

The Inheritance of the Saints in Light

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by David A. DePra

Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us able to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear son. (Col. 1:12-13)

That last phrase ought to read, "...into the kingdom of the Son of His love."

Notice in verse 12 is the word, INHERITANCE. We are made able to be partakers of the INHERITANCE of the saints in light. What does that mean?

First of all, let's establish something: There is no inheritance for anybody except it is from out of the spiritual union that we have in Jesus. Paul tells us:

Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col. 1:27)

He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17)

In short, the inheritance is IN CHRIST, and therefore, you must be IN CHRIST to be a partaker of the inheritance that is in Him. Indeed, we must be living in and out from Christ – must abide in Christ as our life – to actually experience Him and the inheritance that is IN HIM.

Ephesians 1 is a parallel passage to Colossians 1. There Paul states many of the same Truths – including the Truth about the inheritance in Christ.

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance. (Eph. 1:11)

Now, what we need to see regarding the inheritance IN CHRIST is that God isn't handing out, "little pieces of inheritance," in addition to the, "big piece," that is given to Christ. No, God does not give us portions of the inheritance. In fact, what God gives us is not so much a THING called, "inheritance." God gives us Christ. In short, if you are a partaker of Christ – as we have already stated -- if you are joined to the Lord and made one Spirit with Him – if Christ is IN YOU -- then you are a partaker of everything He has inherited.

Another related point we need to see is that salvation and inheritance are not identical. No. The inheritance is given to the saved by grace – because it is IN CHRIST – but we must grow IN CHRIST and experience HIM in order to be able to be responsible for the inheritance.

This is suggested later in Colossians. Paul states:

IN HIM are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Col. 2:3)

So, as it pertains to inheritance, that would mean that only as we experience Christ -- and come into a fullness of Christ -- can we experience what's in Him – the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Only then can we really begin to experience the inheritance that is given IN HIM.

What is The Inheritance?

Now, somebody's going to ask, "What is the inheritance?" Well, the basic reality of the inheritance that God has for His people is nothing other than CHRIST HIMSELF. The inheritance is to fully experience the person of Christ – all that HE IS and all that HE HAS DONE. That pertains to NOW, but more fully, throughout all eternity.

But again -- you cannot separate the inheritance from the person of Christ. For all that God has for humanity is found solely IN HIM. Thus, only if you experience Christ can you experience the inheritance that's in Him -- and all the riches, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hid in Christ.

So that tells us that in this age, we need to get into the business of experiencing Christ. In Christ and in Christ alone is the inheritance that God has for his people. CHRIST IN US is the root and the source – God has given all that He has to give humanity solely in the Person of His Son.

We see this Truth revealed in numerous ways throughout scripture. For example, we are told God desires His people to, "reign and rule," with Christ through the eternal ages. But what that really means is that God wants His people to be an

expression and manifestation of Christ – ultimately to be an extension of Him; to be able to live in and through Him, and for Christ to live in and through us -- to the point where we can be extensions of Him.

And so this is the inheritance. The inheritance is Christ Himself. And really, we find that in the Bible. The Lord is our inheritance.

Now this reality works both ways. Not only is the Lord our inheritance – rooted in the reality of CHRIST IN US – but likewise CHRIST IN US is God's inheritance in the saints. As Paul writes in Ephesians:

That we may know what is the hope of His calling. And what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. (Eph. 1:18)

God's inheritance in the saints is Christ – and the inheritance of the saints from God is the same Christ. God would have a people who live in Christ -- who lives in His people. God's inheritance in the saints is to be a total oneness with Christ - whereby they can be a manifestation and an expression of Christ -- an extension of Christ.

That's God's purpose for the body of Christ. It's God's purpose for the saints. And that's why it's called His inheritance IN the saints. Thus, if God gets His inheritance in the saints, then the saints get their inheritance in Christ.

All in Christ Alone

The fullness of God's purpose and of His inheritance will be realized only when the saints are bodily raised from the dead at the coming of Christ. This is described wonderfully by John in I John 3. It is a passage that is somewhat blurred in the KJV, but for the sake of clarity we will first quote it from the KJV before looking into the passage more deeply in the original Greek.

Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. (I John 3:1)

To obtain a people – sons and daughters of God – this is the ultimate purpose of God. It begins with, and is accomplished ONLY through the reality of THE SON -- Jesus Christ IN His people.

