***Children of God, No.9
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This morning, we are in Romans chapter 8 on our section of verses 14-17 on the subject of The Children of God. This is segment number 9.

**The Inheritance of the Believer**

As we have seen from this particular passage the members of the human race who have turned to God for salvation through Jesus Christ are now definitely declared to be now and irrevocably forever the children of God. These spiritually born again people are furthermore declared to be the heirs of all that the sovereign God possesses. The heirs of God are furthermore joint heirs with Jesus Christ whom Hebrews 1:2 tell us has been made the heir of all things. To be in Christ is to be a joint heir with Him. And as we pointed out, it's not just that you are an heir of God, because that might mean you only have part of certain things from God; you are a joint heir with Jesus Christ which means that you are the inheritor of the totality of what God has along with Him.

Eternal life, of course, is a part of that heavenly inheritance, but it is not all of it. And we do want to stress the fact that eternal life is part of our eternal inheritance. The full execution of that life - that ultimate sanctification is a thing of the future - that is part of the inheritance, but the inheritance is more than that.

Acts 26:18 says, "To open their eyes," describing the ministry of Paul to the Gentiles. "To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in me." Forgiveness from sin and the eternal life which it brings is part of that inheritance, but it is not all of it. The inheritance preserved in heaven for each Christian is furthermore not the same thing as the rewards which he will receive for his Christian service on earth, though again we must stress that those rewards are indeed a part of that inheritance that we look forward to receiving. So, the concept of inheritance is a very broad idea.

Colossians 3:24 says, "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." You will receive reward as part of the inheritance. So, we have eternal life as part of the inheritance. We have rewards that are part of that inheritance. We have as position of God's heirs received something that is entirely the product of God's grace which sovereignly chose certain ones of us to become His heirs. God the Holy Spirit who now indwells every Christian is the divine collateral, the Bible says, for insuring our eventual possession of this heavenly inheritance. Because God the Holy Spirit indwells you, He is the collateral insuring that you'll have this inheritance in heaven someday, and thus, you see, that indwelling of the Holy Spirit is another evidence of the security of the salvation of the believer. It is proof of eternal security. If you did not have the Holy Spirit, then you could possibly lose your salvation again.

So, we look further now at the details, the magnificent details of this concept of the inheritance of the Christian in Jesus Christian. In addition to our eternal life, in addition to our rewards, our inheritance includes the exercising of the enormous authority that the Lord Jesus will exercise as the governing sovereign over the whole world during the millennium. Now, power is something that God designed for human beings to exercise way back in the Garden of Eden. This is exactly what we were told that God designed creation as something over which Adam and Eve were to rule. They were to exercise authority over it. Through sin, they lost it, but through the person of Jesus Christ, all that is going to be restored to us again.

**Authority During the Millennium**

So, I remind you that there's an era coming in the not-too-distance future where for 1000 years, there will be this world going on just as it is now but under direct authority and rule of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Bible tells us a great deal about that from the Old Testament on through the New Testament.

For example, in Isaiah 9:6-7, we have that famous Christmas passage, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given [He had to be born as a child, but He already was a Son, so He was given to us as such]: and the government shall be upon his shoulder [world government]: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

Now, that was what the Jewish people were looking forward to. They were told that God would send a ruler descendant from David who would establish peace and justice and righteousness upon this earth, and He would rule in that kind of kingdom forever. When the Lord Jesus was about to be born, His mother Mary was informed that this passage in Isaiah was now to be fulfilled through her. In Luke 1:32, we read, "He [this child to be born of Mary, the Lord Jesus] shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

Now, when you read the Old Testament prophecy, and you read this New Testament prediction of fulfillment, you really have to pity the amillennialist and reformed theology which muddles around still to this very day in its pathetic, medieval concepts of a throne in heaven and of a kingdom in heaven having nothing whatever to do with this earth. But the Bible is very explicitly clear. There is a kingdom, there is an authority, there is a power coming from God to be exercised by this Savior here upon this earth, and it is not the throne in heaven. It is the throne of David.

In the last book of the Bible, Revelation 19:16, this is further declared concerning Christ when He returns a second time. "And He hath on his vesture and on His thigh a name written, 'King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords.'" And that's how the world is going to see Him the next time. Furthermore, we are told in Revelation 19:15 that the extent of this rule will be worldwide, world government. "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with the rod of iron [no hanky-panky, ultimate authority]: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

And He's going to trample them like a man who's going to make wine trampling grapes so that the Bible is very clear that He is going to have absolute, worldwide political power. He is truly going to establish world government. Now, when He does this, it's going to be a government different than anything the world has ever seen. It's what the world has always hoped for, but this time, they'll pull it off. It will be a government of righteousness and peace.

