



Dale Rumble

Preface

The gospel of the kingdom is not only the good news of God's love and redemption provided through the death of His Son on the cross. It is also God's invitation to embrace the government of Christ. When a partial gospel message is preached, the whole counsel and commission of God are not made clear. For example, there are preachers who mix good works with God's grace in the message of salvation; others proclaim a gospel of grace which does not present all of the inheritance God has promised to those who believe; and there are many who promise every believer that they will one day reign with Christ over the nations.

This tract has been written to address this issue and to clearly distinguish between the inheritance and the rewards of Christians. Let us first examine our inheritance in Christ.

Part I — The Grace of Inheritance

When parents die and bequeath an estate to their offspring, the inheritance is given to the children simply because it was promised to them in the will of their parents. They did not merit it nor earn it; it became theirs by promise, and promise alone.

In same way, our inheritance in Christ is based on what God has promised in His word. These promises become ours when, by His grace, we truly repent, and through faith in the gospel message we receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Our inheritance includes all of the blessings of eternal life, which can never be earned or merited by race, culture or good deeds. They are entirely a free gift from God!

*For this reason it is **by faith** that it might be in accordance **with grace**, in order that the **promise** may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. (Romans 4:16)*

Thus, our inheritance, which accompanies the salvation of our soul, is by grace on the basis of our faith in the promises of the gospel; *we are heirs according to the promise* (Galatians 3:29). As believers, we must *never* consider ourselves unworthy of this great inheritance. Of course, we are unworthy, but Christ has made us worthy, for He has paid the price for all of it!

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no one should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The Magnitude of Our Inheritance

It is important that the boundaries and content of our inheritance in Christ be neither over, nor underestimated in our faith. One who turns away from life in Christ to again serve the devil forfeits his inheritance. Our concern is not with such sin, but rather how to walk

in righteousness as good stewards of what Christ has provided for us. The following seven promises define this inheritance.

1. Eternal Life

And this is the promise which He Himself made to us; eternal life. (1 John 2:25)

Eternal life, which begins with the new birth, is to know God and to forever live in fellowship with Him (1 John 5:10-13, 20). However, it is more than this. When Jesus died on the cross, the sinful, fallen nature of every man was crucified with Him, By faith in God's word declaring this to be so, new believers can identify with Christ's death by being buried in the waters of baptism. There the Spirit of God will circumcise their hearts so that they can arise to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-6; Colossians 2:11-12). They can, *by faith*, exchange their old way of life for one of righteousness by allowing Christ to live His life in them (Galatians 2:20). Our inheritance includes the provision for a life of victory over sin!

2. The Holy Spirit

*In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that **we might receive the promise of the Spirit** through faith. (Galatians 3:14)*

*For the **promise** (of the Holy Spirit) is for you and your children, and for all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:39)*

No one can be a child of God apart from the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. We cannot know the promptings of God apart from the leading of His Spirit. Our inheritance also includes all the virtues and power of the Spirit. And He is the Spirit who will lead us into all truth. He is our anointing to break the chains of those we minister to who are bound by Satan. He sanctifies us, reveals Christ to us and teaches us how to worship and pray.

One cannot be fruitful in service without the gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit. It is through Him that we can fulfill the call

God has placed upon us. He is the “spiritual talents’ we have been entrusted with. Indeed, He is the first fruit of *all* of our inheritance in Christ!

3. The Family of God

Whoever receives the life and nature of God through the new birth becomes a son. He is their Father and *each one* has the place and esteem of a son in His household (1 John 3:1-2).

*For you are **all** sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26)*

If we were to visit an earthly family with many sons we would likely find one in diapers, several in various levels of childhood and, possibly, one or more older ones who were helping their parents with various household responsibilities. All children would be loved equally, but their responsibilities would be quite different. It is similar in God’s family. Each of us are special in the eyes of our Father. There are *no* second class citizens in His household; all sons share His love equally. For this reason, elitism or sectarianism are *always* sins when they appear in a church for they are a contradiction of our inheritance in Christ.

4. The Body of Christ.

To be a son of God, to belong to Christ, is to also be a member of His body, the church. This is also our inheritance in Him.

*For by one Spirit we were **all** baptized into **one** body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)*

*So we, who are many, are **one** body in Christ, and individually members of one another. (Romans 12:5)*

And He (God) put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him (Jesus) as head over all things to the church, which is His body . . . (Ephesians 1:22-23)

The body of Christ is made up of *all* who are called out of the world into fellowship with one another to make up one church. The

word “church” is translated from a Greek word, “ekklesia,” which is composed of two words that mean “to call” and “from out of.” Thus, the body of Christ is made up of all who have been born again by the Spirit of God and called out of the world and together into fellowship around the Lord Jesus Christ. There may be many religious organizations and denominations but there is only one church, one body of Christ.