Now again – this is all IN and THROUGH the Person of Christ. So often we think of Jesus as the, “big son,” and the rest of us as, “little sons” -- sort of Xerox copies of him, lined up, maybe standing alongside of Him. But that's not really the truth. We aren't standing beside Jesus. No. We are IN HIM.

This is an important distinction. God doesn't have a big son and little sons. What he has is Jesus Christ, the only begotten son, and then sons and daughters IN HIM. That is an important distinction because it shows that we are ONE WITH HIM – it shows that ALL is given in Christ and that it is only IN CHRIST – and by living in faith from OUT of Christ – that anything is possible to experience in the Christian life. Everything the believer is, and of course then everything the believer can have, is based on the fact that we are IN CHRIST – based upon the reality that we are one with Him. We can't experience the things of God unless we are experiencing Christ. There is no separation.

But unfortunately, we HAVE separated that which is given IN CHRIST from the Person of Christ in this day and age. That is a big reason why we've gotten into trouble and confusion. We have broken Christ up into, "things," and, separate, "experiences."

For example, we have, in some corners of the Christian church, broken up the reality of CHRIST IN US into two categories. Some say, "Yes, Christ is in us unto salvation. But then we need to go on to receive a SECOND experience in addition to Christ if we REALLY want to get what God has for us." Indeed, many believers actually believe there are TWO indwellings – one is Christ and the other is the Holy Spirit. Some say, "Christ has saved us, but has then handed us off to the Holy Spirit for the Christian life." Many believe this and never think it through to whether this agrees with the Bible.

If we read Colossians 2 we find that such a position is quite dangerous. It is not only false teaching but can lead us into greater spiritual deception. For what we are saying is that Christ is not enough -- we have to have a second blessing. Therefore, if we, "have ONLY Christ," we lack what God really wants us to have. This is a denial that God has given ALL – that Christ IS ALL – to the believer. Our spiritual perception and the life that would follow will be in deception.

This is not just a doctrinal problem. It is a spiritual deception that can come to, "corrupt our minds from the simplicity that is in Christ." (see II Cor. 11:3) It is deception that can lead us away from our true husband, Jesus Christ, to another. Note that instead of a renewed mind according to the Truth in Christ that deception will corrupt our minds according to the error we embrace. We will not be living in the Truth. And we will not even realize what is happening to us.

The Fullness of God's Purpose

Let's get back to 1 John 3.

Beloved, now are we the sons 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. And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure. (1 John 3:2-3)

When the Bible talks about the children of God it immediately brings us to INHERITANCE – for the inheritance is given to those children of God, and this constitutes the full purpose of God. Indeed, if we want to know God's inheritance plan, it is The Father, The only begotten Son, and sons and daughters in the Son. That's it. But it is all accomplished through the person of Christ and experienced through our spiritual resurrection union with him – CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory. Jesus Christ inherited all things and if we are in him and one with him, we are co-heirs with him.

Note again -- we do NOT have an inheritance of our own. We have an inheritance as a co-heir with Christ. In short, we inherit Christ, so to speak -- His life, Him as a person, and experience Him -- and then along with Him comes all that is IN HIM.

As promised, let's examine this passage as it reads in a New Testament Greek:

It has never yet been made manifest what we shall be, but we know that when what we are in Christ is manifested, that what we shall be will be out of His likeness, and that this will enable us to see Him as He is.

Now that's a little bit of a different interpretation than we're used to reading, but that's what it says. When he appears, all that we are shall be out from him. I mean, that is the truth. When we are risen from the dead bodily, when Christ comes back, when he finally made manifest, then when he does appear in his second coming, then when we're raised in a resurrection body, everything that we are as will be from out of Him as the source. We will have His life through us – He will be the life of our existence.

Now, that doesn't mean we are going to be there as mindless beings. No. In fact, we will be awake as never before -- because we're going to be alive in Him. We're going to know Him as we are known by Him. We're going to know the fullness of what it means to be in resurrection union with Christ. We will fully experience everything He is -- and all that He has done. That is the core of inheritance.

Paul says that we NOW have a down payment of that reality by virtue of, “Christ in us the hope of glory” -- via the Spirit. Jesus Christ dwells in us by the means of the spirit of God – and this reality is as a down payment on this fullness yet to come in Christ at the resurrection of the body.

Why does Paul say, “Christ in us the HOPE of glory?” Because this HOPE of glory is going to be released unto, “Christ in us, the REALIZATION of His glory in and through us.” This is what John is describing in I John 3.

