

CLAIMING OUR INHERITANCE

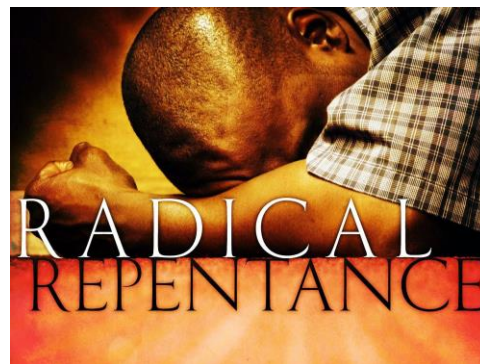
**We are heirs of a kingdom.
But many Christians do not realize that fact,
and many do not walk in the inheritance due to us.**

**This inheritance is there for us,
but first we must be delivered from the domain of darkness where
Satan has
*no more legal claim against us.***

A teaching by Derek Prince

This study compiled by Albert Chipps

PART ONE - Deliverance through Redemption



The charter of the Christian faith is the New Testament. When we use the word “Testament,” we’re using it in the same sense in which we have the phrase “the last will and testament of so and so.” In other words, by using that word we imply that something has been bequeathed to us through the death of another. The New Testament tells us all that has been made available to us through the death of Jesus on our behalf. It reveals our inheritance. It reveals that we are *heirs* of a Kingdom. But unfortunately, many Christians have never yet discovered what their real inheritance is or how to gain it. They are like a man who is an heir to a tremendous fortune, but has never taken the steps to find out what his inheritance is, or to claim it. So that will be my theme this week, discovering and claiming our inheritance as Christians.

The first Scripture that we’ll look at on this theme is Colossians chapter 1 verse 12–14, where Paul says this, ***“Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us [or made us capable] to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. [You’ll see there that Paul speaks of an inheritance which is laid up for God’s people, an inheritance in light. Then he goes on to explain what has to happen if we are to gain our inheritance in light.] For He [that is God the Father] 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.”*** (NAS)

So Paul pictures here two kingdoms: the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of light. The kingdom of light is God’s kingdom and the kingdom of Jesus Christ; the kingdom of darkness is Satan’s kingdom. These two are in opposition, one to the other. Our inheritance is in the kingdom of light, in the kingdom of God and of Jesus Christ. But in order that we may be able to *gain* our inheritance, something has to happen first. We have to be *delivered* from the domain of darkness, that is, from Satan’s power over us and over our lives. And this comes about through redemption, the redemption that God has provided for us through the death of Jesus on the cross. Through His redemption we can receive forgiveness of sins. Once we receive forgiveness of sins, Satan has *no more legal claim over us*, we are *set free* from his domain, and we are made capable to enter into our inheritance in the kingdom of light, the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ.

However, we first of all need to understand something about our condition in the kingdom of darkness. Remember that when people are in the dark, they *can’t see their real condition*. And that’s true of the people who are under Satan’s domain, they’re in the dark and they cannot see their true condition. We need a *light* to come into the darkness and *reveal to us our true condition*. That light is provided by the gospel, by the Word of God. This is what the Word of God tells us about our condition before Christ came to us and forgave us and redeemed us while we were still in Satan’s domain in the kingdom of darkness. Paul uses these words in Ephesians chapter 2 verses 1–3, ***“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, [Paul of course, does not mean that we were physically dead, but that we were spiritually dead, alienated and cut off from the life that is in God] in which [that’s in trespasses and sin] you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.”*** [So in the kingdom of darkness, in our trespasses and sins, we were under the dominion of a spiritual power called the prince of the *power of the air*, and he’s defined as the spirit who works in the sons of disobedience. In other words, our

disobedience to God automatically *exposes* us to the influence and domination of Satan. And then Paul goes on to say that this was the universal condition of all of us.] ***among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.***” (NAS)

So this is true of all of us. In our natural condition we are at enmity with God, we’re alienated from God; we’re in the dark and we’re captivated by the desires of our flesh and our mind. And through those evil, ungodly desires we are *held in bondage by Satan, the prince of darkness!*

