

A PRESENT AND FUTURE INHERITANCE

- A. Introduction: We're talking about the fact that as sons and daughters of God we have an inheritance. Our inheritance includes everything we need to live this life and the life to come. Eph 1:18
1. We're taking time to discuss the nature of our inheritance as well as how to access it. Due to lack of understanding in some basic areas sincere believers fail to benefit from their inheritance in this life
 - a. There's much misunderstanding as to why Jesus came to earth and what God has promised to do for us in this life. Misinformation gives people false expectations which leads to frustration, disappointment, and even anger at God when those expectations aren't met.
 - b. Understanding our inheritance begins with understanding the big picture or overall plan of God.
 1. In eternity past God devised a plan to have a family and made earth to be home for Himself and His sons and daughters. Both mankind and earth have been damaged by sin. Eph 1:4,5
 2. Jesus died on the Cross to pay for sin so it can be removed from all who bow their knee to Him as Savior and Lord. He'll come again to cleanse the earth of corruption and death and make it a fit forever home for Himself and His family. The Bible begins and ends with God on earth with His family (Gen 2; 3; Rev 21:3). That's the plan.
 - c. We must recognize that there's more to life than just this life. God's plan of redemption (His plan to deliver His creation from bondage to sin and death) is unfolding. We're only passing through this life as it is. If you don't learn to look at life from this perspective you'll struggle with accessing your inheritance.
 2. To benefit from our inheritance need to know that there's more to reality than what we perceive with our senses. God is unseen or invisible and He has created both seen and unseen things. Col 1:15,16
 - a. Not only is there a visible realm, there's an invisible realm, and it can and does affect and change the seen world. Christianity is supernatural and transformational. Supernatural means of or relating to an order of existence beyond the visible, observable universe.
 1. The unseen power of God affects and changes the visible, material world as He carries out His plan to have a family of holy, righteous sons and daughters with whom He can dwell forever.
 2. We referred to Elisha in the last lesson. He was unafraid in the face an enemy because he knew he had spiritual provision and was protected by beings in the unseen realm. II Kings 6
 - b. The Bible reveals that we have an inheritance in Heaven which includes spiritual blessings (I Pet 1:3-5; Eph 1:3). This means we have provision in and from another dimension—spiritual or unseen help that can impact the visible, physical world. Let's talk more about all of this.
- B. People have difficulty accessing the provisions of their inheritance because they don't understand the nature of life in a fallen world, they have false expectations about what life is supposed to be like, and they expect God to do for them things He has not promised to do.
1. Life as it is currently on this earth is not as God intended it to be due to man's sin. Jesus said: In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration (John 16:33, Amp). Moths and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal (Matt 6:20). We could do entire lessons on each point below. But consider several thoughts.
 - a. Adam, as the first human and first steward of earth, affected the entire race resident in him along with the earth when he sinned. Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12; Rom 5:19; Eph 2:1-3; II Cor 4:4; etc.
 1. Due to his sin we're born into a fallen race with natures that are contrary to God and bodies that are mortal and corruptible (subject to sickness, old age, and death). A curse of corruption that produces weeds, decay, natural disasters, and death is present in the material world.
 2. When Adam sinned he surrendered his God given authority in the earth to the tempter and Satan became the god of this world. He works through fallen men with unrenewed minds and causes much chaos as he lures mankind into rebellion against God.
 3. God gave humanity free will. With free will comes not only the choices but the consequences

of those choices. People regularly make choices with consequences that can and do affect us in negative ways going all the way back to Adam's choice to disobey God in the Garden.

