

The Inheritance 9-21-03

Joshua 13:33; Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:17

We have been learning about the direct relationship between our behavior here and our heavenly reward in eternity for the past two weeks. (See Jesus' Advice on Investing 1 & 2) We have seen how Scripture clearly declares that our rewards in heaven are based on good works here on earth. God planned those good works for us to step into. He enables us to do them by the power of His Spirit, and then rewards us for our cooperation. We saw the importance in investing in eternity. It is the love of Christ for us that insists that we store up treasure for ourselves in heaven (Matthew 6:20). But so that we don't miss the whole picture, let us briefly look today at what the Bible calls 'our inheritance'.

The idea of inheritance comes from the Old Testament system of leaving land to the family. Each tribe of Israel was allotted a portion of land, and the land was divided up into families. It was on this land that they made their living. You could lease out your land, but you could not sell it permanently. It had to stay in the family. God had given that land to that particular tribe and their descendants in perpetuity. Inheritance always had to do with their portion of the Promised Land.

There was one exception to the rule, and that was the Levites. They were the tribe of priests, and they did not receive a section of land. Instead, God describes their inheritance in three ways. The first description of their inheritance is the offerings to the Lord (Joshua 13:14). A portion of the offerings of the people supported them. Secondly, their service to the Lord is their inheritance (Joshua 18:7). Generation after generation had the privilege of special service in the Tabernacle and Temple. Third, and by far the greatest, the Lord is their inheritance (Joshua 13:33).

One more type of inheritance is that belonging to God. God's inheritance is the people. ⁵³ *For you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance, just as you declared through your servant Moses when you, O Sovereign LORD, brought our fathers out of Egypt.* 1 Kings 8:53 (NIV) People get land; Priests get offerings, service and God Himself, and God gets people.

Let me ask you what you'd like to inherit? A million or two dollars, a house on the beach, or are you a little more practical and prefer a business that's growing and has healthy profit each year? The Children of Israel looked forward to having the family land. God looks forward to having you in His presence. The Old Covenant is full of pictures for us to understand spiritual realities. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 15:4 (NIV) *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

Commented [notes1]: ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. Matthew 6:20 (NIV)

Commented [notes2]: ¹⁴ But to the tribe of Levi he gave no inheritance, since the offerings made by fire to the LORD, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as he promised them. Joshua 13:14 (NIV)

Commented [notes3]: ⁷ The Levites, however, do not get a portion among you, because the priestly service of the LORD is their inheritance. Joshua 18:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes4]: ³³ But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as he promised them. Joshua 13:33 (NIV)

So what is the reality that the inheritance of the Israelite represented? ¹ *The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves.* Hebrews 10:1 (NIV) If the shadow is the inheritance of land, what is the reality in heaven? What is the New Covenant reality?

Even under the Old Covenant, the prophet Daniel was told that one day he would rise to receive his inheritance (Daniel 12:13). What is this inheritance that is given to God's sheep? When Jesus taught about the judgment to come He said, ³⁴ *"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'* Matthew 25:34 (NIV)

Jesus told His sheep that they were to receive an inheritance. Unlike rewards, the inheritance seems to be for all God's sheep. The shadow indicates it is a place for us. It is described as a kingdom prepared since the creation of the world. Peter tells us it is an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade (1 Peter 1:3-4). From that we can see it is an eternal inheritance. The Apostle Paul tells us it comes by a promise, not by being obedient to a set of rules (Galatians 3:18). Both Peter and Paul describe those who trust in Christ as being heirs of the promise made to Abraham (Acts 3:25, Galatians 3:29). God had promised to bless the world through His seed, which was Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16).

Now lets put the pieces of the puzzle together. The inheritance is for all God's sheep, it is eternal, it is a kingdom, and it comes by the promise made to Abraham. Let me add another verse that will put the pieces together. ¹³ *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.* Ephesians 1:13-14 (NIV)

The inheritance is to be included in Christ. He is our Promised Land. When you believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit. He was a deposit. When you get a deposit, it is a partial payment, a little bit of the whole. Do you see? It is like a security deposit that promises the full amount at a time in the future.

We believers are also priests unto God (1 Peter 2:9). Like the Levites, our inheritance is the Lord. He has given us Himself. Not only did He die for us, He ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). If you have Jesus, you have eternal life! He is life.