Isaiah 11:4 therefore says, "But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: He shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." Verse 9 says, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." People are going to know about this God. They're going to have doctrinal information about Them, and His authority will be absolutely enforced. There will be no yielding on that account, on any account whatsoever. Evil people are going to be brought in line.

And so, in Isaiah 2:4, the result is this concerning this world, "And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

So, the Bible says when the Lord Jesus comes to rule, He will establish peace. He will establish righteousness, and it will be permanent. No more war. No more evil. No more mafia. No more people doing what is wrong and getting away with it. No more corrupt politicians. No more corrupt businessmen. No more corrupt anything. If you are, you will be dealt with. And for those who do violate this authority of this king, the penalty will very quickly be that of death itself.

Now, all of this is background just very briefly to alert you to the fact that Jesus Christ is going to be the king of the world. He's going to be the ultimate ruler. And because you and I in the church are His bride, we will share that reign over mankind in the Millennium. We actually, in fact, will be His administrators. And when we talk about our inheritance, we are talking about this in part that we are going to run the world. And most of us think we could run it better than the people who end up running it, and in the millennium, you will be absolutely certain that you will run it better.

Now, I must pause to give us a little bit of a warning here. This is a very exciting thing, and it has been a very exhilarating study for us to realize what God ahead for us in that inheritance. And indeed, being the administrators of the world along with Jesus Christ is indeed part of our inheritance in heaven. But there is a difference of extent of our administration. There is going to be a difference of what kind of authority different believers receive.

Because one of the things that is going to be taken into account is, what did you do with your life now? What did you do with the treasures I gave you? What did you do with the time I gave you? What did you do with the spiritual gifts I gave you? What did you do with that short little span of life that I gave you to live that you thought was going to be so long and go on forever because it went slowly when you were younger but as you got older, you wondered why the time was going faster. And the older you got, the shorter the years got. And suddenly, you became aware of the fact that a life has been wasted. A life has not been anything like what it could have been.

**Zacchaeus**

Turn to Luke 19, and let's look at the case of a fellow that the call "Shorty" because he was so short. His name was Zacchaeus. Luke 19, "And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the tax collectors, and he was rich."

This man Zacchaeus was one of the hated people in Jewish society because he was a representative of the Roman government. He collected the taxes from the Jews. And usually, tax collectors were very well-paid, and most of them managed to be able to embezzle some of the tax income that they were collecting so that they enhanced their wealth considerably.

So, when we come into the picture of Zacchaeus in the scripture, the first thing we are aware of him is that he is a very wealthy man, and consequently, he has a lot of power and a lot of influence and a lot of authority here in the city of Jericho. But he has an interest as he hears about this famous man Jesus coming through town. "And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not because of the crowd, for he was little of stature."

When Zacchaeus got in the crowd, he was a short man, so he couldn't see. So, he decided as being a tax collector, he knows how to resolve problems. He's an expeditor. "He ran ahead, and he climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was to pass that way." He climbed up in the tree over the path and said, "Now I can have a good view."

"And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.'" And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they [that is, the crowd standing around] saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that was a sinner." So Zacchaeus was indeed an unbeliever. He was indeed what the rest of society considered low-life just because he was a tax collector.

"And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: 'Behold, I propose to give half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold [which, the Mosaic Law, you will remember, said, 'If you steal from a person, you must return fourfold to him.'] And Jesus said unto him, 'This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham." And the Lord Jesus here indicated to us that Zacchaeus had done a little more. He had now actually trusted in Christ as personal Savior, and that is indicated to us by this description of Zacchaeus becoming a son of Abraham.

In Galatians 3:7, we are told who the real Jews are. Galatians 3:7 says, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the sons of Abraham." They are the true Jews. There are many racial Jews today, but they are not the sons of Abraham in God's sight. The true sons of Abraham are the Jews who have received Christ as Savior. So, when Jesus says, "This man Zacchaeus is now a true son of Abraham," it was His way of saying, "He has trusted in me as Savior; he is now born again."

