

An Inheritance For You

by J. W. Jepson

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Has this ever happened to you? You open an official-looking envelope, wondering what it could be. As you scan the letter, your curiosity turns to surprise. You have been included in the will of a late rich relative. You were an heir and did not know it!

Although few people are surprised by an inheritance, heirs usually know their status. This is certainly true of Jesus Christ. He is the heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2).

Israel.

God's inheritance began with Israel. He chose the nation for a purpose. He revealed Himself and His Word to them, invested His great love in them, and sent prophets to them. Truly it was said of them, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, and the people whom He has chosen as His own inheritance" (Psalm 33:12).

The Church.

God's inheritance includes the Church. In fact, the Church is God's greatest inheritance. Paul prayed that believers would know "what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:18).

Consider what God has invested in His Church:

1. He redeemed us with the blood of Jesus Christ (1:Peter 1:18).
 2. He sent the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth (John 16:13).
 3. His eternal purpose is centered in us (2 Timothy 1:9).
 4. He has predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29).
 5. He has chosen us for personal fellowship with Himself.
 6. We are the primary object of His love and blessing forever.
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Yes, God is love, and love shares. God does not reserve His inheritance exclusively for Himself. He shared it with Abraham. When God called Abraham to go to the place of his inheritance, Abraham went out by faith and "sojourned in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise" (Hebrews 11:8, 9),

The inheritance passed to Isaac (Genesis 21:10), to Jacob (Genesis 28:4), then to all Israel (Exodus 6:8).

In Christ Jesus the inheritance is now available all who will receive Him by faith. Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, "that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me [Christ]" (Acts 26:18).

In Ephesians 3:5, 6 the apostle wrote of the mystery of Christ: "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel." And Galatians 3:29 declares, "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." We, too, became "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17).

This great inheritance is guaranteed by the immutable oath and promise of God (Hebrews 6:11 - 20).

What is this inheritance, and how do we possess it?

1. Righteousness. "By faith Noah ... became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

2. Eternal life. "That having been justified by His grace we should become heirs

3. The Word of God. The Scriptures are a precious part of our inheritance. The psalmist declared, "Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever" (Psalm 119:111). We must pay attention to God's word. Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

4. A happy marriage. Marriage has a new meaning for the Christian. Husbands are to honor their wives "as being heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7). Also, because we are blessed, we are to bless others, "not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing" (verse 9).

5. Peace that surpasses understanding. The peace that Christ gives is part of our inheritance (John 14:27).

6. Divine protection. "No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from Me," says the LORD" (Isaiah 54:17).

7. The Earth. "The meek shall inherit the earth" (Psalm 37:13; Matthew 5:5). It all belongs to Jesus; and as joint-heirs with Him, it belongs to us also.

8. The Nations. Psalm 2:8 is a promise to Christ: "Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession." The ultimate fulfillment of this promise is yet future. However, Jesus brought His Church into this inheritance at Pentecost. After His resurrection He announced that, after the Holy Spirit came, we would be His witnesses "to the end [uttermost part] of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

So then, the Great Commission is our opportunity as joint-heirs with Christ to inherit the nations for Him. God has given the "end of the earth" to His Son, and the Son has sent us in the power of the Holy Spirit to "possess" it for Him by the gospel. And so the Lord spoke to the apostle Paul at Corinth: "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent: for I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:9, 10). So, preach the word. Jesus Christ has "many people" in *your* city.

9. An eternal home. Jesus went to prepare a place for us (John 14:2). Soon He will announce: "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

10. Incorruption and immortality. Believers will have glorified bodies, because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:50). Incorruption. Immortality. The kingdom of God. Yes, this is our inheritance in Christ. And to assure us that nothing has been omitted, God said, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son" (Revelation 21:7). Yes, friends, when we accepted Jesus Christ, we got everything!

Our inheritance is permanent. It is "the eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15). It is "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:4, 5).

A number of years ago a wealthy businessman died. When his will was read, it was revealed that he had directed that his nearly new Cadillac be sold and that the proceeds of the sale be given to his "sweet secretary." Of course, the "sweet secretary" was elated. But the outraged widow put an ad in the newspaper and sold the expensive automobile for *fifty dollars!*

Yes, an earthly inheritance can "fade away," but the heavenly inheritance is incorruptible.

11. The Holy Spirit. Even now God has given us the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13, 14 informs us that after we believed, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, "who is the guarantee [earnest] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."

So, let us abide in Christ. Let no one take your crown. Heaven is a holy place. No sin shall enter there. In 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10 we are solemnly warned that "neither the impure and immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in homosexuality, nor cheats--swindlers and thieves; nor greedy graspers, nor drunkards, nor foul-mouthed revilers and slanderers, nor extortioners and robbers will inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God" (Amplified Version).

Also, Ephesians 5:5 warns us that "no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolator, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

One day a troubled young man came to Jesus with the question that burns deeply within the human soul: "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied, "Come, take up the cross, and follow Me" (Mark 10:17 - 22).

That is still the only way.
