

What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

A Christian Is An Heir Of Christ



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

A Christian Is An Heir Of Christ

Learn why a Christian is an heir of God and what this relationship means

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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Written by Eric Krieg

About the author: My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

A Christian Is An Heir Of God

What does it mean to be a Christian? Being a Christian means a great deal. Fortunately, God has given us all the information we need to know about what being a Christian really means. As we study His saving message, we discover that a Christian is an heir of God.

Adopted As A Child Of God

An heir is one who is set to gain an inheritance from another. An individual is most commonly an heir because of the physical relation one person has to another (i.e. a child or grandchild). Particularly, the Christian is an heir of God because he/she has been adopted as a child of God. Consider Romans 8:14-17. “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, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

Previously a child of the devil

Before you can appreciate the opportunity you have by being a child of God, you need to recognize that there was an adoption that took place.

And, if there was an adoption (as indicated by Romans 8), you also must recognize that you were not always a child of God. Actually, the Scriptures clearly indicate that you were a child of the devil because you were involved in doing those things the devil would approve of.

1 John 3 makes this point very clear. Verses 8-10 say, “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.”

The devil practices that which is contrary to God’s righteousness. Therefore, those who are following his ways are spiritual children of his rather than God’s – because they resemble him rather than God. And, Romans 3 makes it perfectly clear that every morally responsible person has committed sin at some time. Verse 23 says, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Listen to Jesus’ statement to some who believed they were children of God in John 8. Though they claimed to be Abraham’s descendants (John 8:39), Jesus told them that they would do the works of Abraham if he was truly their father. Yet, Jesus said that they were seeking to kill Him for telling them the truth He heard from God. He said, “You do the deeds of your father” (verse 41). Still, they claimed to have God as their Father. In verse 42, Jesus told them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God...” Then, listen to Jesus’ rebuke of them in verse 44. “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

Although this specific text was a rebuke to some who claimed to be children of God on the basis of their physical ancestry (being descendants of

Abraham), Jesus demonstrated that God was concerned about much more than that! Today, you should learn that you must love God (which involves keeping His commandments, John 14:15) in order to be a child of God. And, your life must resemble who God is rather than following the ways of the devil.

Then, one final passage to consider on this point is Ephesians 2. In this text, Paul explains both the need for the grace and mercy of God and states that it has been provided. In verses 1-3, Paul identifies that you were dead in your trespasses and sins (i.e. when you were living as a child of the devil). During this time that you were living according to the desires of the world and the devil, Paul said that you were a child of wrath in your nature (verse 3). That is, you were deserving to experience the wrath and vengeance of the Almighty God for living according to these sinful ways.

So, take a few moments just to appreciate the spiritual condition you were in prior to becoming a child of God. You were a child of a father who did not care for you. Your father lied to you, deceived you, and spiritually abused you. As long as you stayed in his “home” and lived according to his sinful ways, you were spiritually dead because you were separated from God. And, if your life would end in that condition, you would face eternity in the fires and torment of Hell along with your father and all those who are his children (see Matthew 25:41 and Revelation 21:8). This will be the ultimate manifestation of God’s wrath that will be shown to those who refuse to obey Him (see 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

Adoption is only possible through Jesus

You were enslaved to sin whenever you listened to the lies of Satan (see Romans 6:15-23). You were living in the way that you were taught by your “brothers and sisters” in the world. You were doing whatever you felt would best please your own physical desires. But, whenever you heard the message of the gospel of Christ, you discovered that you had been deceived and spiritually abused. And, you learned that there is a Father who has opened His “home” to many who have come from your same background (who had also been children of the devil).

Ephesians 2 continues to explain this tremendous opportunity God has given to all who were dead in their sins as children of the devil to have spiritual life through Jesus Christ. “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (verses 4-7).