**Parable of the Ten Minas**

Now, Zacchaeus in the immediately flush of the joy of having sins forgiven and of the relief of his soul concerning this issue has made a very dramatic statement. "I will now hereby propose," and he says this to all the people standing around him, "that I am going to give 50% of my vast holdings to the benefit of the poor as a contribution to God's work. And I will review my case histories, and if I find that I have cheated anybody in the collecting of taxes, I will restore four times what I took from him improperly."

Now, that's quite a statement. That's quite a proposition. Now, after that initial flush of salvation joy may have passed, Jesus was aware of the fact that Zacchaeus might have second thoughts about this. He might wonder whether this was a smart thing to do. After all, his power in Jericho was because he had money. This was a position of wealth that gave him a position of power. And he might have wondered whether that was a wise thing to do. And consequently, Jesus immediately proceeded to give instruction to Zacchaeus concerning eternal inheritance and concerning the foolish choice that one can make relative to the extent and the depth of that inheritance in heaven. Zacchaeus had at his disposal the opportunity to enormously expand and enhance his heavenly inheritance in terms of the rewards, or he had an opportunity to blow himself completely out of the water.

And so, we follow now with a parable of the ten minas. A mina was an amount of money that took a man about three months to earn. It's hard to put that in modern terms in actual numbers, but if in ancient times a person would work for three months, that was three months wages: a mina. So, while it was a substantial amount to earn, it was not in itself all that big an amount. So, Jesus proceeds to tell him the story, this parable of the ten minas, to encourage Zacchaeus to seek for the real power of inheritance in heaven. He had power in Jericho, but he says, "There's power greater for you in heaven if you play it right." Now, the power that Zacchaeus had sought up to this time had been sin nature power. Now, he could seek the power that God intended him to have but in God's plan.

And so, in verse 11, Jesus says, "And as they heard these things, he added and spoke a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." One of the misconceptions that was going around was that Jesus the King was here. Some of them indeed recognized Him as having the credentials of the King, and they said, "Ah, here's finally the Davidic kingdom. The millennial kingdom is about to come." And Jerusalem was aroused with this excitement and expectation, and Jesus wanted to put this thing in perspective to say, "Wait a minute. I, the King, am here, but the kingdom is going to be delayed because something else is going to happen first. First, I'm going to die for the sin of the world. Then I'm going to raise up a peculiar body of believers for myself personally who will be my bride, the church, and then I will come back."

And so, He gives this parable of the nobleman going to a far country to arrange for receiving a kingdom. "And He said therefore, 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.'" Now, the kingdom, this is, of course, a symbolic reflection upon Jesus Christ, the one who is going to heaven to await the kingdom that He's coming back to receive. Now, this was done in ancient times. Herod the great, for example, came to his kingly authority of Judea by the fact that he went to Rome and he appealed to the Emperor for the authority to be king of Judea and was granted that authority and came back. Those who resisted and objected to Herod's being the king were then disposed of by Herod with the authority that he had now received from Rome. So, this is the background of this that everybody understood.

Verse 13, "'And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten minas, and said unto them, 'Occupy till I come.''" What he did was to call his servants, and he gave each of them the same amount of money, and said, "Occupy," which translated means, "Do business, invest until I come back." Ok, now everybody starts off even. Everybody has something to invest. Everybody is told what to do.

Now there are some people, we'll see in verse 14, do not like the idea of this man becoming king over them. "'But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.''" And they, exactly as others, objected to the Lord Jesus coming to reign over them. Hebrews 1:13 tells us that He is in heaven seated upon the Father's throne until all His enemies are made His footstool, and they are going to be removed for this resistance. In any case, the Lord's servants are told to do business during His absence with the resources He has given them. And, of course, you can see how the parable applies to the resources of the spiritual gifts that we Christians have today. Now, the servants at the Lord's return were to report to Him about their investments, which again, you see, was a picture of the judgment seat of Christ where Christians report in.

So, verse 15 of Luke 19 says, "'And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom [he was granted the kingdom], then he commanded these servants to be called unto him.'" So now, here we are. We are standing at the judgment seat of Christ. The Lord has returned. He is prepared now to begin ruling on this earth during the millennium.

"'He called these servants to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, 'Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.' [The first man came up and says, "I multiplied it to ten pounds." The Lord says, "Wow, that's great. A thousand percent return!"] And he said unto him, 'Well done, good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little [which, a mina was comparatively little], have authority over ten cities. [I am king of the whole realm, and I establish you as the ruler of ten cities, which suggests to us some of the things that are going to be the rewards that we Christians have in heaven.]''"

