

*Heirs
Of
God*



Heirs of God

“...and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” Romans 8:17

“And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:29

“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” Hebrews 11:7

Most of us are not looking forward to our earthly inheritance because of the condition that must be met in order for us to inherit. We may one day inherit a house, land, an automobile and a whole house of furniture. If we have siblings we will most likely have to share these things with them, and blessed is the family that settles all these matters

without fighting and falling out with one another. The condition that we dread is the death of a mother, a father or both. We would much rather have our parents alive than to have all the stuff.

The Bible says that as children of God we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. It says that if we are in Christ then we enjoy the blessings of the promise made to Abraham. The scriptures teach that like Noah we can be an heir of a righteousness which is according to faith. We can change our tattered and stained robes for a beautiful white robe, the righteousness of Christ our Lord.

The Bible speaks of different covenants. A covenant is an agreement between parties in which conditions are established for the fulfillment of certain promises. An heir is someone who stands to benefit in some way as a result of a covenant relationship. H. C. Heffren has written some things that may be helpful to us in understanding these covenant relationships:

Two young men were enjoying



Volume 32 - Number 1 - Jan/Feb 2013
BC is published every other month. Send all inquiries, address changes and subscriptions to the editor: Scott Gage, PO Box 3425, Fayetteville, AR 72702-3425 Voice & Fax 479-521-6809 Email: Lsgage129@cs.com

www.basicchristianity.net

should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:11-14). The Holy Spirit is a seal, a guarantee of our inheritance.

As we grow in the knowledge of Christ, we better understand how great this inheritance is. Paul prayed that the Ephesians would “know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Ephesians 1:18).

The New Testament explains how you can be an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. To receive the inheritance you must be rich in faith and you must love God with all your heart. Through the death of Christ your sins can be forgiven so you can be in the family of God. You must be baptized into Christ to become an heir. By the mercy of God through the washing of regeneration you are reborn to an incorruptible inheritance in heaven. To inherit eternal life, you must be led by the Spirit

through the guidance of God's word. You must do good, keep God's commandments and follow Christ.

God gives this great promise: “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son” (Revelation 21:7).

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said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live' (Luke 10:25-28).

Keeping commandments is not enough. To inherit eternal life we must take up the cross and follow Christ: "Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' So Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, *that is*, God. You know the commandments: "*Do not commit adultery,*" "*Do not murder,*" "*Do not steal,*" "*Do not bear false witness,*" "*Do not defraud,*" "*Honor your father and your mother.*"' And he answered and said to Him, 'Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.' Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, 'One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me' (Mark 10:17-21 // Luke 18:18-22).

Jesus promises blessings and eternal life to those who put Him first in their lives: "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall

receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:29).

To inherit the kingdom we must do good: "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me' (Matthew 25:34-40).

This inheritance is *in* Christ: "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ

a hearty meal together. One lad was the son of a wealthy landowner; the other was a very likeable and reliable hired man. Both men worked together. Their dress was similar and they frequented the same recreation spots, played on the same local team and even attended the same place of worship. In many respects there was very little difference between them. However, one morning all this similarity vanished instantly when the solemn faced mother came to her son and said, "John, your father died in his sleep last night. You are the sole heir to his large estate." Immediately, a vast chasm of difference separates these two men. The heir becomes the owner and proprietor while the hired man remains the same as before. The son inherits the provisions of the Will in which the hired man has no claim. Heir-ship is what made the difference.

Wills are important documents. When death occurs, the heirs should study them carefully. When you seek to bestow your lifetime estate to your heirs or beneficiaries you do so by drawing up "Your Last Will and Testament." The term "last" is very important because a new Will automatically cancels and annuls any previous will, which the testator may have made. Sometimes people make a will while still quite young, but in later life they find conditions have changed. Children and grandchildren are to be consid-

ered in addition to greatly increased riches, so in the good judgment of the testator a new will is drawn up to replace the inadequacies of the old will. This new will is now the Last Will and Testament and legally it is the only will in force. A Will cannot be altered or revoked, after the death of the testator. It is final!

