

# **The Believer's Inheritance: Now and Later**

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## **I. Introduction**

## **II. Ephesians 1:3-15**

- A. v. 3 - God is saying all good things about those who are in Jesus Christ
  - 1. These good things are in regard to spiritual realities
  - 2. Paul details some of these good things in the following verses
- B. v. 4 - God chose those in Christ before He created the world
  - 1. God chose that believers in Christ would be holy
  - 2. God chose that believers in Christ would be blameless before Him
  - 3. God's choosing is in Christ and is therefore positional
- C. v. 5 - God marked off the boundaries of their lives so that they would be placed as mature sons (adoption)
  - 1. All those in Christ are credited as being mature sons
  - 2. Mature sons enjoy a place as a privileged member of a family as well as a prominent position
  - 3. All of this is in accordance with God's desires and determinations
- D. v. 6 - God's saying good things, choosing, and adoption of all believers in Christ say something good about the reputation of God's grace
  - 1. God's grace is as good as advertised
  - 2. God's grace has resulted in believers being fully "*accepted in the beloved*"
- E. v. 7 - Those in Christ have been bought back by his blood
  - 1. Jesus Christ's bloody and violent death was the currency that purchased one's forgiveness of sins
  - 2. Jesus' blood paid the penalty
    - a) Results in justification (Ro. 5:9)
    - b) Bought back from the power of sin (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14)
    - c) Destroyed the power of death (Heb. 2:14)
    - d) Destroyed the power of Satan (Heb. 2:14)
    - e) Provides peace between God and man (Col. 1:19-20)
    - f) Provides nearness (Eph. 2:13; 1 Pe. 3:18)
- F. v. 8 - In Christ, God has provided us insight into his perspective (mind) and understanding (how to make us of that knowledge)
- G. v. 9 - Paul revealed a mystery concerning God's desirous will
  - 1. This mystery was according to God's good pleasure
  - 2. This mystery was the revelation that God had made one new Creation from both Jews and Gentiles - The Church, Body of Christ, The Christ (Eph. 3:3-6)
- H. v. 10 - The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times
  - 1. *Pleroo* - to fill up that which is lacking
  - 2. A future period of time when God will fill time full - resulting in time becoming no more (Rev. 10:6)
  - 3. The completion of this dispensation will usher in eternity
- I. During this dispensation God will gather together all things in the Christ

1. "...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..." (Eph. 1:15-23)
  2. "...till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:11-13)
  3. At the beginning of this dispensation all who are in Christ will be united in Him
- J. v. 11 - In Christ, believers have been made an inheritance
- a) *Kleroo* - 'to choose by lot; assign by lot; to make a heritage, private possession'
    - (1) From *kleros*
      - (a) "An object used in casting or drawing lots" - Outline of Biblical Usage
      - (b) "What is obtained by lot, allotted portion" - OBU
    - (2) In secular use it refers to a familial inheritance that typically consisted of material possessions (Mt. 21:38; Mk. 12:7)
    - (3) Passive voice - makes believers in Christ His inheritance
  - b) Christ is the heir of all things (Heb. 1:1-2)
    - (1) God has placed all things under Christ's feet - authority (1 Cor. 15:25-27)
    - (2) Christ will be recognized as Lord of all (Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 5:13)
  - c) In God the Father's plan, He determined that all those who place their faith in Christ would comprise an inheritance for the Son
    - (1) Believers have been given to the Son by the Father (Jo. 6:37)
    - (2) The Son provides eternal life to all those given to Him by the Father (Jo. 17:2)
    - (3) The Father gathers from the world those that comprise Christ's inheritance (Jo. 17:6, 9, 11)
    - (4) Christ desired that those who have been given to Him will eventually join Him in heaven (Jo. 17:24)
    - (5) Christ desired that all those in Him would be able to share in His glory (Jo. 17:22)
  - d) Believers are not merely Christ's possession but He also graciously shares His inheritance with all
    - (1) Believers in Christ are co-heirs with the Son (Ro. 8:14-17)
      - (a) God considers each believer as one of His very own mature sons - v. 14
      - (b) The Spirit of adoption provides believers with a close, personal relationship with God - v. 15
      - (c) Being an heir with Christ is based upon being a child of God - v. 17
      - (d) Suffering with Christ results in our being glorified with Him - v. 17
    - (2) Believers in Christ can be certain that they will experience suffering in this life - this suffering will lead to reigning with Christ - (2 Ti. 2:12)
      - (a) First class condition - assumes statement to be true
      - (b) The believer has been promised that they will rule with Christ in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times
        - i) Ruling with Christ will include judging the world and judging angels (1 Cor. 6:2-3)
        - ii) Ruling with Christ will include authority to rule over the nations (Rev. 2:26-27)
          - (1) "Overcomers" are those who believe in Christ (1 Jo. 5:4-5)
          - (2) The believers authority will be similar to the authority the Son received from the Father