"''And the second came, saying, 'Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.' [He didn't do as well, but the Lord said to him also,] 'Be thou also over five cities.''" He is grated authority over five cities. He is not commended as the first man was, but he too has been given an inheritance, so to speak, relative to what he did with what God gave him to work with.

"'And another came, saying, 'Lord, behold, here is thy mina, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.' And he saith unto him, 'Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow.''"

This man comes along and says, "I don't have anything. I still have what you gave me, but that's all I've got. I didn't do anything with it. Here it is. You've got it back." Now, at the judgement seat of Christ, there are going to be many, many multitude millions of Christians - you may count on it like that - who are going to stand there and say, "Here is the spiritual gift you gave me. That's all I've got. Here it is. I bring it back to you." By the sheer fact that churches are so negligent, and preachers are so criminal in failure to emphasize the issue of personal rewards to alert Christians how much is riding upon that doctrine alone for them. And their eternity is going to be affected by it. To permit people to have that narrow, corrupted view of just this life and riding it on that. This servant comes along and says, "No return. Here it is."

"'Why then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with interest? And he said unto them that stood by, 'Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.''"

The Lord condemned this man in the presence of all these people for his failure to invest as he had been commanded. So that when he came into the Lord's presence, he had made no advancement with what had been given to him. This is the reason the Bible tell us that some people will stand in great humiliation at the judgment seat of Christ. There's going to be terrible, terrible shame in that throne room for multitudes of Christians.

Mark 8:38 puts it this way. The Lord says, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." You are ashamed of Jesus Christ. You hide the fact you're a Christian. You do not get involved in standing forth as a voice for righteousness. You do not oppose and resist that which is evil. You condone it. You go along with it. You do not stand up against it. You're ashamed to be known as one of those goody-two-shoe Christians. Jesus Christ says, "I just want you to remember that one day, I'm going to stand before the Father, and I'm going to be ashamed of you, and I'm not going to promote you. I am going to rebuke you right there in front of all the people who know you."

In 1 John 2:28, the same idea is stressed. 1 John 2:28, "And now, little children, abide in Him [that is, walk in temporal fellowship with Him; that's what it means to abide in Him]; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at his coming." Plenty of Christians are going to be very, very much ashamed at His coming. The unproductive servant here has taken away from him the assets that God gave him to multiply and with which to serve and to establish the expansion of his own inheritance in heaven.

Now, notice what happens. Verse 24 said, "Take it from him. Give it to the man that showed he is trustworthy - this man here that multiplied 1000%." "'(And they said unto him, 'Lord, he's already got ten minas.') [Jesus says,] 'For I say unto you, 'Everyone who hath shall be given [the productive will receive more]; and from him that hath not, even which he hath shall be taken away from him [and from the unproductive will be removed even that which he hath].'"

Now, once this servant has lost his minas, he might have thought to himself, "I really played the fool. This is the stupidest thing I could have done, and I'm going to change my way." But how could he? His assets were removed. And this is the shock that comes into the lives of Christians that finally decide to get with it, to get moving, to get investing, to get operating, to start living for eternity. And something comes into their lives, and they are cut down, and they can't do it. Their health is gone. Their wealth is gone. Their opportunity is gone. The openings are gone. Whatever is needed is gone, never to be returned again. The golden gate slammed shut in their face.

And that is the point of this parable. This is a very sobering verse. The inheritance that might have been so greatly expanded has now not only been removed, reduced but has been closed against that believer. The warning for Zacchaeus in this parable is the warning to all of us to the extent of the authority that we rightfully should share with Jesus but which may be greatly limited by our own stupidity. As far as those who are the enemy's, verse 27 says, "'Those enemies who would not that I should reign over them, bring them here, and slay them before me.'" The enemies were forthright dispatched without any mercy upon them for having resisted the Savior.

So, Zacchaeus was told, "You're born again. You've made a dramatic statement as to what you're going to do with half your wealth, how you're going to play square and make right anything that needs to be made right. And I want to warn you: follow through. Don't compromise. As the days go by, you're going to look and say, 'Boy, this is a lot of money. I don't think I should have said that. I don't think I really want to do that.' Zacchaeus, you may think that hanging onto this will give you some power and some base of authority, but you're wrong. It's going to be gone. It's foolish. Put it out there. That basis of authority no one will ever be able to take from you, and it will expand your inheritance."