Now God’s purpose through the gospel is to deliver us from that bondage of darkness and of Satan and to bring us into our inheritance in the kingdom of light. This is very clearly stated in Acts 26:18, where Paul repeats the call that he received from Jesus Christ to carry the gospel to the Gentile world. And this is what Christ commissioned Paul to do through the gospel, ***“...to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.*** (NIV)

Again, you see God’s end purpose is that we may receive forgiveness of sins and thus be qualified for our inheritance in the kingdom of light. But in order that this may happen, first of all, God has to *open our eyes as to our true condition and turn us from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God.* We realize therefore, from these Scriptures and from our own experience, that *darkness has power.* The power of Satan is *real.* It’s not an imagination, it’s not a theological fantasy, but *Satan is a real being with real power who really dominates those who are alienated from God.* And in order to enter God’s kingdom, we have first of all to be *delivered from the power of Satan.* And this deliverance has been made possible *only through the death of Jesus on our behalf.* Deliverance from the power of Satan comes through redemption, and redemption has been provided for us by the death of Jesus on our behalf.

We need to understand more precisely the meaning of the word “redemption.” It comes from a verb, “to redeem.” To redeem means to *buy back* or to *ransom*. An example would be if the son of a wealthy man were taken by kidnappers and they held him for ransom and the wealthy man was willing to pay the ransom asked by the kidnappers, and thus his son was restored to him, we could say that the wealthy man, by paying the price, had *redeemed his son from the kidnappers.* Now what Jesus has done is to pay the price to redeem us from the kingdom of Satan. In Romans 7:14, Paul says this, ***“We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual,*** [other translations say I am carnal] ***sold as a slave to sin.***” (NIV) Literally the Greek there says, *“sold under sin.”* This is a figure taken from the Roman world. When a person was sold in the slave market in the Roman world, he was said to be sold ‘under the spear’ because he was placed on a stand, against a post, and out of the post above his head there stuck forth a spear fastened to the post. And so the evidence that he was being ‘sold as a slave’ was that he was being sold under this outstretched spear. What Paul is saying is that we, through our sin, were exposed as slaves in Satan’s slave market. And the spear stretched out over our head that indicated that we were for sale was the sin that we had committed. Now when a person is sold as a slave, or was in ancient times, they had no choice as to what occupation they would have to do. Some people might be compelled to take quite respectable occupations, like housekeepers or teachers or nurses, but others might be sold to very menial or immoral occupations, like the cleaner of a latrine or even a prostitute. The person who was a slave had no choice. It was simply the choice of the one who owned him. And so it is with us as sinners. We are all slaves of Satan by nature, but some of us are respectable sinners, and some of us are less respectable sinners. But there is really no ultimate difference between the respectable and the non-respectable sinners. Well, what happened when Jesus came to earth was that He walked into Satan’s slave market, saw us there for sale, and paid the price to buy us out of Satan’s dominion and out of Satan’s slave market. The price that He paid was His precious blood. In Ephesians 1:7, Paul says, ***“In Him [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of God’s grace.”*** (NAS) Our redemption was *paid for* by the *blood of Jesus* which obtained the forgiveness of our sins. He bore the penalty of our sins in our place that we might be forgiven and thus qualified to inherit the kingdom of the saints in light.

This is stated again in 1 Peter 1 verses 17–19, a very beautiful Scripture. ***“And if you address Father the One who impartially judges according to each man’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth, “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. (NAS)*** So it was the precious blood that Jesus shed on our behalf that paid the price of our redemption, delivered us from Satan’s slave market and from the kingdom of darkness, obtained for us the forgiveness of sins and qualified us to enter the inheritance of the saints in light.