- iii) Ruling with Christ will include permission to sit with Him on His throne (Rev. 3:21)
  - e) God both desired and determined in advance that He would use believers to accomplish His plans and purposes
- K. v. 12 - God's purpose consists of believers' lives and destinies saying something good about who God is
- L. v. 13 - the Holy Spirit seals the one believing the Good News concerning salvation
  - 1. The gospel of your salvation (1 Cor. 15:1-4)
  - 2. The promise of the Holy Spirit dates back to the Upper Room
    - a) Jesus Christ promised His disciples another Helper of the same kind (Jo. 14:15-17)
    - b) Jesus Christ promised that the Father would send the Spirit who would teach them all things (Jo. 14:26)
    - c) Jesus promised that when the Spirit came, He would "*guide you into all truth*" (Jo. 16:13)
    - d) At one of His post-resurrection appearances, Jesus Christ instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Spirit (Lu. 24:49)
    - e) In the moments before His ascension, Jesus Christ reminded the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Father's promise of the Spirit (Acts 1:8)
    - f) The fulfillment of this promise occurred at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4)
  - 3. Paul refers to the Spirit of promise in other writings (Gal. 3:14)
  - 4. Why is Paul's statement about being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise so significant?
    - a) It speaks to uniqueness of the believer in Christ's inheritance
    - b) During Christ's earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given to men in the manner Jesus described (Jo. 7:39)
    - c) The Spirit's ministry to the one believing in Christ is entirely new in human history
    - d) God has provided a different inheritance for the NT believer than the OT saints
      - (1) References to inheritance in the OT are often temporal and material
        - (a) Familial - Judges 11:2
        - (b) Abrahamic Covenant
          - i) In the OT, God promised Abraham an inheritance that consisted of land, blessings, and a seed (Gen. 12:7; 13:15-17; 15:7-8; 17:8)
            - (1) This promised inheritance was reiterated to Moses (Ex. 32: 13)
            - (2) The NT confirms the material inheritance God promised to Abraham (Heb. 11:8-9)
          - ii) God provided a first installment of this inheritance to the nation of Israel when they entered the Promised Land
            - (1) The tribes of Israel were promised an inheritance of land (Nu. 33:54)
            - (2) The tribe of Levi received no land promise. God was their inheritance. He provided for them through the tithe and sacrifices (Nu. 18:24)
          - iii) OT saints anticipated the future fulfillment of this inheritance (Ps. 105:9-11)
        - (2) The OT also refers to the inheritance of Eternal Life

- (a) During Jesus Christ's earthly ministry he was asked, "*what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" (Mk. 10:17; Lu. 10:25; Lu. 18:18)
    - i) Jesus also promised that some of His disciples would inherit everlasting life (Mt. 19:29)
    - ii) The promise of eternal life to OT saints dates back to the prophets
      - (1) Daniel foretold that believing Jews would be raised from the dead in glorified bodies (Dan. 12:1-3)
      - (2) Isaiah also prophesied that dead saints would live again (Isa. 26:19)
      - (3) The Psalmist was certain that he would not remain in the grave but that God would raise him (Ps. 49:15)
      - (4) God provided Ezekiel with a vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones in which dead OT saints will rise from the grave and inhabit the land promised to Abraham (Ezk. 37:1-14)
  - (b) The eternal life that OT saints expected to inherit is different than the eternal life promised to NT saints. Believing Jews were expecting to be resurrected from the grave in a glorified body and that they would dwell in the entirety of the land promised to Abraham
  - (3) The Holy Spirit serves as the first installment of God's promised inheritance to believers in Christ and an important component of their salvation
5. The Holy Spirit seals the believer
- a) Seal - *sphragis* - definition
    - (1) "A seal is an instrument of stone, metal or other hard substance (sometime set in a ring), on which is engraved some device or figure, and is used for making an impression on some soft substance, as clay or wax, affixed to a document or other object, in token of authenticity." - ISBE
    - (2) "The seal serves as a legal protection and guarantee. It is thus placed on property, on wills, etc. Laws prohibit the misuse of seals, which owners often break just before death. Seals serve as proof of identity." - Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
    - (3) "The real importance of the seal is a legal one: the owner puts his mark on his possessions, his beasts...and thereby guards his property against theft. To the extent one can call it a protecting sign or a guarantee." - New International Dictionary of NT Theology
  - b) The Holy Spirit seals the believer in Christ thus protecting and ensuring the security of one's salvation (Eph. 4:30)
    - (1) Believers in Christ now belong to Him (1 Pe. 1:18-19; Ro. 12:1-2)
    - (2) The Holy Spirit guarantees the security of God's purchased possession (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
    - (3) The Holy Spirit ensures that the believer will never be separated from the love of Christ (Ro. 8:35-39)
- M. v. 14 - The Holy Spirit presently serves as a downpayment on the future possession of the believer's full inheritance
- 1. Earnest - *arrabon* - definition
    - a) "An earnest, i.e. money which in purchases is given as a pledge that the full amount will subsequently be paid...for the gift of the Holy Spirit...is both a foretaste and a pledge of future blessedness." - Thayer