- b. You must recognize the parameters of life in a fallen world. If you don't, on top of the hardships, injustices, and sufferings of life, you'll live with continual disappointment and frustration.
 1. If you were to move to Siberia because you want to live beside the ocean and spend you days soaking up the sun in a temperate climate, because you misunderstand the nature of life in Siberia, you'd live a life of frustration and disappointment. So it is with many of us.
 2. There is no such thing as an easy, problem free life in this sin cursed earth—no matter how much God loves you, how good you are or how much faith you have.
 - A. This doesn't mean there's no help for life's trials. But you must understand that although some issues can be resolved in this life, others may not be. We must deal with them as best we can with the assurance that all will be made right in the life to come.
 - B. The ultimate stage for reversal of life's pains, injustices, and losses is ahead, first in Heaven and then on the new earth when life will finally be what God intended. Rom 8:18
 2. We could do entire lessons on the points below. But consider several examples of what this looks like:
 - a. Healing for our bodies is a present provision of our inheritance. In His earth ministry, when Jesus announced that the kingdom of God was at hand, He healed the sick and cast out devils to demonstrate what the kingdom in action looks like in a fallen world. But we can't stop the aging process or death. A glorified body is for the life to come. Matt 4:23,24; Matt 9:35; Phil 3:20,21
 - b. Food, clothing, and shelter is a present provision of our inheritance. Jesus said that as we seek first the kingdom of God those things will be provided. The "over and above" (or hundredfold) is for the life to come. Matt 6:33; Matt 19:28,29
 - c. Much of the trouble in our lives comes from choices other people make which affect our lives.
 1. If taxes go up unreasonably due to the choices of government officials you can't override it with your faith. But you can look to your heavenly Father to provide what you need.
 2. If your company lays people off and you're the low man on the totem pole you can't override management's decision. But you can look to God to provide you with another job.
 3. If your son gets a divorce and his ex-wife moves three states away with your beloved grandchildren whom you're used to seeing weekly, you can't pray away her choice.
 1. Your inheritance doesn't empower you to override the human will or keep the effects of their decisions away from you. God's Word gives us wisdom on how to handle and navigate through these kinds of issues.
 2. The Bible gives insight into how to pray effectively for eternal results. When we pray in other tongues the Holy Spirit helps us to pray in the best way possible in the situation.
 3. This is where knowledge of the big picture is so helpful. This life is not all there is and everything we see is temporary and subject to change by the power of God either in this life or the life to come. This awareness lightens the load of life's hardships. II Cor 4:17,18
 - a. Most of life's troubles come from choices made by other people. (And, occasionally, we make a boneheaded choice ourselves.) But the Bible gives us wonderful news. God is able to use human choice and cause it to serve His purposes as He works out His plan to have a family.
 - b. The Bible records numerous examples of God doing just that. These examples are intended to give us hope in the midst of life's hardships. Rom 15:4
- C. Consider the highlights of one such example, the story of Joseph (Gen 37-50). It illustrates the present and future aspects of God's help for us and how they work together in a fallen world. Joseph is a real person you'll meet in Heaven. He lived a life as real as yours and mine. He is part of the same plan of God as us.
1. Joseph's story: When he was seventeen years old his older brothers, jealous of their father's love for him, sold him into slavery after changing their minds about killing him.
 - a. He was taken to Egypt by slave traders and purchased by Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh (King of

Egypt). Joseph was falsely accused of rape by Potiphar's wife and unjustly jailed.

1. While in prison he rightly interpreted dreams had by a baker and butler who worked for Pharaoh, predicting that the baker would be executed and the butler released.
2. Joseph asked the butler to bring his case before Pharaoh, but the man forgot Joseph for two years. When Pharaoh had troubling dreams no one could interpret, Joseph was summoned.
- b. Joseph rightly interpreted the dreams to mean there were seven years of plenty ahead followed by seven years of famine. He advised Pharaoh to place a man in charge of preparing for it.
 1. Pharaoh selected Joseph who successfully designed and implemented a food gathering and distribution program. There was plenty of food to feed Egypt and surrounding nations.
 2. Joseph's own brothers were among those who came to him for food. He eventually reunited with his family when his father, brothers, and their wives and children moved to Egypt to live.
2. Joseph's ordeal brings up the question: Why did this happen? God didn't do it. Jesus—who is God and shows us God—never treated anyone like this. God doesn't afflict people only to turn around and deliver them. That would be a house divided against itself. John 14:9,10; Acts 7:9,10; Matt 12:24-26
 - a. Joseph's brothers plotted to murder him, sold him into slavery, and then lied to their father Jacob about what happened. These fallen men, influenced by Satan, carried out a series of freewill acts that caused Joseph's troubles. That's life in a sin cursed earth.
 - b. Why didn't God stop it from happening? He doesn't override human choice. Why didn't He warn Joseph not to go see his brothers the day they carried out their plan? It wouldn't have solved the issue. They still had jealousy and murder in their heart and would have gotten him on another day.
3. God does put off short term blessing (like ending your trouble now) for long term eternal results.
 - a. He uses and maximizes the consequences of human choice for His glory and much good, even choices He does not approve or orchestrate. But timing is involved.
 1. Had God stopped Joseph's ordeal the day it started he would not have ended up in Egypt in charge of a food distribution program. He and his family may have died in the famine. That would have thwarted the plan of redemption since Jesus came through this people group.
 2. Had God intervened when Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph he wouldn't have gone to prison and met the butler, his link to Pharaoh. Had the butler remembered Joseph sooner he may have been released from jail but would have gone home without interpreting any dreams..
 - b. Tremendous good came out of Joseph's ordeal. Not only was his own family saved from famine (and the redemptive line preserved) many thousands were saved from starvation and multitudes heard about the Only True God because Joseph acknowledged Him throughout his adversities.
 1. During Joseph's servitude in Potiphar's hose, Potiphar, a worshipper of the gods of Egypt, realized that the Almighty God was with Joseph. Gen 39:3
 2. While in jail Joseph credited God as the one who gives accurate interpretations of the baker's and butler's dreams, and many more idol worshippers heard about the True God. Gen 40:8
 3. Joseph credited the Lord when he interpreted Pharaoh's dream causing the king to proclaim: "(Joseph) is a man who is obviously filled with the spirit of God (NLT)". Gen 41:38,39
 4. Many countries came to Egypt for food during the famine. They heard about the Sovereign Lord as they were told why Egypt had plenty of food when no one else did. Gen 41:57
 - c. God never abandoned Joseph and he had food, clothing, and shelter throughout. God preserved him and caused him to thrive in the midst of very difficult circumstances. Gen 39:2-4, 21; 41:40
 1. Gen 50:20--At the end of Joseph's story we get insight into how he viewed what happened to him. He told his brothers: You meant what you did for evil but God used it for good.
 2. His statement is the Romans 8:28 of the Old Testament. It's a tremendous promise to people who live in a sin damaged world. What did God do for Joseph?
 - A. He worked behind the scenes and caused the choices of men to serve His purposes.
 - B. God's timing was perfect. He put off short-term blessing (immediate deliverance) for long-term eternal results. There're are people in Heaven because of what happened.