PART TWO- From Curse to Blessing



Today I'm going to explain the nature and the scope of our redemption through Christ. Our first scripture will be Galatians chapter 3 verses 13–14, where Paul says this, ***“Christ redeemed us [notice the word redeemed] from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” 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.*** (NAS) Paul is referring there to a scripture in Deuteronomy in the Law of Moses where God says that everyone who is put to death by hanging on a tree or a piece of wood, and that includes a piece of wood that makes a cross, everyone who dies in this way is *under a curse*. And the evidence that such a person is under the curse is they're hanging there visibly on that piece of wood. So in order to redeem us from the curse of the Law, Christ *became a curse for us*, and this was *visibly demonstrated* when He hung there on the cross. Now it was necessary for Christ to become a curse because the curse of God follows against all sin and disobedience against God. The secret of what took place on the cross is this, that there was a divinely ordained exchange, something which could not be seen by the natural eye but could only be perceived through the revelation of God through the Holy Spirit and through the Scriptures. The exchange was this, Christ became a curse. He took the curse due to our sin and disobedience that we in return might have access to the blessing that was due to His obedience. Let me say that very simply and briefly. It's important that you understand it. Christ became a curse. He took the curse due to our disobedience that we in turn through faith in Him, might receive the blessing of God, the blessing that Jesus had earned for us by His obedience.

Now, this exchange that took place at the cross is more fully pictured in Isaiah chapter 53. In this chapter, Isaiah the prophet speaks of a nameless servant, no name is given. However, all the writers of the New Testament unanimously identify this nameless servant as Jesus, the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. In verses 4–6, which is the very heart of this chapter and of this revelation, we read these words, ***“Surely he [that is Jesus] took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, [more literally, our pains] yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.”*** (NIV) That's remarkable that Isaiah says “we,” and that's primarily the Jewish race, but then the whole human race, *“we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.”*

I remember years ago in Israel talking to a Jewish man and telling him that I believe that Jesus is the Messiah. His comment was remarkable, at least to me at that time. He said, “I can't believe that Jesus was a righteous man because if He had been, God would not have allowed Him to die such a death. It must have been judgment of God upon Him.” Well, that's exactly what Isaiah says, “We did esteem him stricken by God and smitten by God.” But in the next two verses Isaiah goes on to point out *why* Jesus suffered. It was not for *His* sins, but for *ours*. This is what Isaiah says, ***“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*** (NIV) There are two aspects to the exchange as it's here pictured by Isaiah. There's the spiritual aspect and the physical aspect. Jesus made provision for us both spiritually and physically. Spiritually He was pierced for our transgressions; He was

crushed for our iniquities. Transgressions and iniquities are spiritual. We could translate them acts of disobedience and acts of rebellion. Jesus bore the punishment due to our acts of disobedience and acts of rebellion that we in turn might be reconciled to God and so have peace. So that's transgression and iniquities and the result is peace. That's spiritual.

On the physical side, Jesus took our infirmities, carried our pains (that's physical) with the result that we are healed, or more literally, healing has been obtained for us. That's physical. So we see that there was a complete exchange, both in the spiritual and in the physical. Jesus took the evil due to us that we might receive the good due to Him.

Now the basic problem of the human race is stated there by Isaiah in the 6th verse. ***"Each of us turned to his own way. . ."*** That's the *universal guilt of humanity!* Not all of us have committed all the specific sins. Not all have committed murder or adultery or other such sins. But there is one problem of which we are *all* guilty, *each* of us has turned to his *own* way. That's stubbornness, disobedience, rebellion. That's the *root problem of the human race*. And that's the problem that Jesus dealt with by His death on our behalf, on the cross. ***"The Lord made to meet upon Him the rebellion of us all."*** Rebellion and all its evil consequences met together that day upon Jesus as He hung there on the cross.

We need to understand that all through the history of the human race, sin and disobedience against God have *always brought a curse*. The first example in human history is found in Genesis chapter 3, which records the temptation of Adam and Eve by the serpent, the serpent being the disguise that Satan came in, and their subsequent disobedience. When this disobedience was disclosed and God took judgment on it, this is what God said, and notice the recurrence of the word "curse." ***"And the LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life:' To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying 'You shall not eat from it', Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.'"*** (Genesis 3:14, 16, 17, NAS) So we see that as soon as sin entered the human race it was *followed by the curse*. The curse descended upon the serpent and upon the ground and the result for Adam and Eve was toil and pain. All these are the outworking of the curse brought upon man by his sin.