Adoption of Children

The children of God, the inheritance, and adoption -- these are all concepts that are related to the same eternal purpose of God. But I do think there's a misunderstanding about this term, "adoption." Note Paul's words in Ephesians 1:

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. (Eph. 1:5)

The Father, through the means of His Son, Jesus Christ, desires to ADOPT believers as children of God. Christ is the only begotten son, and we are sons and daughters in Him, so it's through the means of Him -- because we are already IN HIM -- that adoption is possible.

But what does Paul mean by, "adoption?" This is an important question -- because if we think adoption is salvation we are wrong -- and it will create a lot of confusion. That mistake is, in fact, responsible for many reading verse 5 as a proof text for the doctrine of predestination unto salvation -- i.e., the false doctrine of unconditional election. No. So let's find out what it meant in the mind of the first century Christian to be adopted as a child -- in this case, what it meant to be adopted as a child by God.

First of all, and central to the point, we must look at the word, "adoption" -- because it doesn't mean in the Bible what we mean today. Today, to be adopted by a family pertains to those who are not biologically members of that family -- but are brought in that family from the outside by a legal process. That's adoption today. But that is not what it means in the Bible -- neither in Ephesians or Galatians.

In those days, adoption pertained ONLY to those who were ALREADY members of a family -- only to those who were ALREADY biological members of a family. So, if in Bible times, your mom and dad are biologically your mom and dad, then adoption in those times was possible for you -- it would pertain ONLY to you.

But there is more. Adoption of those already born into a family was the step whereby they could receive their inheritance because they had become mature enough to be a responsible and faithful heir.

Get that: Birth as a child put you in line to receive the inheritance. But you could not receive it until you were ADOPTED. Thus, adoption meant you had reached a place of responsibility -- so that you could actually be given responsibility over your inheritance.

Can we see how important that is to understand that? In other words, as it pertains to a Christian person, yes, you are saved by grace through faith. This makes eventual adoption possible – it makes being able to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light possible. But you must grow in Christ for this to become a reality – you must reach the point of being able to be responsible for what God freely gives in Christ.

This should bring clarity to the phrase that God has, “predestined us unto the adoption as children.” Predestination has NOTHING to do with getting saved. It has ONLY to do with God’s desire FOR those already saved – for those ALREADY in Christ.

Don't think of predestination as something that has to happen, because God has sovereignly ordained it. No, it doesn't have to happen. Predestination simply means that this is God's will for you. You can refuse it. The Bible is filled with warning that loss of inheritance – because you are never adopted – is possible.

We could say that we predestine our children for an earthly inheritance. That's what you want for them. That's your plan for them. But maybe they commit a crime, and suffer drug addiction. They never reach the point of responsibility for their inheritance. But they do not cease to be your children.

So, it is possible to be saved but not adopted. You can lose or forfeit inheritance that God wants you to have – that He destined you to have before you were born. So many of the verses in the Bible that a lot of people try to make mean a loss of salvation are actually warning against, not a loss of salvation – which is impossible – but are warning against a loss of inheritance. Other passages are talking about those who were never saved to begin with – they did not lose salvation, but refused it. Hopefully, this starts to clear up a lot of things in the Bible that have been misinterpreted.

Now what this tells us is that God Almighty is in the process of preparing sons and daughters -- through growth in Christ – preparing sons and daughters so that we can be given our inheritance -- because we are responsible.

Chastisement

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected [us], and we gave [them] reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened [us] after their own pleasure; but he for [our] profit, that [we] might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it

yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all [men], and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. (Heb. 12:5-14)

As adopted children we are not to despise, refuse, or make light of, the chastisement of the Lord – because if we submit to them we will become faithful and responsible as those able to be ADOPTED.

As God positions us for His inheritance in Christ we will have to lose our inheritance in Adam. This is the work of the Cross. This is chastisement. We must lose our lives in order to find Christ as our life. That means we must lose any inheritance imbedded in the old man in Adam. We cannot have both. We must lose the old in order to fully experience the new in Christ.

If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt. 16:24-26)

To lose your life to Christ means that you have given yourself to Him – such that you now belong to Him. This equals HOLINESS. In reading the passage from Hebrews 12, we see that an outcome of chastisement is HOLINESS. What does holiness mean? It doesn't mean to merely do holy things. Works are included, of course. But holiness at the core, the word, HOLY, means, “to be set apart for God's use,” or in other words, in modern language, HOLINESS means, “to belong to God.”