C. God got Joseph through until He got him out and caused Joseph to flourish under very severe circumstances.

D. God brought genuine good out of real evil and maximum glory to Himself and maximum good to untold numbers of men and women as He worked out His eternal plan.

4. From Joseph's story we get insight into living in the light of unseen realities with an awareness that there's more to life than just this life (an eternal perspective).

a. Gen 39:2,3--As was pointed out above, Joseph continually acknowledged or praised God. To praise God means to acknowledge Him by talking about who He is and what He has done, is doing, and will do. Joseph couldn't see the Invisible God any more than we can.

1. Joseph's master, Potiphar, could see that God was with Joseph. He couldn't see God anymore than Joseph or us. He saw Joseph's behavior along with the effects of Joseph's dependence on God. Joseph was a light of God in his circumstance.

2. Joseph lived with a conscience toward God that affected his behavior. When Potiphar's wife tried to induce him to sin with her he resisted with: I can't do this because it would offend Almighty God (Gen 39:9). In other words he sought God's kingdom: not my will but yours.

3. Joseph couldn't change his circumstances. He had to trust the unseen God and praise is the language of faith (II Cor 5:7). God kept Joseph by His power through faith (I Pet 1:5).

b. God made two promises to Joseph before his trials began. The Lord promised him greatness and pledged to give him a homeland in Canaan (Gen 37:5-8; 35:9-12; 48:4). The first promise was fulfilled, but Joseph never returned home to live.

1. Gen 50:24-26--Shortly before his death Joseph told his family to carry his bones to Canaan when they returned to their country as he knew they would one day. When the family finally left Egypt four hundred years later, they did as he requested (Ex 13:18,19).

2. Joseph knew his destiny didn't end when he died. He is in Heaven now awaiting his return to earth with Jesus at the Second Coming. At that time Joseph's bones will be raised up and restored to life. He'll be reunited with his body at the resurrection of the dead. The first place he'll stand is Canaan. Joseph has an inheritance in the life to come on the new earth.

D. Conclusion: Consider these thoughts as we close. Does God delight in human suffering? Of course not. But He sees it in terms of the big picture, like a parent dealing with a child who's lost a favorite toy. Even though the child's heart is truly broken dad recognizes that in terms of an entire life span this isn't as devastating as it seems to the child in the moment.

1. We have a present and eternal inheritance. Nothing can come against us that's bigger than God. All lost is temporary and subject to change by the power of God either in this life or the life to come.

2. No one in unseen Heaven is crying about any suffering or hardship they endured in this life. They recognize that in comparison to the life they're now living and the one they will live on the new earth, it's nothing. Lots more next week!!