Now this principle that disobedience against God always brings a curse in its train is more fully worked out in the Law of Moses, in Deuteronomy chapter 28. This 28th chapter of Deuteronomy sets forth two things, two opposite things. First of all, the *blessings* that will come upon us if we walk in humility and obedience toward God. Secondly, the *curses* that will come upon us if we walk in stubbornness and pride and disobedience toward God. These two alternatives are set forth for us very clearly here in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy. In the first two verses of the chapter Moses says this, ***"Now it shall be, if you will diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 'And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you will obey the Lord your God.'"*** (NAS)

Notice that when we walk in obedience we don't have to pursue the blessings of God. On the other hand, the blessings of God *overtake* us. Blessing *naturally* results from obedience to God. God has ordered the universe according to that law. Then in verse 15, Moses presents the opposite side of the picture, the results of disobedience, ***"But it shall come about, if you will not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you."*** (NAS) And there follows a very long and detailed list of curses.

We notice as we study this chapter that both the blessings and the curses cover three main areas: *spiritual, physical and material*. Likewise, the full outworking of redemption through Jesus Christ *also* covers these three main areas, spiritual, physical and material. A beautiful picture of redemption and its results is contained in the third epistle of John, the second verse, with which I am going to close today. John writes to his friend, Gaius, ***"Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in***

good health, just as your soul prospers.” (NAS) Notice the complete prayer of John, that his friend may prosper materially and financially, be in good health, even as his soul prospers. Those are the three areas, spiritual, physical and material.

PART THREE - Spiritual Benefits of Redemption

Today I'm going to deal with the spiritual area. What are the spiritual curses from which Christ has delivered us? And what are the spiritual blessings which Christ has made available to us? I'm going to return to the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, the chapter that sets out in great detail two opposite things, the blessings that result from obedience to God and the curses that result from disobedience to God.

First of all, I want to look again at the basic causes, the causes that bring *blessing* and the causes that bring *curses*. I'm going to read from a marginal version, which is more literal than the actual version that's in the text of the New American Standard Bible. Deuteronomy chapter 28 verses 1–2, and I want to repeat that this is the marginal version, but it's closer to the original Hebrew than the actual text version. ***“Now it shall be, if you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you will obey the Lord your God.”*** And then in verse 15, Moses turns to the curses and this is the reason why the curses come. ***“But it shall come about, if you will not listen to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.”***

It's vitally important for us all that we understand the decisive difference between earning the blessings and earning the curses. And it's summed up in one short, but very important phrase: *“Listening to God's voice.”* If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, all these blessings will come upon you, but if you will *not* listen to the voice of the Lord your God, all these curses will come upon you. So you see that our whole destiny for well-being or for disaster is settled by the *voice that we listen to*. Listening to the voice of the Lord and obeying what He says will bring blessing. But *not* listening to the voice of the Lord will bring a curse (many curses). Of course, it's not sufficient to listen to the voice of the Lord unless we also obey what He says. But conversely, it's impossible to obey what God says unless we first hear His voice, because it's His voice that tells us what He requires us to do. And the great spiritual danger that confronts so many professing Christians is that they've become insensitive to the voice of God. They may continue in their religious activities and duties, but it's all something that's habitual and formal, just a matter of a life pattern and of habits that they've cultivated, but there isn't that ongoing, continuous personal awareness of God's voice. You see, through all dispensations the one thing that God asks of His people is this; that *we listen to His voice*. For instance, this is stated clearly by the Lord Himself in Jeremiah chapter 7 verses 22–23. In these verses God explains what He really required of Israel when He brought them out by redemption from Egypt. And He says that the first thing He had in mind was not the keeping of the law for the offering of sacrifices, but *listening to His voice*. Now His voice would *lead* them to keep the Law and to offer the sacrifices. But on the other hand, merely observing the externals of the Law and offering the sacrifices was of no avail to them if they were not doing it as a result of listening to the voice of the Lord. The key requirement of God is that we listen to His voice. Here is what God says there in Jeremiah 7 verses 22, ***“For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people...”*** (NAS) Notice the simple requirement that the Lord may be our God and we may be His people, *“Obey My voice and I will be your God. . .”* That's summing it up as simply as it's possible to sum it up.