As much as you are in Christ today, you have only experienced a deposit. As much as you are ruled by the reigning Christ, you have barely experienced the Kingdom. The day is coming when you will receive Him fully, when you will be in

Commented [notes5]: ¹³ "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance." Daniel 12:13 (NIV)

Commented [notes6]: ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, 1 Peter 1:3-4 (NIV)

Commented [notes7]: ¹⁸ For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. Galatians 3:18 (NIV)

Commented [notes8]: ²⁵ And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' Acts 3:25 (NIV)

Commented [notes9]: ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:29 (NIV)

Commented [notes10]: ¹⁶ The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. Galatians 3:16 (NIV)

Commented [notes11]: ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

Commented [notes12]: ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Hebrews 7:25 (NIV)

the Kingdom to the extent that nothing you do will be out of His perfect will, and nothing in that realm will be in rebellion toward Him. That is our inheritance.

That is more than enough! To be in the unhindered fullness of His glory will fill your heart and mind and soul with such overwhelming love that all you will want to do is worship and serve Him.

But wait; there is something I have to add. You are also a co-heir with Christ. *¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.* Romans 8:17 (NIV)

As an heir of God, a co-heir with Christ what do we inherit? *^{21b}All things are yours, ²²whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours, ²³and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.* 1 Corinthians 3:21b-23 (NIV) You will inherit all things.

People fight, bicker, and give their lives to gain some little tiny piece of the things of the world. The saints of God forsake the world but will inherit everything! That, too, is our inheritance. Every believer inherits Christ Himself and all created things. But the passage didn't stop there. The Apostle Paul went on to describe one more conditional inheritance. If we suffer with Him, we will share in His glory. Like special rewards, this promise has conditions. It is for those who suffer with Him. Jesus has given Himself to us. That is hard for me to grasp, but to share in His glory is entirely beyond my comprehension. I could try to describe it, but I would fall far too short and do the very idea injustice. So I will return to that which every believer inherits, Jesus!

What is He to me? The infallible Word of God declares that He is my Lord and my God, my Savior and Salvation, my righteousness and peace. He's my Life, my helper, my Liberator, my Sanctifier. He is my High Priest. Oh, He is the mighty God, my Advocate, my King and yet my friend. He delivers and defends, leads and shepherds me. He is my source and Provider, my strength and confidence, my healer, my shield, my wisdom. He's my fortress and strong tower, and as we saw last week, He's my Rewarder. He's my Counselor, the propitiation for my sins, my teacher, my rock and guardian. He's my mediator and intercessor, my light, my glory, my joy, my victory, my banner, my Passover, my preserver, my "Yes" to all of God's promises. He's my judge, and He is my resurrection!

Did you notice I said MINE? I inherited Him! I can only speak for myself. You must speak for yourself. When I stepped into the death of Jesus, I rose again with Him. I became a co-heir with Him of all things. I have received Him and all these things He is to me, to the extent that I am able to receive them. But one day, one day my eyes will see my King and behold His glory. I'll go from deposit to full payment. I'll go from shadow to reality.

²⁶*And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;*

²⁷*I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another.*

How my heart yearns within me! Job 19:26-27 (NIV)

Then He will be all those things to me without the hindrances I have here. *I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine.* Song of Songs 6:3a Are you His this morning?

That is just a glimpse of what it means to inherit the Lord, but the Levites had another inheritance. They got to serve. When you realize all that Jesus is to you, all that God has done for you, you are desperately going to desire to serve Him. That is part of our inheritance. ³*And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:* ^{4a}*And they shall see his face;* Revelation 22:3-4a (KJV) We may shy away from service now, but then it will be a blessed inheritance. If you wanted to sit around with harps and rest, you're in for a surprise. There will be service to perform for the One we love with our whole heart. We are going to be busy serving and loving every minute of it.

Believer, we have an inheritance, and if you will go even further, you will have rewards and even share in His glory. If you haven't yet decided to trust in Jesus Christ, and let Him be all those things to you, why not do it right now. He can be yours if you will be His.

I want to invite forward to the front pews anyone that feels called to declare that God has called them to be a part of this church and would like to become a member, and I have an information sheet on joining the church to give you. But infinitely more important, if you are here this morning and have never said "yes" to the love of Jesus, if you have never asked for forgiveness of your sins, or never made a public declaration that you are His, don't put it off. None of us knows what will happen this afternoon. While the Spirit of God is working on your heart, become His, so that He can become yours. Become His, and you will have all that He is for your inheritance.

You may have been away from the Lord for some time. God has been drawing you back, and you want to recommit your life to Him. Make it public so your family in Christ can help keep you accountable. Come and sit on the front pew while we stand together and sing.