It is our purpose here to investigate what God's Will is. Who are the heirs? What do they inherit? What are the qualifications for heir-ship? And how do the heirs avail themselves of the benefits contained in the Will. The Bible furnishes ample information to give a satisfactory answer to these valid questions. First of all God's Will is found in God's Word where it is called the Old Testament and the New Testament. These are sometimes referred to as the First and Second Covenant as: "For if the FIRST covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought of the SECOND." Heb. 8:7. That the SECOND covenant replaces the FIRST is seen as follows: "In that He saith, a NEW covenant, He hath made the FIRST old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to VANISH away." Heb. 8:13.

Some writers and preachers refer to various covenants, which God made with Noah, Abraham, Moses or David as if these were still operative. From these Old Testament writings

they maintain that many of God's promises are not fulfilled and because of this, God is obligated to execute them in some future age. This logic is based on a false understanding of the nature of a Will. God's First Covenant was the best, established relationship between God and man up to the time it was fulfilled. But it had many recognized inadequacies and for that reason it was only meant to be temporary and serve only until a better covenant could be affected. The Bible describes some of its shortcomings as being WEAK. Rom. 8:3. It was FAULTY. Heb. 8:8. It was a SHADOW of good things to come. Heb. 10:1. It made nothing PERFECT. Heb. 7:19. Its crowning shortcoming was its inability TO TAKE AWAY SIN. Heb. 10:4. Beyond these and many more inherent inadequacies was the fact that the covenant itself was flagrantly broken, and therefore nullified by those with whom it was made. Although many Scriptures such as Jer. 31:31-34, bear this out, we shall only quote Heb. 8:9, "Because they continued NOT in my covenant, and I REGARDED THEM NOT, saith the Lord." Because the first covenant is abrogated through disobedience, we read, "HE TAKETH AWAY THE FIRST, THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH THE SECOND." Heb. 10:9b.

To illustrate, let us suppose a father and mother have six sons.

In their youth these boys gave promise of being worthy of the estate, and so the father drafted a will in which they are to be the heirs on condition that they live honorably and obedient to parental guidance which is clearly defined. But they fall in with bad companions and betake themselves to evil ways of dissipation and lawlessness. Their mother is brought to an early grave through despondency over their conduct. The father bears his grief for a period of time but eventually he remarries and adopts another son. At a ripe old age the father dies and his six wayward sons by his first marriage go to claim the estate. They produce their old Will for the probate judge to establish its genuineness and award them the property. The judge, however, produces the Last Will and Testament of the deceased wherein it is stipulated that all the property is bequeathed to his widow, and her adopted son. It would be useless for those six boys to seek to establish any legal claim to the property based on a Will that has no validity in court. No probate judge would distribute the property on the basis of sentiment or sympathy. He would assign the property in accordance with the Last Will and Testament of the testator.

A prime example in the Bible is the case of Esau. Esau was the firstborn son of Isaac, and he was entitled to his inheritance by this birthright. However, in a

according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:4-7).

We are reborn to an inheritance in heaven: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3, 4).

Through Christ we are freed from bondage to sin so we can be adopted into the family of God. "Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God

through Christ" (Galatians 4:1-7).

To receive the inheritance, we must be led by the Spirit: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:14-17).

God leads us through His word: "So now, brethren, 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).

To inherit eternal life we must love God: "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading *of it*?'

So he answered and said, "'*You shall love the Lord* your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,'" and "*your neighbor as yourself.*"' And He

not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Only by the power of God and with the help of His Son, Jesus Christ, can we be restored to a close family relationship with the Father. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “Your iniquities have separated you from your God” (Isaiah 59:2).

Christ bore the punishment for our sins so we could be reconciled with the Father and receive the inheritance: “He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:15). The New Testament grants the inheritance and states the conditions.

Christ told Paul to preach to the nations: “to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26:17, 18).

Only by faith in Christ can one become a child of God. Believers must be baptized into Christ to receive the inheritance. “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:26-29).