**Christians Sharing in God's Judgment**

Furthermore, we Christians are going to share with Jesus Christ the power of judging all of God's rational creatures. There are two kinds of rational creatures that God has made: angels and human beings. In Hebrews 2:5-10, we are told about the fact that those of you who are sitting in this room who are born again believers are going to pass judgment upon Satan and his demon angels.

Hebrews 2:5, "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, of which we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.' For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels [in His humanity] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

So that through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, we human beings who start off a little lower than angels in our capacity are elevated with Christ above them. We who are now in this lower status are going to pass eternal judgment on the devil and his whole gang.

1 Corinthians 6:3 tells us that explicitly, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" We Christians are actually going to judge angels.

And in the book of Jude, verse 6, that same thought is stressed, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." There is going to be a great judgment of the angels, these here referring to those of Genesis 6 who cohabitated with human women. These would be under our authority to judge.

Satan and the demons know that we Christians are destined to pass ultimate judgment on them. You are going to make the decision to remove them from this earth and to put them into the lake of fire, and I can assure you that there is nothing that Satan and his demons want to do more than to make the judge look bad. And that's why they try to make us look corrupt by causing us to sin so they can make fun of those that are going to be their judges.

Furthermore, we will share with God the authority of ruling and judging human beings. In Ezekiel 20:33-38, we have the description of how we will judge with Christ at the end of the tribulation all the unsaved Jews that are left after the tribulation. In Matthew 25:31-32, we have the description of judging the unsaved Gentiles, separating the sheep from the goats. In Revelation 20:11-15, we read about that sobering, ultimate experience of all the unsaved of the human race standing before the great white throne judgment. Christ is seated upon that throne passing judgment of where people will be spending eternity, passing the judgment of the extent of their punishment. We, in Christ, are going to share that authority.

Revelation 20:11 says, "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." We Christians are there exercising that judgment.

Acts 10:38-42 and John 5:22 further add that point of our being those who judge. Christians as the bride of Christ are, of course, going to therefore share with Him in this judgement. And in 1 Corinthians 6:2, we are told that, "Do ye not know that the saints will judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matter?"

**Sharing the Holiness of Jesus**

Furthermore, we share in this inheritance not only a degree of authority of ruling over the Gentile world in the millennium, not only do we exercise the ultimate judging of those relative to their eternal destiny in terms of angels and human beings, but we share in that inheritance the holy character of Jesus Christ.

1 John 3, which is good news to any thoughtful Christian. 1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is." Part of our inheritance is to be made in the holy character of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:22 adds this about that character, describing it as the fruit of the spirit as love and joy and peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. All of those are the character of Christ.

**Sharing the Preeminence of Jesus**

And another thing that our inheritance includes is our sharing the preeminence of Jesus Christ in the universe - the outstanding preeminence. In Colossians 1, beginning at verse 17, we read, "And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence."

In Ephesians 1, beginning at verse 22, we add, "And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." So, in the world to come, you and I as believers in the church age are going to stand as the preeminent saints of all ages. That's why as members of the royal family of God, we say we are the aristocracy. We are the supreme, preeminent believers, far above the Jews.

**The Qualification of Receiving God's Inheritance**

Now, all of the inheritance of the Lord Jesus that God has prepared for us in heaven that includes all these different elements is contingent upon one very important fact, and that needs to be made clear. Very often, people are given a great image of what God has for them or the inheritance in the future, but it is not tied as directly as it must be to the basic qualifications, and that is that you be born again. As we have seen in Romans 8, we are in this position of being God's heirs simply because we are the children of God.

Colossians 1:12 says, "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." The inheritance that God has does not go to unbelievers. Unbelievers are not included. The general good person of our society is totally excluded.

Galatians 5:21 says, "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, and revellings, and the like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Here are characteristics that are true of the unbeliever. This kind of person does not inherit the kingdom of God and the inheritance of heaven. The answer to controlling this kind of conduct on the part of the Christian, of course, is the filling of the Holy Spirit. And in Galatians 5:16-17, we have that told to us. The Christian is in Christ, so he has satisfied the standard God requires of absolute righteousness. And verse 18 tells us that, in [Galatians] 5, "But if ye be led of the Spirit [if you are a born again person], [then] ye are not under the [condemnation of the] law."