Therefore, this Father is the only one who could provide the payment necessary to adopt you away from Satan! This was only possible through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. This Father willingly sacrificed Jesus Christ by sending Him from Heaven to earth in order to teach those who were children of the devil and give His life as the ransom sacrifice by being crucified.

Listen to Ephesians 1:3-6: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”

It was God’s decision to give the children of the devil the opportunity to access all the spiritual blessings He would provide through Jesus Christ. God (the Father) chose that those who would come to Jesus Christ would have access to all these spiritual blessings (including the forgiveness of their sins, see verse 7) and should live holy lives. Then, He also predetermined that those who would come to Jesus Christ would also be adopted as sons.

Listen to Galatians 4:4-5: “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.”

God sent Jesus Christ to this earth at just the right time in order that He might provide the opportunity for those who were enslaved to Satan as his children to be redeemed by His precious blood (see 1 Peter 1:18-19). Now, God has given everyone the opportunity to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ. And, no longer being a slave to Satan, you can be a son (or daughter) of God. Then, as a child of God, you can be an “heir of God through Christ.”

But, recognize that this is all only possible through Jesus Christ. No matter how much you might have hated the devil as your father and hated living in slavery to him, you could not escape this “home” without the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it clear that your salvation was by the grace of God through faith, and that it was not of yourself. No matter how many good works you would try to do, you could not earn your own adoption by God!

Those who follow God are adopted as children

Although you could not earn your own adoption by God after you had decided to sin and become a child of the devil, God does require you to live for Him in order to receive the adoption as sons through Jesus Christ. Think back to Romans 8:14. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” As you consider this statement in the context of Romans 8, you discover that these are individuals who are focused on the spiritual things of God rather than the physical things of this world. Being led by the Spirit of God requires following the teachings of God the Spirit has revealed. Thus, you are led by the Spirit whenever you give yourself to obey the words of God (as revealed in the pages of the Bible).

Recall that 1 John 3:8-10 said that the one who is born of God has God’s “seed” in him. This seed is His word (compare with Luke 8:11 and 1 Peter 1:22-25). Furthermore, the one who has been born of God through His seed is also the one who practices righteousness and loves his Christian brothers and sisters. And, once again, it is through the words God has revealed in the pages of the Bible

that God has told you everything you need to know to live in a way that is right with God (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Now, you must recognize that God’s word did require you to do some things in order to become His child. God has not made every child of the devil His child unconditionally. As we have seen, God required you to obey Him by doing what the Bible instructs you to do. He required you to hear His word (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God (John 8:24), repent of your sins (Acts 17:30), confess Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and be immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). Then, He required that you remain faithful to Him after you have become His child by continuing to be led by His Spirit and practice righteousness (see Revelation 2:10; Romans 8:14; and 1 John 3:10).

Specifically, please consider Galatians 3:26-27. “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.” Notice the essential place this passage assigns to both faith and baptism in becoming the adopted children of God. Without either one, a child of the devil cannot become the adopted child of God!

Why God adopted you

Now, the entire idea of adoption implies a choice on the part of the one doing the adopting. This one is not forced to be a father or mother to any children who are not their own. Instead, there is something within this individual that provokes the desire to parent a child/children he/she does not have the natural responsibility to parent.

Now, I want you to imagine that you decide that you want to give a child who is not your own a good home and an opportunity to experience your love and affection. You want to give a child the opportunity to do well in his/her life. Whenever you go to select the child you will adopt, which one do you choose? Do you choose the most problematic child or the least problematic one? I’ll let you decide for yourself.

While I cannot tell you which one you would choose, I do know which ones God has adopted. God

has adopted (through the process we have already discussed) the ones who had lived contrary His desires. He has adopted those who had demonstrated hatred in their actions toward Him whenever they rebelled against Him. And, just as this is true about everyone who had been a child of the devil, this has also been true about you.

