



IS YOUR ETERNAL INHERITANCE IN ADAM OR IN CHRIST?

Put simply, an inheritance is something that one person passes on to another when they die. There are a number of types of inheritance. Perhaps the one most familiar to us is a financial inheritance. We make out a Will to ensure that those whom we love receive any assets that we may have acquired through life. It is hoped that such an inheritance will bring some benefit to those who receive it. While we all may not receive a financial inheritance, we all receive a physical inheritance. Our biological parents pass on certain physical characteristics to us, such as our body shape and size, the colour and shape of our eyes and the colour of our skin. Associated with our biological past is our intellectual inheritance. We acquire mental abilities and aptitudes from our biological parents (which, we sometimes wish we had more or less of). Then again, as citizens of a particular country we can speak about our national inheritance – the national culture and customs that have been passed down from generation to generation. The Bible speaks extensively about the national inheritance of Israel, God's firstborn nation.

Our spiritual inheritance in Adam

The Bible also speaks of another type of inheritance – a *spiritual* inheritance. We learn a good deal about this in the book of Romans Chapter 5, verses 12 and 18. The epistle to the Romans is in part a book about inheritance, as we shall see. But let us now refer to these two verses of Chapter 5.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (v 12). “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation” (v 18).”

These verses clearly tell us, that through the action of *one man* we have all inherited *sin, death, judgment and condemnation*. In regard to sin, we have inherited this man's fallen position and condition. We commit sin because we are sinners – our inherited nature. This man sinned by deliberately disobeying God, despite the fact that God warned him that he would surely die in the day that he sinned (Gen 2:17). On the fateful day of his disobedience, he died spiritually and later his body died physically. This man was, of course, Adam. He was our representative head, and so what he did impacted upon every one under his headship – the human race. His sin therefore has brought physical and spiritual death upon us all. “Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come” (Rom 5:14). Despite what we may think or feel, according to His holy prerogative, God regards every one of us as sinners because of what our federal head, Adam did. He has stated this very plainly because He does not want us to have the slightest misunderstanding about it. As sinners, death, judgment and condemnation *have* been inherited by us. Judgment means that we are all declared guilty before a holy God; condemnation means that we have all been sentenced to an eternity separated from God. The Lord spoke of it. “He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (Jn 3:18).

There we have it! The awful universal legacy left by our fallen head Adam. What can we do about it? Of ourselves we can do nothing to remove it. We can refuse to accept a financial inheritance and even take steps to avoid the consequences of our physical inheritance. But as far as our spiritual inheritance is concerned, nothing we can do will remove it. Yet, many, to their eternal peril try to do so through good works – by living a harmless life or by esteeming others above themselves; some become faithful members of a church and many rest on their “baptism” as infants. Such things, humanly speaking, appear inoffensive; but the Bible declares them to be impotent in regard to salvation from the dire inheritance that we have in Adam. Paul reminded the Ephesian Christians, that “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Then he adds the unambiguous disclaimer, “Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph 2:8-9). “But wait” say some! What about the rich ruler who kept the law and asked the Lord, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life” (Luke 18:18)? He was told to sell all his possessions and follow the Lord. Is this not “works”? Superficially, it may appear so. However, by divesting himself of his earthly possessions, he would be casting his all upon the

Lord. He would thus demonstrate the principle of faith in Christ – the only way of inheriting eternal life. Still, there are those who believe that they can avoid Adam’s inheritance by “keeping the law” – the Ten Commandments. They do this in spite of the Bible telling us that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight” (Rom 3:20; Gal 2:16). It is to our eternal loss to trust in our own merits for salvation. “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa 64:6).

How then can we escape the dreadful legacy of Adam? We have already seen something of the answer. It is **through faith in Christ**, God’s Beloved Son. God sent His Son to put away sin by His sacrificial death on the cross (Heb 9:26). Sin had to be put away – defeated through Christ’s death and resurrection. Then, and only then could a holy God in grace reach out to you and I and offer us salvation from the inheritance of Adam. “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace” (Rom 4:16). We need to acknowledge our judgment and condemnation in Adam before God and in faith accept Christ as our Saviour. We then come under the headship of the second Man, Jesus Christ. His headship gives everyone under it eternal life. This is declared by Paul to the Corinthian Christians – “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ [those in Christ] shall all be made alive” (1 Cor 15:22). And so we have another head – the Man Christ Jesus, whose legacy is contrasted with that of Adam. “Therefore as by the offence of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience [Adam] many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous.

As sons of Adam we inherit his terrible inheritance. But *upon* faith in Christ we become *children* of God. The Lord stated this very clearly. “As many as received him [Christ], to them gave he power [right] to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn 1:12). We are then born into a new family – the family of God. This is the meaning of being “born again.” To change our inheritance we must change our parentage – from Adam to Christ! Upon spiritual rebirth we also become “adopted sons” of God. The term “adoption” in the Roman epistle has the sense in which the Romans used it in their laws of adoption and inheritance. Though not a child by nature, an adopted son under Roman law took the family’s name and had the same rights to the family’s inheritance as a son by nature. Christ is the Son of God by divine nature and right; Christians are the sons of God by adoption and grace. When we accept Christ we take the name of Christ. We are put into the place of inheritance as sons of God and, we become joint heirs with Christ, the Son of God, as we note below. So to the Christians in Rome Paul wrote, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Rom 8:15). How wondrous are the provisions of God to all who believe! They are found *only* in and through Christ.

“Heirs of God & joint heirs with Christ”

Christ died to enable us to escape the damning inheritance that we all have in Adam. Adam’s inheritance is corruptible, defiled and has a reservation for all through divine judgment in hell – eternal separation from God. If you are still a child of Adam, we trust that you will be convicted of the terrible legacy you have in him, and place your faith in Christ. In so doing you will be assured of an

inheritance that is “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet 1:4). This inheritance is incorruptible, undefiled and eternal because it rests upon Christ and shared with Him – the incorruptible, undefiled and eternal Son of God – the Man exalted in heaven. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:16-17). “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 5:21). “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death...they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb 9:15). God is calling all to Him through His Son, so that all may receive the promise of eternal inheritance. Will you heed the call?

“Naught have I gotten but what I’ve received,
Grace has bestowed it since I have believed,
Boasting excluded, pride I abase, I’m only a sinner saved by grace” (Redemption Songs)