God saves us by grace through a rebirth at baptism. “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs

moment of weakness he sold his birthright to his younger brother, Jacob. The Bible says, “Thus Esau despised his birthright.” When his father, Isaac died, Esau bitterly and tearfully regretted his rashness, but nevertheless Jacob inherited that which belonged to his birthright. Possession of this birthright made Jacob the legal heir. (<http://www.heart-talks.com/heir.html>)

We understand that we are under the New Testament that was sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ. This is the Last Will and Testament that the Lord has made. He will not make another one. This new covenant is one that includes both Jew and Gentile. Paul addresses this remarkable truth in Ephesians 2:17-22:

And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are be-

ing built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Both Jew and Gentile are built together upon the one foundation. Both obey the same gospel in order to become joint heirs with Christ. Burton Coffman in his commentary on Galatians 3:27 states:

This is not merely a continuation of the argument Paul has been making, but it is continued into Gal. 4. The true seed of Abraham (in the plural sense) are all of those who, believing the gospel, have been baptized into Christ, comprising in their corporate totality the seed singular which is Christ, in the sense of his spiritual body. This enabled the Gentiles to be accounted the true seed of Abraham, bypassing the Law of Moses altogether, thus inheriting through the promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18).

Huxtable has this pertinent observation on this final verse of the chapter:

Those who believe in Christ and are baptized in him are to be understood as here being affirmed to be 'Abraham's seed,' because, being clothed with Christ, they share his position. 'Heirs ...' They are heirs, not of

Abraham, but of God; for the idea connects to that of the sonship to God (Galatians 3:26), of believers in Christ. ⁴

NOTE 1: ON COMMENTS REGARDING Gal. 3:27

Observations under Gal. 3:27 are not intended as a presumption that any mortal knows the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:16), or the ultimate judgment of the Almighty regarding any man's destiny; for God is too wise to make a mistake and too good to do wrong. The whole province of judging is denied to Christians (Matthew 7:1); on the other hand, the observations under Gal. 3:27, and throughout this series, are merely a conscientious effort to read what seems to be the clear and unequivocal meaning of the sacred New Testament itself. It was Christ who said, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved' (Mark 16:16), and the antithesis of that bold promise justifies the deductions offered under Gal. 3:27. The New Testament is all that people have as the basis of eternal hope; and it is in that frame of reference alone that people have any right to express opinions or form judgments of what is truth. The Lord has promised eternal life conditionally, and only God could change the conditions.

Upon behalf of many precious souls, apparently devoted, spiritual and praiseworthy in so many ways, who have decided to trust God for salvation regardless of their refusal to comply with the conditions, and in many cases, even admit that there are any conditions, let it be said that only God knows if he will or will not find a way for them to whom he has made no promise in the New Testament. The clear and, in a sense, dogmatic interpretations which have been attempted in this series regard only what has been revealed in the New Testament and do not presume to judge the eternal destiny of any fellow-mortal whomsoever, the sole purpose being that of persuading people to accept the salvation of God in Christ upon the condition of their exhibiting 'the obedience of faith' (to the best of their intention and ability), the same being the only condition upon which God has promised (in this dispensation) to give any man eternal life. The presumption to affirm what the one true and Almighty God will do for us sinners-all, over and beyond what he has promised to do, simply does not lie within the boundaries of the purpose of these studies. (<http://www.studyLight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?bk=47&ch=3>)

As heirs of God we anticipate the coming of our Lord and the glorious inheritance that is ours in Christ. We will be glorified together with him, and ours is truly a

living hope. It is an inheritance that is "incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1Pet. 1:4).
...LSG

Are You an Heir of God?

Will you receive "an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith"? (Acts 26:18).

An heir is someone who is entitled to a legacy because of a family relationship or a testament. Although an inheritance is a gift, a testament can require that certain conditions be met. Some people imagine how grand it would be to inherit a fortune from some unknown, wealthy relative.

As they dream, they fail to realize that their heavenly Father has willed them a fortune worth more than all the world. "Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?" (James 2:5).

This inheritance is received in the resurrection. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not

all sleep, but we shall all be changed -- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:50-52). This inheritance is an eternal kingdom where death will be no more.

There are conditions. They who live according to the flesh will not inherit the kingdom. "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21). "For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Ephesians 5:5). "Do you