

(From the book of sermons, compiled and edited by Agnes Robinson, entitled *Heaven's Quest for a Man Like God* by Rev. H. P. Robinson, copyright 1969 by LifeSprings Resources, formerly Advocate Press. Reprinted by permission.)

THE INHERITANCE AMONG THE SANCTIFIED

"I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20: 32).

Property inheritance figures largely in all Jewish history. It comes into particular notice first with Abraham, the father of the faithful, and is prominently featured throughout their national existence.

God, after calling Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees to go out into a country that he knew not of, said unto him, "To thee, and to thy children after thee, will I give this land for an inheritance." This promise was made upon the basis of Abraham's faith and obedience, and from that far off day until this very hour, the tides of human history have ebbed and flowed about that promised land. Ever and anon the course of human events have moved in strange and uncharted channels, determined by the binding contracts of that promise and God's faithfulness in keeping His Word.

The firstborn in every Jewish family was held in a peculiar light with particular reference to the inheritance of the father. The inheritance was a sacred thing, held in high esteem by the Jews and greatly respected by the Lord.

In the case of Esau and Jacob, the whole tragic episode involved the reckless barter of the honored birthright. The holy record does not elaborate upon it. It simply states, "Esau sold his birthright," and centuries later the apostle, when referring to this foolish barter, said, "Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, for ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected for he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears."

The book of the Exodus is a record of the redemption from Egyptian bondage of the descendants of Abraham; and God is seen through this deliverance connected with the Israelites in one particular sense – by His covenant with Abraham. He is faithful in fulfilling His promise by giving them the land for an inheritance.

In establishing themselves in the land of promise, each of the twelve tribes was given an equal inheritance. In addition to this, the tribe of Levi, who had previously been exchanged for the first born was given a specific inheritance. The Lord said to Moses, "The Levites shall dwell in the Cities of Refuge; they shall not have an inheritance among the people, but the Lord will be their inheritance." Thus, in this arrangement, the people received a two-fold inheritance involving both material and spiritual gifts.

The Jews received the inheritance, involving all the special privileges as the chosen people of God, simply because they were the children of Abraham. The land which they claimed for their own, the overtures of God's mercy, the demonstration of His power, the expression of His providential care, came to them through the faithfulness

of God in keeping His covenant. It was not because they were worthy of His honored favor, but because they could trace their lineage to Abraham as their father. Thus, they reaped the benefits of the inheritance upon no merits of their own. It was theirs only through son-ship.

Down across the years, these strange people have moved through the earth. They have moved as if inwardly conscious that they were traveling to a certain destiny. As the Scripture hath said, "They have not been reckoned among the nations." They have had no home, yet, they have moved with a pardonable pride; cursed, yet blessed of God; vagabonds on the earth, yet heir to a promised land; driven from shore to shore, yet knowing that someday they will come into their inheritance; dying, yet with their faces toward Jerusalem, praying for that day soon to come when they, as children of Abraham, shall settle in their homeland forever.

In the beginning of the Gospel era, the Pharisees endeavored to capitalize upon being heirs of the promise and demanded the virtues of God's grace on this basis alone. Jesus informed them, however, that they had forfeited their right as legal heirs because they had failed to perpetuate the works and faith of Abraham, telling them that if they were the children of Abraham, they would do the works of Abraham. He infuriated them to the point that they were ready to stone Him to death, because He told them that they were illegitimate children in respect to their son-ship to Abraham. They could no longer claim to be heirs of the promise because they were of their father, the devil

In the kingdom of grace, Jesus shows that the relationship was changed, and the individual could

not claim heirship to the blessing without meeting certain moral demands for himself. The first explanation of this was given by John the Baptist during his marvelous ministry in the wilderness of Judea. "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance," he said, "and think not to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham; and now also, the ax is laid at the foot of the tree. Therefore, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.'" Thus, not only were the promises of God contingent upon certain moral obligations of the individual, but even sonship in the kingdom of God depended upon individual repentance and proof of that repentance.