These characteristic evils here are very sobering, but they describe the world, the unbeliever, and he does not come into this kind of inheritance. Notice these characteristics in Galatians 5:19. Four types of sexual sins characterizing the unbeliever. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, [adultery: illicit sex between married people; fornication: illicit sex between unmarried people] uncleanness [perverted sex], lasciviousness [sensual, mental evil]."

Galatians 5:20 give four categories of sin. Sin toward God: idolatry. Sin toward ourselves: sorcery, which is the use of drugs. And then sin toward others. Hatred: mental attitude murder. Strife: creating discord between individuals. Jealousy: coveting what others have. Wrath: emotional outbursts of anger. Factions: organized conflict between rival groups for selfish ambitions. Seditions: causing splits so as to undermine the body of Christ. And then, there is the sin towards scriptures. Heresy: the perversions of doctrinal truth.

And then verse 21, two categories of evil. The inner category. Envy: desire to destroy what another has that you cannot have. The outer category. Murder: first degree homicide. Drunkenness: intoxication so inhibitions are lost. Revellings, carousing, and orgies, sensual indulgence, and the like; it's all kind of evils of this kind.

And so, Galatians 5:21 ends up, "They who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Paul warns us that those who practice this as a lifestyle, and that's what we mean. Sure, any Christian can do any one of these things, but the point is, "they that do such things." And it's important that you know the word that is used here. It's the Greek word "prasso," and that means "practice." Those who practice such things. They do this as a controlling evil, this as a habit of life. We know that because in the Greek, it's present tense. That means it's a continual habit. This is the way you do it. It isn't just that occasionally you fall into this sin.

In John 3:20, the same word is used. John 3:20, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light [doeth evil means as a habit of life, this is your characteristic conduct], neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved [a pattern resulting in a corrupt lifestyle]." Now, the consequences to the unbeliever, Paul says, "If this is your normal way of living as your pattern and habit, it is because you are not a born again person, and you will never inherit the kingdom of God." There are times when Christians do these things, but they are not the normal pattern of our lives.

In 1 John 3, this is very poignantly stressed. 1 John 3:9-10 says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." Now, people who are not taught in the Word of God have taken that verse, and they have pursued the hope of becoming sinless. They say, "You see, if you're born again, you will stop sinning." But again, we fall back to the fact that the Greek word uses this word, "prasso," present tense, means that it's not a habit that you practice as a controlling way of life.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin [as a way of life]; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God [he cannot sin again as a habitual pattern of life]. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." So that the Bible is clear that those whose normal pattern of life is sinning in these terrible things is doing that because he's not born again. And you kid yourself if you think you are.

So, the inheritance of God is real for those only in the family of God. And when we step out of line, God the Holy Spirit says, "No, you can't sin as a normal pattern. I bring conviction, I bring misery, and I bring discipline." It's different for us. But the inheritance of God in heaven is for born again people only who will be made like Jesus Christ with whom they share God's possessions. Included in that result will be the inheritance of a perfect body, that perfect, glorified body. Immortal, never to die again, never to sin again.

So, when the Apostle Paul in Romans 8 says that if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs with God, and joint heirs with Christ, that inheritance in heaven includes our authority of ruling with Christ but only to the extent of our investment in eternity. Christians are going to look back on their lives and wonder how they could have been so dumb, how they could have been so short-sided. Especially those who died young, those who didn't have many years. And they will look back with greater regret that their prime time was wasted instead of invested for eternity. And they'll be out there. And here's some little Joe po-dunk nobody is going to be ruling in authority over cities while the Christian who had the great opportunity, great spiritual gifts here, is going to be a street sweeper in heaven. And you have to make your decision, because it will affect your eternity.

These Christians who are forever going to do something for God's work when God's work needs the doing now, today. These Christians who forever are going to open doors of opportunity someday when the get around to it, but those doors of opportunity need to be now. Christians who are going to serve in some capacity they have sometime down the line who never get around to it when it needs to be done now.

The parable to Zacchaeus was a carefully calculated piece of instruction to warn this man to carry through with his intention to invest for eternity. That is what we Christians will share with Christ: the authority of ruling to the extent of our application. We will share that enormous responsibility of deciding where rational creatures spend eternity. We will be able to do this because we will be absolutely perfect in our bodies, and in our minds, and in our souls as Jesus Christ is. And we will share with Jesus Christ that preeminent role that He will play in the millennial world, all the world looking to the political center of Jerusalem, and we, the leading authorities with Him. But only if you're in the family of God. Only if you're born again. If you are, then get with it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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