We are bought with a price. We are not our own. HOLINESS means to belong to Jesus Christ. Indeed, the word SAINT means sanctified, or a HOLY ONE. It's the same Greek word. Thus, a saint, by definition, is one who belongs to God. This is supposed to be the outcome of chastisement; the outcome of losing yourself to Jesus Christ.

The attitude of holiness is that we give ourselves to Christ – belong to Him – for whatever it takes for Him to have His will in us. Really, it is an abandonment to Him for whatever it takes for Him to bring us to the place where we are able to be responsible over the inheritance. Can we see that this is all for OUR benefit? That is what Hebrews 12 tells us – that God chastises us for OUR benefit, that we can be partakers of HIS holiness, which is just another way of describing the inheritance.

All these things are interconnected – for one who belongs to God is able to take responsibility for the inheritance that God has given in Christ. In short, the inheritance can belong to you only if you belong to God. And you only belong to

God if you have lost your life to Christ and have found Him as your life.

A Principle

There are many teachings in scripture, and in the parables of Jesus, that are talking about inheritance. Many of them intersect upon one principle: He that is faithful over little will be able to be faithful over much.

Note that the issue here is not so much, “the little,” or, “the much” -- but the issue is FAITHFULNESS – for this has to do with relationship by faith with God, and reverence for Him.

To apply this to inheritance -- he that is faithful to God in little – proven responsible to God over that which is little -- will be adopted because they will be able to be responsible for that much more – both now and later.

The Seed of Abraham

God has made it possible for believers to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. That's adoption. To expand our understanding on this matter it will profit us to read what Paul writes on the subject in Galatians:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. (Gal. 3:16)

Note the main point: There is ONE seed. Sure, because there is ONE son of God – the ONLY begotten Son of God. One! But we are sons and daughters of God – IN HIM. It is because we are IN HIM – and ONLY because we are IN HIM -- joined to Him and made ONE with Him in resurrection union – it is only because of that union that we are sons and daughters of God. And as such, Paul will go on to say that because we are sons and daughters of God in Christ that we are IN HIM likewise the seed of Abraham.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be in Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and you are heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:26-29)

So can we see how all of this goes back to the fact that we are in Christ? All of it does. Everything God has to give the believer -- and we can call that inheritance because the inheritance is everything God has to give the believer – is given in Christ.

The entirety of the inheritance was given to Christ -- and yet if we are in Christ then all of that inheritance is in place for us and we can become coheirs with Him if we will simply allow God to bring us to the place where we can move into responsibility and receive adoption as sons.

Can we see how vital and important this is? Paul ended Galatians 3 by writing:

If you be Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and you are heirs according to the promise.

He goes on to say Galatians 4.1:

Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all.

Paul is talking about being a CHILD – meaning one who is an heir to the inheritance but who is not yet mature enough to possess it. Paul is saying that all believers at one point were as a child who God has predestined to receive adoption – and thus inheritance – but who at that point are not mature enough to be responsible for the inheritance.

But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father. (Gal. 4:2)

This is a child who is destined by their father to be the heir of the fortune in the family. But as merely a child, they are not mature enough to assume the responsibility of the inheritance. So the inheritance is in place, waiting for them. But presently, they cannot take possession of it, live in it, or experience it. Thus, the child is under tutors – living under something that God intends to mature them. In the life of the believer, this can be many things. But in the end, it is really whatever serves as chastisement.

“Chastisement,” in Greek means, “to train a child.” That is exactly what a tutor does to prepare an heir for actual possession and responsibility for an inheritance. Or as Paul concludes, this chastisement is so that we might, “receive adoption as sons.” (Gal. 4:5) This is the same purpose revealed in the passage from Heb. 12 – “that we might be partakers of His holiness.” “God is dealing with you as SONS.” It is all the same Truth.

Paul caps off this teaching about a child coming into adoption by giving the Galatians the solution and means by which all of this is possible:

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you. (Gal. 4:19)

The English word, “formed,” according to the NT Greek, means, “an inward realization and expression.” Paul is saying that we are no longer under the law, or under any religious system, as the means of coming into a realization of inheritance. Rather, he travails that we come into an inward realization of Christ. Christ is IN US – as a down payment of inheritance. But as we come into an inward realization of Him, we begin to be able to possess all the inheritance that is given IN HIM.