So, this begs the question: Why did God give you the opportunity to be adopted and be one of His children? John 3:16 explains what you need to know. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” God simply loved those whom He had created so much that He could not do nothing and watch all mankind go down the path in life that would result in everlasting torment in Hell fire. So, He provided mankind with the opportunity to be saved through Jesus Christ and have everlasting life in Heaven!

Ephesians 1:5-6 also identifies why God gave you the opportunity to be adopted. The passage says that this decision to adopt through Jesus Christ was “according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” Why did He make such a great sacrifice to save you from the consequences of your decision to sin again Him? Because that is who He is! It is His “good pleasure” to give you the opportunity to live as His child and praise Him for His grace! “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15)!

The Christian’s Inheritance

Having received this adoption, you (as a Christian) are a child of the Almighty God. Therefore, you can cry out “Abba, Father.” The term “Abba” was used as an expression of closeness in relationship. No one could rightly say “Abba, Father” to God except those who are God’s children (Romans 8:15-16). And, Romans 8:17 says that if you are a child of God, then you are an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. Therefore, let’s spend some time considering this wonderful inheritance God has made available to His children. And, please

note that God offers this same inheritance to all who are His children – even those who are His children by adoption!

Heirs of God, the Father

The idea of being an heir differs in significance depending on who the father is. For instance, one individual may be an heir but may receive little/no inheritance. However, others are heirs to great wealth, royalty, possessions, etc. So, to appreciate the fact that a Christian is an heir, you must recognize who the Father is!

Notice that Romans 8:17 says that you are an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. This God is the one who is described in Acts 17. Verse 24 says that this is the God “who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth.” And, He is the God who is so full of magnificence that He is too wonderful to be confined by a physical structure – no matter how extravagant man may build a temple. Verse 25 says that He is the one who is not in need of anything man can do for Him. Verses 26-28 emphasize that God has made man. Verse 29 says that He possesses Divine nature (meaning that He is eternal, He is all-powerful, He is ever-present, He is all-knowing, He is all-seeing, and everything that is involved in God being God). And, verses 30-31 say that God will judge the world.

Now, I want you to think about the wealthiest and most powerful king who could ever live. Most of the people on this earth would love to be this man’s heir. However, the opportunity you have as a Christian to be the heir of the Almighty God makes you a greater heir than even he! This is because your Father is greater than any earthly father could ever be! While some have wealthy fathers who are kings, the Christian has a Father who is Lord of Heaven and earth! There is nothing good that does not belong to the Christian’s Father!

In fact, Jesus helps us to see that even if an individual would inherit everything this world has to offer from an earthly father, it would all be worthless if he/she was not an heir of God! In Matthew 16:26, Jesus said, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Rather

than putting your focus on being an heir of physical things, you must recognize the tremendous opportunity you have been given to be the heir of God and humble yourself under His authority so that He will grant to you all the blessings of His inheritance. Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3)!

Full adoption coming

Now, though we are children of God while we live on this earth and have access to all the spiritual blessings God has provided through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3), we only have a small portion of the inheritance that God has prepared for His children. In addition, those who are heirs of God are not always distinguished from those who are not while we live on this earth. There are many who claim to be heirs of God who have actually rejected God as their Father.

Yet, there will be a Day on which all those who are true children of God will be identified as such and the full inheritance the Father has prepared will be given to them. Listen to Romans 8:23-25. “Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”

Throughout our lives on this earth, the children of the devil will make life burdensome for the children of God. In fact, the Scriptures picture this as a war. However, the children of God are saved in the hope they cling to – and this hope focuses on the Day when Jesus returns to take all of God’s children to Heaven with Him. Thus, as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, we will all spend eternity in the place the Scriptures identify as Heaven. This hope serves as an anchor for the child of God who is experiencing difficult situations while he/she lives on this earth (see Hebrews 6:19)!

A description of the Christian’s inheritance

What is this inheritance in Heaven – and why is it so wonderful so as to persevere through all of the difficulties of life in order to receive? Consider a number of Bible passages that help us to understand the nature of this inheritance.