Now you might think that it's different in the New Testament, but it's not. The principle is exactly the same. Jesus sums it up in one single verse in John chapter 10 verse 27, ***“My sheep hear My***

voice, and I know them, and they follow Me..." (NAS) The mark that we really belong to Jesus is not that we practice a certain denominational pattern of life or that we worship in a certain building, but it's that we hear His voice, and hearing His voice, that we *follow Him*. That's the mark of true believers in all races and in all ages, in all denominations. It's not something external, but it's an inner personal relationship with the Lord that enables us to hear His voice, and hearing His voice, to follow where He leads us. We see then that the simple pathway to God's blessings is to hear and obey His voice, but the inevitable end of *not* hearing and obeying God's voice is the *curses*.

Today I'm going to list for you briefly the curses in the spiritual realm, the inner realm, the realm of our inner personality, which result from disobedience to God as they are listed by Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 28. First of all, in verse 20, Moses says that we will experience *confusion in all we undertake to do*. That's the first specific spiritual curse, it's confusion. In verse 28, Moses lists *madness* and *bewilderment of heart*. Those are results of not hearing God's voice. They are *curses*. Verse 34, God says you shall be *driven mad by the sight of what you see*. We might say that mental and emotional breakdown is a curse and it's the result of disobedience against God. I'm speaking from personal observation of scores and scores of cases, perhaps the *commonest single cause of confusion and mental and emotional breakdown is involvement in the occult, in wrong spiritual relationships and activities that are forbidden by the Word of God!*

And then to go on with the list, in verse 65, Moses speaks of a *trembling heart and despair of soul*. I believe we could sum up these spiritual consequences of disobedience, these spiritual curses, in some words like these, *confusion, frustration, inner agony and torment*. And I speak as a minister who is always dealing with people and their problems. These are the things that we *continually* encounter in the lives of people in America today, confusion, frustration, inner agony and torment.

Now what is the blessing in the spiritual realm that results from obedience? Of course, there are many blessings, countless blessings. But I believe they really can be summed up in one short and beautiful word, the word is *peace*. In Isaiah 53:5, where Isaiah pictures the exchange that took place when Jesus died on the cross, he says this, ***"The punishment that brought us peace was upon Him..."*** So Jesus endured the judgment and the punishment due to *our* sin and disobedience that we might be reconciled with God. And being *reconciled* with God, that we might be *delivered* from inner agony and torment, from confusion and frustration, and that we might know the reality of a deep, settled, inward peace. And I feel I must add from personal experience that for many years now, I've enjoyed that deep settled peace. It's a reality to me, not a theory, not a doctrine, not a theology.

Let's look at two other Scriptures in the New Testament that speak of this peace. Romans 5:1, ***"Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."*** (NAS) What beautiful words, *"we have peace with God."* No longer are we guilty. No longer do we fear that somehow we are not pleasing God. We have *peace with God*.

And then a beautiful verse in Philippians 4:7 that describes the experiential results within us, ***"The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*** (NIV) It takes the peace of God to guard our hearts and minds in our contemporary civilization. But I want to testify that God's peace can do that. Actually, the word "peace" in its Hebrew form means more than just the absence of conflict, it means wholeness or well-being. But I want to say this, that peace begins in the inner man but it leads to total well-being. It works out in every area of our lives, in the physical and in the material also.