*Since there is **one** bread, we who are many **are** one body; for we all partake of the one bread. (1 Corinthians 10:7)*

*There is **one** body and **one** Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling. (Ephesians 4:4)*

5. The Kingdom of God

God has only one kingdom; to belong to Him is to be a citizen of His kingdom. This too is our inheritance in Christ.

Truly, truly, I say to you unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3)

Do not be afraid, little flock, for you Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

For He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

Our inheritance includes victory over all the schemes of Satan and his kingdom of darkness. However, there is also a future, much greater dimension of God’s kingdom that will one day include all of the earth as well as heaven. This kingdom will also be the inheritance of all saints (Daniel 7:18, 27). It will be ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ with each saint having a specific place of service.

6. Resurrection

Flesh and blood cannot inherit this kingdom that is to come. For this reason, another inheritance for every believer is a resurrection of life (1 Corinthians 15:50). The promise of eternal life is not simply that we will live forever, but that we also will have a body like

our Lord with whom we live. The promise of our resurrection was made by Jesus Himself.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die . . .(John 11:25-26)

We receive our new bodies when the Lord Jesus returns in glory at the last trumpet to raise the dead who belong to Him.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

*Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall **all** be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)*

The redemption of our bodies will be the final portion of our inheritance, for it completes our adoption as sons (Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:53-54).

7. The Image of Jesus

Resurrection is the miracle of putting off our earthly house of clay and putting on the house prepared for us in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:1-5). We replace a body of death with a spiritual body that is imperishable. This is the inheritance of *every* believer.

And just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. (1 Corinthians 15:49)

What will our glorified body be like? We are promised that we will inherit a body which reflects the image of Jesus. This does not mean that we would have the same glory He does or the same as other believers.

But we all, as with unveiled face we see as in a mirror the Lord's glory reflected, are changed into the same likeness from one degree of glory to another, derived as it is from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 3:18, BERKELEY)

*Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, **we shall be like Him**, because we shall see Him just as He is. (1 John 3:2)*

The desire of our Father's heart is to have many sons who manifest the image of His only begotten Son. This has been His purpose from the beginning of creation.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)

These seven magnificent promises, all based on the grace of God, make up the inheritance of every person who becomes a child of God. That part of our inheritance which we have yet to receive is reserved for us in heaven.

*To obtain an inheritance, which is **imperishable and undefiled** and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you. (1 Peter 1:4)*

The only place for boasting in regard to our inheritance is in the Person and sacrifice of Christ. Let us next consider the question of rewards.

Part II — Rewards are for Service

*For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that **each one** may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to **what he has done**, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)*

Rewards will be based on God's assessment of our stewardship of the inheritance we received in Christ (i.e. how well we served

Him with all that He bequeathed to us at Calvary). Although we may be conscious only of our great personal needs when coming to Christ, once we are born again we discover something new. We are no longer our own! We have been bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We discover that we have been saved to serve in a purpose which God has been bringing to pass over the centuries. Each of us have been called in our generation to a unique and specific place of service in the body of Christ.

No one will be coerced, for service must come out of willing, submitted hearts, and it will be judged according to the following four principles:

- The quality of our service will depend on the extent that Christ is Lord in our life; the criterion is how well we build upon Him as the foundation for our life and ministry.
- The only valid service is that accomplished by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The arm of flesh cannot do the works of God.
- While inheritance is entirely based on grace, service requires our commitment and obedience in *working with the grace* of God that is extended to us according to our personal call (Romans 12:6). Paul expressed it well:

*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them (the other apostles), yet not I, **but the grace of God with me.** (1 Corinthians 15:10)*

Thus, through humility and faith, we are to enter into the grace of His rest (Hebrews 4:10-11).

- We are not called to serve alone. Our specific gifting for service should take place in a local body where we are committed, accountable, and supported by other members. We *must* be under authority. Our relationship to other members should be one of love, support and dependency so that our collective service is like the functioning of a physical body (1 Corinthians 12; 14).

Since each believer begins as a newborn babe in Christ, it will only be possible to walk and serve in these principles by growing in spiritual stature (Ephesians 4:15-16). The quality of our service, and thus of rewards, will be reflected by our spiritual growth in Christ. God has a plan for the life of each of His children, one that involves their maturity as well as place of service. We are responsible to lay down our personal desires and ways, and allow Christ to take up His rightful place as Lord in what we do. The rewards we will receive are based on how well we do this.