This is essentially what we find in Colossians. Christ in you the hope of glory -- coming into an inward realization of the Christ who is in us -- beginning to know Him, beginning to experience Him – resulting in experiencing all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and the inheritance are in Him. As Paul writes, “Giving thanks unto the Father, who has made us able to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” (Col. 1:12)

The Kingdom

Giving thanks unto the Father, who has made us able to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us, (positioned us) into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love. (Col. 1:12-13)

The way that you and I are translated from the power of darkness over into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love is first by being born from above in Christ. And then by coming into an inward realization of Jesus Christ – resulting in the renewing of our minds according to the Truth in Christ.

Now, sometimes lost in this idea of the Kingdom of God is the fact that the word Kingdom means, “rule of God or sovereignty of God.” The Kingdom of God is not a place or a person over which God rules. No, the Kingdom of God is the rule of God itself. You can't see it. You can only see that which the rule of God is over. But the rule of God itself is from God. It's His sovereignty. And if you're translated into that Kingdom, well, how many understand that this means you're under His rule. “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added” -- seek you first, in other words, Jesus as your personal Lord. Seek you first, “belonging to God” -- as a saint. Seek you first, coming into a realization of Christ.

Notice that we are delivered from the power of DARKNESS into the kingdom of Jesus Christ – and that we are made able to be partakers of the inheritance in LIGHT. This shows that fundamental to the kingdom of God is LIGHT. Sure. God is Light. Jesus is THE LIGHT. And of course, we are in the kingdom of God only because we are in Christ, and He is in us. It all begins with Christ in you. He is the king -- and all of the kingdom includes all that is in Him, and extends from Him.

So to be translated or positioned into the kingdom of the Son of God's love means to be positioned as a child in line for inheritance – equipped with all that is needed to come into maturity and adoption. And what is needed is Christ – His life, His light, and His Truth.

Predestined Unto Adoption and Holiness

The Greek words translated, “predestined,” means, “to determine beforehand.” This is a different word than the one translated, “foreknowledge.” Thus to, “predestine,” simply means that God has a will. It does not guarantee that in every detail that God gets His will.

Read the Bible. There are many times that God has a will – pre-ordains what He wants to happen. How could it be otherwise? But there are just as many times that due to the disobedience and unbelief of people that God does see what He ordains come to pass. Does this mean man is more powerful than God? No. It simply means human beings have a free will.

Sovereignty means that just as God can put His hand on everyone and everything and bring to pass His will to the disregard of human free will, so He can take His hand off and let people choose against His will. WITHIN the sovereignty of God humans are permitted to refuse God. And the fact is, since Adam, God has generally taken His hand off – and most have refused Him. God will eventually get His will – with or without each of us. But He will get His will.

One of the clearest passages on predestination is found in Ephesians 1. To get the context we will begin several verses before predestination is mentioned:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all, not some, but all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

Note once again that ALL is in Christ. God hasn't blessed us with these spiritual blessings, simply because of Christ, or aside from Christ, but God has blessed us IN CHRIST. In other words, the spiritual blessings are in Christ – and you must be IN CHRIST to experience them. This would obviously apply to the inheritance. You only come into the blessings that are in Christ by coming into a realization of Christ.

Paul then adds:

Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ -- according as He has chosen us in Him. (Eph. 1:3-5)

Note that we are, “chosen IN HIM.” This isn't, “unconditional election,” as the Calvinists teach. No. There is ONE elect - Christ is the elect. Thus, if I come to Christ, by grace through faith, I am then IN CHRIST -- and then because Christ is the elect, then I am elect in Him.

We need to understand that. To clarify, God has chosen us IN HIM. He hasn't chosen us TO BE in Him. No. We are ALREADY in Him. But then because we are ALREADY in Christ, we are chosen in Christ unto what? Holiness. And unto adoption. Paul writes exactly this Truth:

He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. (Eph. 1:4-5)

Election is NOT unto salvation. No. Election is after salvation -- for the saved, unto what? That we might be holy before Him. Unto adoption as children. That is the purpose of God in choosing those who are in Christ to be adopted as children.

How clear could that be once we understand these things? “Having predestined us unto the adoption as children by Jesus Christ to Himself.” We have already seen that adoption is not salvation – it pertains to those ALREADY saved. Thus, predestination unto adoption as children does not mean salvation. It pertains to those ALREADY saved. There is nothing unclear about this.

Faith Precedes Salvation

Go back to Calvinism. You gather up the five points of Calvinism, and Calvinists themselves will tell you that there is one conclusion: Regeneration precedes faith. They believe that God saves you by his sovereign election, so that you can believe. In other words, Calvinism teaches that you do not believe in order to be saved. It teaches that you are first saved SO THAT you are able to believe.