PART FOUR - Physical Benefits of Redemption



What are the physical benefits that Jesus has purchased for us? We'll go back again to Deuteronomy chapter 28, that great chapter that lists both the blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience. Let me begin by saying that we have to bear in mind always the basic causes for blessings and for curses. It is in listening to the Lord's voice that brings the blessings, not listening to the Lord's voice that brings the curses. This is the principle that runs *all through Scripture. Our whole destiny is ultimately determined by whether we listen to the voice of the Lord and then do what He says.* And if we *do not* listen to His voice, we *cannot do what He says*. We have to have that living, ongoing personal relationship with the Lord that enables us to hear His voice. Do you remember what Jesus said in John 10:27? *"My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me."* That's the mark of true believers in all ages, they hear the voice of Jesus, they follow Him. *Hearing brings blessing, not hearing brings curses.*

Now we are going to look in Deuteronomy chapter 28 at all the physical curses that result from not hearing and not obeying the voice of the Lord. They are indeed many. I will just briefly recapitulate them. It's important as you listen that you bear in mind that all these things that I'm listing now are stated as curses, as things that do not belong to the redeemed people of God. Verse 21, the Lord says, ***"The LORD will make the pestilence cling to you. . ."*** So, pestilence is a curse. Verse 22, ***"The LORD will smite you with consumption and with fever and with inflammation. . ."*** So consumption, fever and inflammation are curses. Verse 27 lists the following, *boils, hemorrhoids, scab, and itch*. All these things are curses. They should *not belong to the redeemed people of God*. Verse 28 lists *blindness*. Verse 35 speaks of *sore boils . . . on the knees and the legs, from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head. . .* Verse 59 is really amazing in its explicit statement of all the physical disasters that result from disobedience. It says, ***"The LORD will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses."*** You know, so many of us as Christians, we are enduring curses when we should be enjoying blessings. And we're enduring the curses probably for two main reasons, either because we don't know that they are curses or because we don't realize that Jesus delivered us from the curses that we might inherit the blessings. So listen to verse 59 again and check and see whether you're living in the curses or the blessings. ***"The LORD will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants"*** (notice that they go from generation to generation), ***even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses."*** And then in verse 60, it speaks about all the diseases in Egypt. Now it was my lot to spend two years in Egypt as a soldier in the British Army in World War II, and I will tell you the diseases of Egypt are past all counting. I don't think there are many diseases that aren't found in Egypt. But if there are, they are also included in the curses because the next verse says (vs. 61), ***"Also every sickness and every plague which is not written in the book of this law. . ."*** So logically, *every kind of sickness, every kind of plague is a curse*. Somehow or other its ultimate cause is disobedience against God. The prophet Isaiah gives us a very, very vivid picture of the results of disobedience and rebellion. He's speaking to the nation of Israel and he compares their condition as the result of their disobedience to that of a body that's completely sick. This is what he says in Isaiah 1 verses 5–6, ***"Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness, only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged"***

or soothed with oil. (NIV) That's a vivid metaphorical picture of the *results of disobedience*. But as I was reading it one day, the Holy Spirit showed me something wonderful and beautiful. I realized already that Jesus had taken all the curses upon Himself because He became our substitute. He redeemed us from the curse being made a curse for us, but as I was reading that passage in Isaiah chapter 1 verses 5–6, I saw that not merely is it a metaphorical picture of the condition of Israel as a result of their disobedience, but it's also a literal picture of Jesus as He hung on the cross. Listen to it again. *"Why should you be beaten anymore..."* He was beaten with that Roman scourge, with its fearful nine thongs, each one studded with bone or metal. *"Your whole head is injured..."* Remember the thorns had been pressed down upon His head. *"Your whole heart afflicted..."* I believe Jesus died of a broken heart. *"From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness, only wounds and welts and open sores not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil."* Do you realize that's an *exact* description of Jesus as He hung upon the cross? And do you realize *why* He was in that condition? *Because He redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us.* All those physical curses that are a result of our disobedience against God, came upon Jesus as He hung there on the cross.

We've looked in some detail at the physical curses that come from disobedience, and we've seen that Jesus bore them on His own body on the cross. Now let's look at the physical blessings that were purchased for us by Jesus. We'll turn again, first of all, to Isaiah 53 verses 4–5, ***"Surely he [that's Jesus] took our infirmities and carried our [pains], yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he [that's Jesus] was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed."*** (NIV) Notice, *He* took the physical consequences of disobedience that *we* might in turn have healing. That phrase at the end of verse 5, *"by his wounds we are healed,"* more literally in Hebrew it says, *"by his wounds it was healed for us."* I think we could perhaps say, *"by his wounds healing was obtained for us."* Healing was made *our* inheritance through the wounds that Jesus bore on His body.