The Test for Rewards

One obvious measure for determining rewards will be the fruitfulness of one's life and ministry.

*And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a **hundred-fold**, some **sixty**, and some **thirty**. (Matthew 13:23)*

Another measure will be our faithfulness in using the spiritual talents entrusted to us by the Lord (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-19). In the parable concerning talents, a servant who multiplies what he had been entrusted with ten times, was given authority over ten cities; one who multiplies his talents five times was rewarded with authority over five cities. The servant who hid his talent had it taken away and given to another. Instead of faith, this particular servant was motivated by fear.

A third measure is how well one has sought to know the will of God, and through living and proclaiming it, turned many to righteousness.

And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. (Daniel 12:3)

There are many good works that can bring rewards. Even a glass of water given to a child of God will not lose its reward (Mark 9:41).

Those who have an abundance in the goods of this world are to use it for the glory of God. This is a good work worthy of reward.

Instruct those who are rich in this present world . . . to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future . . . (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

It is apparent that while all believers are equal in God's eyes concerning their inheritance, this is not the case for rewards. Each person will be honored according to his works, and there will be degrees of "greatness" in this respect, for Jesus speaks of "the least," "the great," and "the greatest" in His kingdom (Luke 7:28; Matthew 5:19, 18:4). One would not expect the prophet Jonah to receive the same reward as would Isaiah, Jeremiah or Daniel.

*Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward **according to his own labor.** (1 Corinthians 3:8)*

When believers (or a church) boast about a greater place they expect to have in the kingdom to come, they are exhibiting an elitist spirit and demonstrating that, in fact, they do not qualify for such an honor because greatness in the kingdom of God is based on humility (Matthew 5:3, 5; 18:4). No one can know today how he will be rewarded in the life to come; and certainly no one can judge another in this respect. The Lord alone knows, and He will reveal it when He returns in glory for He will be bringing all rewards with Him.

*Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to render to every man **according to what he has done.** (Revelation 22:12)*

*For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense **every man according to his deeds.** (Matthew 16:27)*

We are to take heed to ourselves and our service that we do not lose our reward. It is not simply a matter of “good deeds”; what we do must bring glory To God. We cannot be critical and unforgiving of others; there can be no pride in our hearts for humility is to be our trademark. Ministry is to come out of the burden of the Lord, from hearts, filled with mercy and compassion. The exact nature of rewards are not clear at this time. They apparently involve *glory, honor and peace* (Romans 2:10). For this reason, it is wise to remember that the meek shall inherit the earth.

*Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that **you may receive a full reward.** (2 John 1:8)*

The Boundaries of Rewards

Although we know little about these rewards, there are indications that they can represent great loss or great gain. The following scripture explains why the loss can be great.

*For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. **If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.** (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)*

Many things in church life today seen by some to be measures of success in ministry, may very well be burned up when tested by the fire of God. It would be terrible loss to have the results of many years of ministry consumed by fire; and every man will be salted with fire, for our God is a consuming fire (Mark 9:49; Hebrews 12:29).

The parable concerning servants, who were instructed by their master to care for his household and faithfully watch for his return from a wedding feast, provides good insight into the gain and loss of rewards (Luke 12:35-48). The servant who fully obeyed his master was put in charge of all his possessions (great gain). The servant, who knew his master's will but did not act in accord with it, was beaten with many lashes (great loss). A third servant who did not know his master's will and acted contrary to it, was beaten with only a few lashes (a lesser loss).

Another parable that instructs us on rewards concerns the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25: 1-13). Here again there are three distinct groupings of individuals.

- The one who was aware that the bridegroom was coming and proclaimed it to the ten virgins
- The five virgins who acted prudently concerning the supply of oil for their lamps and went into the wedding feast.
- The five virgins who were foolish by neglecting to replenish the oil in their lamps and were not allowed into the wedding feast

Some believers are saved without properly understanding the fullness of their inheritance in Christ. As a result, they become critical and unforgiving toward others; some are lifted up in pride; others are offended by circumstances, while some become discouraged and wounded in their spirits. Because of such hindrances, many have no vision of God's purpose for their lives, and their pilgrimage on earth will bring only limited rewards. The greatest rewards are promises made to those who overcome, who endure, who suffer for the sake of Christ, and in some instance, who are martyrs. However, to be an overcomer during the era of agnostic humanism in the nineteenth century is not the same as overcoming in the commercially oriented, affluent, ungodly culture of America today. And in neither of these periods were believers of the Western world persecuted to death for their faith, which will be the environment that arises at the end of this

age. Christians in every generation have faced some degree of suffering and the need to endure. However, such obstacles will be unprecedented at the end of this age. Overcomers in this era of time will be greatly rewarded. This almost certainly will include some who suffer martyrdom (Revelation 12:11).

