eternal life"
It is in this context Jesus called Judas a devil —
(money-mindedness ... vv67-71)
- Sadducees in the Church (Acts 23:8)
"No faith in resurrection, angel or spirit"
That's why they are "Sad—you—see!"
Most pitiable (1 Cor 15:19,20)
"beasts" (v32)

3. Liberation from Ritualism

- The death of Christ rang the deathbell to ritualistic
religion —
"veil ... torn from top to bottom" (Mt 27:51)
Therefore,
— No special place ... *"wherever two or three"*
Jn 4:20,21,23 / Acts 7:47-49
Temple → House to House (living stones)

— No special person ... *"whoever"*
Priests (1 Pet 2:5,9)

- Don't stitch back the veil —
Decorated altars
Burning of candles/incense
Bowing before Crosses/Crucifixes
Special dresses for clergy ...
These are all *"dead works"* —
Christ's blood *cleanses us* from these (Heb 9:14)
- Implications —
 - a) Throne of Grace open for all —
No Mediator
R.C. — Mary who brought Jesus to us!
Protestants — Preachers who bring us to Jesus!
Jesus entered there FOR us!
He is able to save us to the uttermost ... (Heb 7:25-27)
 - b) Lord's Supper — No ritualistic flavour
No ceremonial importance
Just to *"REMEMBER" Him!* (1 Cor 11:25)
 - c) *Food ... Drink ... Festivals ...*
Rom 14:5,6,9
Shadows vs. Substance
Rituals vs. Reality

4. Liberation from Legalism

- *"Christ is the END of the Law"* (Rom 10:4)
Law x Righteousness of faith ...
(vv6,7) ... *"who will ascend ... descend ...?"*
i.e. You don't need to DO it;
Christ has already DONE it!

*Redeemed us from the CURSE of the law by becoming
a CURSE for us (Gal 3:13)*

Handwriting wiped out ... nailed to the Cross (Col 2:14)

Christ crucified but resurrected ...
Law crucified never to be resurrected ...

The New Covenant not added to the Old;
The New Covenant annulled the Old!

- Paul's legalism thrown away for knowing the "power of resurrection" and "fellowship of suffering" (Phil 3:4-10)

i.e. FIRST — Resurrection power
NEXT — Fellowship of suffering
i.e Power to endure suffering!

Read Romans & Galatians again and again.

Otherwise your "liberty" in Christ will be secretly stolen by false teachers —

Gal 2:4 ... "secretly to spy our liberty"

eg) Special days ... Individual discretion
Special diet ... Individual discretion

"Who are you to judge ... It's Christ who rose!"
(Rom 14:1-10)

Even fasting/tithing ... *New wine ... bottles* (Mk 2:18-22)

5. Liberation from Defeatism

- The defeatist mentality of Peter and the other disciples disappeared when they received the Ascension Gift, the Holy Spirit —
Acts 2:32,33/4:10,13 ... *boldness* ...

If Jesus had not ascended,
the Spirit wouldn't have descended —
Jn 16:7 ... "It is to your advantage I go away"

- Ministerial gifts from the Ascended Lord —
Eph 4:8-12 ... *apostles ... prophets* ...

Gifts for "everyone" —
Rom 12:4-6 ... *gifts of grace* ...

- "All authority ... Go therefore ..." Mt 28:18,19

The gates of Hades could not stop the disciples' enthusiasm —

They went and preached everywhere! (Mk 16:20)
"If Christ is not risen, our preaching is in vain!"

They kept challenging —

"O Hades, where is your victory?" (1 Cor 15:55)

"Therefore ... immovable ... always abounding ...
your labour is not in vain" (v58)

Sing: *Onward Christian soldiers! Marching as to war!
With the Cross of Jesus — going on before!
Christ the Royal Master leads against the foe;
Forward into battle, see His banners go!*

6. Liberation from Factionalism

- Because of Christ's descent & ascent,
no Jew ... nor Greek ... (Col 3:1,11)
Jew or Greek — Racial
Circumcised or uncircumcised — Ceremonial
Barbarian or civilized — Educational
Slave or free — Social

eg) The two diametrically opposite groups —
Jews & Gentiles

"... *middle wall of partition broken down*"

Eph 2:14

"*enmity put to death!*" (v16)

The CROSS: Symbol of Reconciliation

- Christian groups are factionalised by caste...class... colour
It cannot be so, if founded on Christ.
“Is Christ divided?”

Not rallying around personalities —

Paul ... Apollos ... Cephas ...

Rebuke: *“Was Paul crucified for you?”*

(1 Cor 1:10-13)

Preachers/leaders belong to people;

people belong to Christ;

Christ belongs to the Father! (1 Cor 3:21-23)

- The major causes of our weakness & witnesslessness before non-Christians —
Individualism ...
Denominationalism ...
Own empires ...
Charging one another — God knows the hearts!

7. Liberation from Pessimism

i.e. unbelief

- The disciples locked inside the room out of fear ...
The Risen Lord enters the Room ... *Peace!*

He breathed on them to blow away their fear —

Jn 20:19-22

- Christ’s message to **all** the Churches —
Rev 1:17-19 ... *Fear not ... First & Last ...*
dead & raised ... keys of Hades & Death
- Jesus ascended 40 days after Resurrection —
Once again fear & pessimism —
God sent two men in **white** who said —

“Why stand gazing? ...

Go on with the job ...

He will come back ...”

(Acts 1:9-11)

- The Ascension is the pledge of His Second Coming —
(Jn 14:1-3) ... *I’m going to prepare a place for you ...*
let not your heart be troubled ...

Conclusion

Because Christ descended and ascended,

No more Carnalism

No more Materialism

No more Ritualism

No more Legalism

No more Defeatism

No more Factionalism

No more Pessimism

All “isms” have become “wasms!”