First, this inheritance has been (or, is being) prepared for God’s children. 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 speaks of the fact that God has revealed His will to mankind through His Holy Spirit. This is because it is only the Holy Spirit who can know the mind of God. Now, whenever we read what the Holy Spirit has revealed through the inspired writers of the Bible, we can understand the mind of God and Christ. In this context, particularly notice what Paul said in verses 9-10. “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.”

Not only has the Spirit revealed what God has prepared concerning how God’s children are expected to conduct themselves, but He has also revealed what wonderful inheritance is prepared for God’s children who love Him. So, we observe a couple of things. First, there is something that the Almighty God who is Lord of Heaven and earth has prepared for those who are His children. Second, this inheritance has never been seen by man’s eyes. Third, the only way we know anything about the inheritance He has prepared is through what God (by His Holy Spirit) has revealed about it.

Jesus used the same kind of language about the inheritance being prepared in John 14. He said, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions [dwelling places]; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know” (verses 1-4). Then, Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (verse 6).

Can you just imagine the place that the one who performed miracles of healing the sick, causing the blind to see, making the paralyzed walk, and raising the dead is capable of preparing? And, then to understand that He is preparing this place in His “Father’s house.” As a Christian, therefore, you have a dwelling place in your Father’s house that is being prepared for your eternal occupancy! One Day, Christ will come and take those who are joint heirs with Him to live in this place He is preparing with His Father!

Second, listen to the description of this wonderful inheritance in 1 Peter 1:3-9. “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, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.”

Ultimately, this inheritance is the salvation of your soul. So, this inheritance is two-fold. God saves you from the punishment those who are children of the devil will experience in Hell. And, God gives you eternal life in Heaven. Notice that this inheritance is pictured as being “reserved in heaven for you” (verse 4). Therefore, given Jesus’ language we observed in John 14, picture having a room God has prepared for you in Heaven – with a note on the door saying, “Reserved for [insert your name here].”

Furthermore, this inheritance is not something that perishes. Inheritances we get from earthly fathers fade away over time. They rust, are destroyed, are stolen, are spent, and are left to others when our lives end. And, they typically require the death of the one who is leaving the inheritance.

However, our Heavenly Father will never die – and His inheritance will never fade away!

Third, this inheritance offers rest to those who have labored for the Lord. As we will observe in a few moments, this inheritance is conditional and will only be given to those who are diligent in living in the way their Heavenly Father desires. Certainly, there is much work that your Father wants you to be doing and there will be suffering experienced as you labor. However, Revelation 14:13 speaks of the Christian’s inheritance as rest for these. “...Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on...that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

The sacrifices that the child of God makes while living on this earth will not be for nothing. As 1 Corinthians 15:58 assures, the Christian’s labor will not be in vain! Instead, there is rest that is offered in a place that is described as being eternal life (Matthew 25:46).

Fourth, the most complete picture that we have been given of this inheritance is seen in Revelation 21:1-22:5. In context, the apostle John was given a vision through the Spirit into Heaven. And, he writes what he has seen. However, as we prepare to consider what he says, let’s understand an essential point: The book of Revelation was written in symbolic language. It is full of imagery that must not be taken literally. So, as you read the book of Revelation, you must picture the images that are being painted to try to describe Heaven in terms that our human minds can grasp.

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He

said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'

"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

"Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

"But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever."

This inheritance is conditional

What a wonderful inheritance that has been prepared by God for His children! But, in order to receive this inheritance, you must comply with the conditions that have been placed upon it. Just as an earthly father can place conditions in his will for others to meet before they can obtain his inheritance, God has placed conditions upon receiving the wonderful inheritance that has been described.

We have already discussed the conditions God has placed upon becoming an adopted child of His (i.e. hearing His word, believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized). Now, I specifically want to consider the responsibilities you have as a child of His. Consider a few points briefly.