Now, they do not say that God saves you, and then five years later, you believe. They sort of make it all one work, but they clearly demand that it is only because God is regenerating you without your faith that you are able to have faith -- because you would have no ability to believe otherwise.

But what does it say here, in Ephesians 1? It says:

In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. (Eph. 1:13)

Clearly, it is saying that first you hear, and then after you hear, you believe, and THEN you are saved – because after you believed you are sealed.

This is so clear that there is no point in trying to deal with any useless argument to the contrary.

The Earnest of Our Inheritance

In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (Eph. 1:13-14)

After we believe, we are sealed with the spirit of God. Of course, this is exactly CHRIST IN YOU – because Christ dwells in the believer by the means of the spirit of God. But note how Paul describes this: As the, “earnest of our inheritance.”

Can we see that the down payment is Christ – and all that we can now experience IN HIM, that the fullness is also Christ – the fullness of all that He has done and all that He is?

The, “earnest,” is a down payment. In fact, the same word was used for an engagement ring. An, “earnest,” is NOT the fullness, but carries all of the reality of the fullness. Paul says that we carry this earnest of our inheritance UNTIL the full redemption. In other words, in this age, we experience, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” That is the down payment. But this is all unto, “Christ in you, the full realization of His glory.”

This is exactly what we saw that John was describing in I John 3:

It has never yet been made manifest what we shall be, but we know that when what we are in Christ is manifested, that what we shall be will be out of His likeness, and that this will enable us to see Him as He is.

Now tie this into inheritance, God has given us in Christ a down payment of the fullness of our inheritance in Christ. It is to the extent that we are faithful over the down payment that the fullness can come into our experience in the eternal

ages.

The down payment is a sampling. It is a foretaste. It is an advance, if I can put it that way, of the fullness. Well God says, “Be faithful over little, and if you are, then you will be able to be faithful over much.” Or to put it another way, allow God to chastise you as sons. Be faithful over what little God has given. For if you do, then you will be able to be adopted and responsible over the fullness of the inheritance.

Are you and I being faithful over what God has given us now, whether it be little or much? I’m not thinking about money. I’m speaking primarily of the spiritual life and Truth God has given us in Christ. If we are faithful over that NOW, then we will be brought into a relationship with God over much. MUCH to the point where we can be adopted – trusted with MORE; entrusted with a fullness.

The Prayer of Paul

In this age, believers are given the Living Christ within. We are made to be one with Him in a spiritual, resurrection union – which is CHRIST IN YOU. And CHRIST IN YOU is our HOPE OF GLORY.

Immediately following Paul’s teaching that we are given Christ by the means of the spirit of God as a down payment of our inheritance, Paul shares what he prays for the church:

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what [is] the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. (Eph. 1:15-19)

Note that everything Paul prays will be revealed to the believer goes back to our inheritance through Christ as a down payment. Paul says that he prays that we might be given, “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.” He says that it is this which will enlighten the eyes of our understanding – that we might KNOW. Know what? “The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” And all of the rest of the eternal plan of God.

What an incredible thing we're being told here by the Apostle Paul that is in store for us through Christ in us, the hope of glory, and how we need to be faithful over what God has given us.

The Children of God

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. (Rom. 8:17-19)

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed [them] unto us by his Spirit. (1 Cor. 2:9-10)

The Spirit itself bears witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God. And if children then heirs -- there it is again. Get saved. Come into a realization of Christ. Get to where you're adopted as sons and daughters, and you'll be in a position of being an heir. You will be adopted unto your inheritance in Christ.

But also note this necessity: If so be it that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. This is not a matter of putting in your suffering time. It's a matter of reality that if you are in Christ and you are allowing God to have you, then you're going to lose your life under the work of the cross. That's the process. It has to be that. You have to be brought to the place where you belong to God -- which means to be holy -- to where you lose your life for His sake in order to find Him as your life -- and that'll involve suffering. But this is all unto being made able to partake of the inheritance in light as an adopted child of God.

So all of this is going to be brought to the full, brought to the fullness, at the resurrection of the body -- where everything that we are will be out from Christ -- out from His likeness. Everything that we ARE will experience everything that He IS - in fullness. And that IS the inheritance and the means by which all else that is in Christ will be experienced.

May God give us a greater understanding and reverence for His great purpose in Christ.

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