Hence, the issue involved in inheritance did not by any means terminate with Jewish History; the principle of it was just transferred into the dispensation of Grace, along with all the types and shadows, and takes on spiritual significance when interpreted in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The rich young ruler was somewhat confused in his conception of the basis upon which New Testament inheritance depended. Coming to Jesus, he said, "Good Master, what can I do that I might inherit eternal life?" Jesus, knowing that he was still thinking in terms of the law of Moses and of his kinship to Abraham, told him to keep the commandments. He did not attempt to explain the mysteries of the kingdom inheritance simply because this man's heart and mind were so far removed from a spiritual insight into those things.

Quite often in the Gospels, the people of God are exhorted to faithfulness with the appeal and promise that they might inherit the kingdom

prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

It is in the Acts of the Apostles that the master theologian gives us a clear picture of the classification of our spiritual status that makes us an heir to the promised possession. "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified." In his famous speech before Agrippa, he recalls his commission, giving the purpose of it thus: "I send thee to the Gentiles to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

An inheritance is a free gift, based upon love, kinship, and family ties. It is the gift of a father to his son because that son is a member of that family by birth or adoption. Thus, in the case of these two foregoing verses of Scripture, it is clear that there is a certain inheritance which is a specified and particular gift of God to the sanctified.

The sanctified are, because of that experience, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Hence, the experience of Sanctification makes us one with Christ, standing on an equal basis with Him in the sight of God with respect to this particular inheritance.

It is very clearly implied that this inheritance belongs to the sanctified people in this life. It is further implied that it is not a material but a spiritual blessing, and it is evident that this inheritance is the Baptism with the Holy Ghost.

There are many promises of God, yet there is

one referred to as THE promise of God. "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you." And again, "After ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise of the Father." These two Scriptures definitely refer to the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is given to the sanctified on the basis of the shed blood of Jesus Christ in answer to the prayer of God's Son for His people throughout all generations.

I further prove that this inheritance of the sanctified is the Holy Ghost, the promise of the Father, with Ephesians 1:13,14, "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory."

In this last verse, the Holy Spirit with all of its blessings and gifts, is but the immediate and present inheritance of the sanctified. "For," saith the Scripture, "this is our portion until the redemption of the purchased possession," indicating that there is for the sanctified "the promise of an eternal inheritance, purchased by the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God."

It is a challenge that is beyond this world for men to realize that all those who are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus are made one with Him in Spirit, in fellowship with God, and equal heir to the promise, and will be granted the immortal honor of sharing in an eternal inheritance with Jesus Christ forever, an inheritance that fadeth not away, but will brighten and be enriched by on-going millenniums.

In the fifth chapter of the Revelation, we have

the dramatic introduction to the seven-sealed book. Great alarm is expressed by both man and angel over the fact that no man on earth or in heaven is able to break the seals of the book. Contained within the seals of this book is the title deed to our purchased possession. It is the bloodstained contract of the eternal inheritance of the redeemed. For one terrible moment, the promised heritage seemed beyond the reach of God's children, but behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, came and took the book and broke the seven seals. This, our Kinsman Redeemer, our blood brother, from the right hand of God, has at last prevailed to reward His faithful ones with their eternal inheritance.

To those of us who now toil through the long day, this may seem *a* remote possibility, but ere long, the trump of God shall sound, the year of Jubilee shall come, and we can take our stand yonder to share in that blessed heritage prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

It will not be limited to a spiritual inheritance. Heaven is much more than a visionary fantasy. It is not just an idea, it is a place. It is not a place marred by cabins in the corner, either. Jesus said "In my Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . and I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am, ye may be also." That, with the unconditional gift of the earth as an inheritance to the meek, is enough to satisfy the wildest imagination of every faithful saint that they may wait patiently for the redemption of the purchased possession.