- b) “Originally, ‘earnest money’ deposited by the purchaser and forfeited if the purchase was not completed...In general usage it came to denote ‘a pledge’ as ‘earnest’ of any sort; in the NT it is used only of that which is assured by God to believers; it is said of the Holy Spirit as the Divine ‘pledge’ of all their future blessedness” - Vine
  - c) “Money given by a purchaser as a pledge for the full payment of the sum promised. The Holy Spirit is to the believer the first installment to assure him that his full inheritance as a son of God shall follow hereafter; the token of the fulfillment of ‘all the promises.’” - Fausset
- 2. NT references to the Spirit as an earnest of the believer’s future inheritance
  - a) The Holy Spirit seals and serves as an earnest of the fulfillment of God’s promised inheritance (2 Cor. 1:22)
  - b) The Holy Spirit is a downpayment on the future promise of a glorified body (2 Cor. 5:5)
  - c) The indwelling Holy Spirit provides a guarantee to the believer that God will make good on the final installment of their inheritance
- 3. Paul also uses the term “*first fruits*” to communicate a similar idea
  - a) First fruits - *aparche* - definition
    - (1) “denotes, primarily, ‘an offering of firstfruits’ (akin to *aparchomai*, ‘to make a beginning;’ in sacrifices, “to offer firstfruits”).” - Vine
    - (2) “The Greek term *aparche*...referred to the first produce or profits that might be given as a gift of thanksgiving. The recipient might be a person or, as in most cases, the Temple.” - G.M. Burge
    - (3) The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of each believer precedes a future bounty in eternity (Ro. 8:23)
- 4. The gift of the Holy Spirit to each believer at the moment of salvation serves as the first installment of an even greater future inheritance which will occur during the “*redemption of the purchased possession.*”
  - a) The Holy Spirit enables believers to presently enjoy a quality of God’s life that they will experience in full measure in eternity (Col. 1:12)
    - (1) Believers are heirs according to the promise of eternal life (Tit. 3:7-8)
    - (2) This is based off of the promised inheritance of eternal life (Tit. 1:1-2)
    - (3) Eternal life and light refer to the manifestation of God’s quality of life (Jo. 1:4)
    - (4) The Holy Spirit indwells each believer in Christ (Ro. 8: 9,11)
    - (5) The Holy Spirit’s indwelling provides confidence that it is possible to live up to God’s reputation in this life (Col. 1:27)
    - (6) The Holy Spirit provides the believer with Christ’s character (Gal. 5:22-23)
  - b) This first installment of the believer’s inheritance also includes:
    - (1) The Holy Spirit points others to Christ (Jo. 16)
    - (2) The Holy Spirit instructs believers (Jo. 16:13)
    - (3) The Holy Spirit provides victory over sin (Gal. 5:17)
    - (4) The Holy Spirit makes it possible to serve Christ in a whole new manner (2 Cor. 3:8)
    - (5) The Holy Spirit assists the believer in their communication with God (Ro. 8:26-27)

- c) None of this was possible prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and therefore was not a part of the OT saints inheritance
  - d) Despite the first installment of their inheritance, believers in Christ still ache in this life until as the result of their sin nature and living in a sin cursed world (Ro. 8:23)
    - (1) Paul equates “adoption” with the future redemption of the physical body
    - (2) Already declared to be sons of God, the believer still awaits the complete realization of their sonship
    - (3) This will occur when their bodies are glorified and “*delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*”
5. The Holy Spirit’s sealing lasts until “*the day of redemption*” (Eph. 4:30)
- a) While believers have been redeemed from the power of sin they are not immune to its continued presence, influence, and affects
  - b) The future and completed redemption occurs when the physical body has been glorified and sin’s presence and affects have been eradicated
    - (1) Scripture promises that the believer’s future inheritance consists of being glorified together with Christ (Ro. 8:17)
      - (a) Christ promised the disciples in the Upper Room that He would return for them (Jo. 14:3)
      - (b) Christ prayed to the Father and asked that they would be with Him so that they could experience His glory (Jo. 17:22-24)
    - (2) The believer’s inheritance also consists of a transformed and glorified body like that of the Glorified Jesus Christ
      - (a) John expressed confidence that as a child of God we were guaranteed that we would be like the glorified Christ when we see Him (1 Jo. 3:1-3)
      - (b) Paul wrote that our true home is in heaven and that Christ would eventually transform our earthly bodies into glorified bodies (Phil. 3:21)
      - (c) In this life, believers possesses a body made from dust but in the next life they will possess a glorified, heavenly body, fashioned after the glorified body of their savior, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:42-49)
    - (3) This future glory will not consist of anything that brings sorrow, pain, or death (Rev. 21:4)
    - (4) Peter assured believers that this future inheritance was not subject to decay, was not tainted by anything impure, nor would it ever fade into oblivion (1 Pe. 1:4)
6. This inheritance is reserved for those who have believed on Jesus Christ as Savior
- a) Paul states that the unrighteous have no inheritance in the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9)
  - b) Paul states that “*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*” (1 Cor. 15:50)
  - c) Those whose lives are under the dominion of the sin nature will never inherit God’s kingdom (Gal. 5:21)
  - d) The unbeliever has no claim to God’s inheritance because they are not one of His children
7. This provides for an opportunity to say something good about God’s reputation

### III. Summary