First, you must practice righteousness and love your Christian brothers and sisters. John said that those who are children of the devil are known because they do not practice righteousness and do not love their brethren (1 John 3:10). The reverse is true

about those who are children of God. They do practice righteousness and love their brethren.

Second, you must love Him. Recall that Paul spoke about the things God has prepared “for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). By implication, those who fail to love Him will not receive the things He has prepared. The wonderful inheritance we have been discussing is reserved for those who love God. And, recognize the fact that true love for God means that you will keep His commandments and His commandments will not be burdensome (1 John 5:3).

Third, you must be faithful to Christ. Being faithful to Jesus Christ means that you conduct your life according to His will. It means that you will act in the way He desires rather than in the way you desire – and that you conduct yourself in this way through the point of your physical death, even if being faithful to Christ means suffering and dying for Christ. In Revelation 2, listen to what Jesus told a group of God’s children. “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (verse 10). In Romans 8:17, Paul said that those who are children are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, “if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” So, you cannot expect to receive the inheritance if you are not willing to be faithful to Him through suffering!

Fourth, recall that God has only promised this restful inheritance to those who “die in the Lord” (Revelation 14:13). So, it is only the one who dies physically while in a right condition with God who will receive this eternal inheritance in Heaven. Therefore, receiving this eternal inheritance depends upon you conducting your entire life according to the things that are revealed in the pages of the Bible concerning how God wants you to live and what He wants you to do!

Avoiding prodigal living as an heir

Finally, as you recognize these conditions God has placed upon His heirs receiving this inheritance, you need to consider the importance of avoiding prodigal (wasteful) living. To illustrate this,

I want to focus on Jesus’ parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. Please note that if you are unfamiliar with this parable you should read it now.

In the parable, a man had two sons. And, the younger of these two sons demanded his father’s inheritance early. Not long after he received this inheritance, he went away to a far country and wasted all of his inheritance with wild and reckless living. Eventually, he had wasted everything that he had inherited and was in desperate need of food for survival. Then, when he hit “rock bottom,” he returned to his father to simply ask to be made a servant. Although the older brother was disappointed by his father’s reception, the father welcomed the return of his son and gave him the best of what he had.

Every child of God needs to listen carefully to Jesus’ parable! For, this parable has often been demonstrated as true whenever those who are children of God take their inheritances and waste them by their wild and reckless living! Rather than being grateful for the opportunity to be saved through Christ, many who have become Christians depart from Christ in order to please their own physical desires. Thus, they throw away the opportunity to receive the wonderful inheritance God has promised in order to experience temporary pleasures associated with life on this earth.

However, even when an individual has acted with such recklessness, it is still possible to return to the Father. The Father wants those who have left Him to return. Like the father in Jesus’ parable rejoiced whenever his son returned to him, God will rejoice whenever His erring children return to Him – and He will again give them access to His great inheritance!

Conclusion

What love God has shown to you in sending His only begotten Son to die for you in order that He might have you (who had sinned against Him) as an adopted child! Now, through Jesus, you have the opportunity to experience all of the wonderful blessings of the inheritance God has provided for His

children. But, you must be faithful to God throughout the course of your life if you wish to receive it!

C. Revelation 14:13 –

Study Questions

D. Revelation 21:1-22:5 –

1. Adopted As A Child Of God

When were you a child of the devil? What is being a child of the devil like?

What does God require of His children to receive this inheritance?

Through whom is adoption possible? Explain.

How is it possible to waste this wonderful inheritance?

Does God require you to do anything in order to be His adopted child? If so, what?

Why did God adopt you?

2. The Christian's Inheritance

Contrast being an heir of God with being an heir of an earthly father. What is so special about being an heir of God?

When you will be fully adopted?

Discuss the Christian's inheritance through the following passages.

A. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 and John 14:1-6 –

B. 1 Peter 1:3-9 –