Glory and Authority

Good is always the enemy of the best. Unless saints come under the Lordship of Christ and understand God's purpose in and through the church for the last days, they will settle for something less than the glory that is promised to those who overcome during this time of great testing.

The greatest rewards concern the glory, honor and authority that will be given to those who are found worthy to reign with Christ in His kingdom. The following scriptures speak of these things:

1. . . . *if we have died with Him, we shall also live with Him (inheritance); if we endure, we shall also reign with Him (reward).* (2 Timothy 2:11-12)

2. The New Jerusalem, described as the bride of Christ, is the place where (and the persons with whom) the Lord will govern the earth and heaven in His kingdom to come. The saints who make up the bride are given this reward for two reasons. First, they have made themselves ready; they have prepared themselves for the Bridegroom by being pure and holy in heart. Second, they are rewarded because of their many deeds of righteousness. The city is uniquely rewarded with the glory of God that rests upon her (Revelation 19:7-8, 21:10-11). The following verses speak of the future government from this city:

- ***He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from God, and my new name.*** (Revelation 3:12)

- **He who overcomes** *I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (Revelation 3:21)*
- . . . *and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it (the city), and His **bondservants** shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads And they shall **reign forever and ever.** (Revelation 22:3-5)*
- *And **he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end,** to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron . . . (Revelation 2:26-27)*

The following observations reveal the wide spectrum of rewards concerning authority that await the children of God:

- Apparently all saints will judge the world and fallen angels (1 Corinthians 6:2-3)
- The original apostles will judge the nation of Israel (Luke 22:28-30)
- Some saints will reign with Christ during the millennium (Revelation 20:6)
- Certain saints, who proved themselves as bondslaves of Christ, will reign with Him forever following the millennium (Revelation 22:3-5). The saints, who through purity of heart and deeds of righteousness, qualify to be the bride of Christ are probably from every generation in the history of the church
- There are some saints, perhaps from Old Testament times, the church age, or from the Millennium, who do not share the glory of the New Jerusalem but can go in and come out of the city of God (Revelation 21:24-27; 22:14).

One thing is certain — not everyone will be rewarded to sit on the right or left side of Jesus in His kingdom!

Conclusion

The gospel of the kingdom contains not only promises of our inheritance in Christ, it also invites us to share His glory, for it carries in its message the challenge of potentially great rewards for those who love Him.

*. . . God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. And it was for this He called you through our gospel, **that you might gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.** (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)*

*And if we are children, then we are heirs also; heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ — sharing His inheritance with Him; **only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory.** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth being compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us and for us, and conferred on us! (Romans 8:17-18, Amplified)*

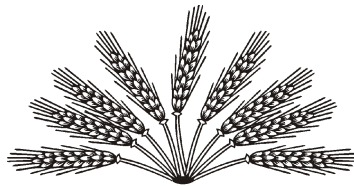
The gospel is God's message of redeeming love as well as a proclamation of the government of Christ. To reign with Christ in His kingdom does not require that one be an apostle or prophet or a great worker of miracles. It is not the magnitude of service that man would call great which is important, but our faithful obedience in what He has called us to be and do. We are only responsible for the talents given to us. However, to every believer godliness, worship and intercessory prayer can bring *great* rewards! Consider how wonderful it would be to hear these words of commendation:

. . . for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; and they are blameless. (Revelation 14:1-5)

*. . . things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, **all that God has prepared for those who love Him.** (1 Corinthians 2:9)*

We are living in a unique period of history. The Lord is preparing His army for a final conflict of spiritual warfare in which He will bring in a great end-time harvest. The persecution, afflictions, wickedness and deception of these days will be unlike anything seen before (Matthew 24). Only those who prepare themselves for this warfare, who are trained by the discipline of the Lord, being tested and proven through hardships and trials, will make up the army of the Lord. To them will come the victor's prize of great rewards; they will gain the glory of Christ!

Each of us needs to be sure of our commitment to God's call on our life for these days. If we desire to be part of His government in the future, we better be under His government now. The garments we are weaving today are the ones that we will wear for all eternity!



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