Now this passage is quoted in the New Testament by Matthew in his Gospel, chapter 8 verses 16, 17, describing the ministry of Jesus in healing the sick and casting out evil spirits. This is what it says, ***"And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled saying, 'He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.'"*** (NAS) Notice that Matthew has no doubt who the person is referred to in Isaiah chapter 53, for he applies it to Jesus. Notice also that Matthew, who was a Jew and understood Hebrew, had no doubt that the application of those verses in Isaiah 53 is *physical*. It was the *physical healing* of the sick that was the fulfillment of the prophecy given in Isaiah. Why was Jesus able to heal all who were sick? Because in the eternal purposes of God, *He* was to bear our infirmities and carry away our diseases. And because the cross, in a certain sense, is eternal, although it had not yet been fulfilled, in God's sight it was *already accomplished*. From the foundation of the world Jesus was the Lamb slain. And so God *identified* with the ministry of Jesus, *identified* with His sacrifice, gave His seal of blessing upon it in the healing of the sick.

And then notice what Jesus says in John chapter 7 verse 23, answering His critics for healing a man on the Sabbath. He says, ***"If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath that the Law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath?"*** (NAS) Notice, Jesus makes the *entire man well*. Every area of human being and human personality can be healed through Jesus.

And notice again what Peter said after the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate in Acts 3:16. This is how he explained the healing, ***"By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you all can see."*** (NIV) Notice, the result is *complete healing*. Jesus said, ***"I've made an entire man well. . ."*** That's the physical outworking of the redemption provided for us by Jesus.

We are grateful for the work of physicians, psychiatrists and others, but there's only one person in the universe who can say, *"I make an entire man well! I can deal with all his problems: spiritual, mental, emotional, physical."* And *that's the Lord Jesus Christ!*

Let me close with a beautiful verse from Hebrews 13:8, ***"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever."*** (NAS) So as we contact Jesus by faith on the basis of His redemption, the same results that took place and are recorded in the New Testament are available to you and me today through faith in Jesus.

PART FIVE - Material Benefits of Redemption



Listening to the Lord's voice and obeying it brings blessing; not listening to the Lord's voice brings curses. Today we're going to look at the blessings and the curses specifically in the *material realm*. First of all, we look at the material blessings promised to obedience, and they are many indeed. It's not possible for me in this brief talk to go into them in detail. But here is what Moses says in Deuteronomy 28:3, ***"Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock."*** [That was really the main material possession of the Israelites as an agricultural community.] verse 5 ***"Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl,"*** [We might say your shopping basket today, your purse. These will be blessed.] verse 8 ***"The LORD will command the blessing upon you [I love that thought, that God is going to command His blessing upon us] in your barns and in all that you put your hand to,"*** [that leaves absolutely nothing out of anything that we undertake. God will bless it *"all that you put your hand to"*] ***and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you.*** verse 11 ***"And the LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you."*** (NAS) Notice that phrase, *"The LORD will make you abound in prosperity."* Abounding in prosperity is a blessing that results from hearing and obeying the voice of the Lord. Moses returns briefly to the same theme in the next chapter of Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy chapter 29 verse 9. This is what he says there to Israel, ***"So keep the words of this covenant to do them, that you may prosper in all that you do."*** (NAS) So keeping the words of God's covenant causes us to prosper in all that we do. That leaves no room for failure or frustration in any area of our lives. These are the blessings.

Now let's look at the material curses for disobedience. Going back to Deuteronomy chapter 28 verse 29, ***"And you shall grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in his darkness,"*** [you see, there's a *total inability to find the right way through life*] ***and you shall not prosper in your ways...*** (NAS) Notice that just as abounding in prosperity is a blessing, so not prospering in our ways is a curse. And then still more completely and vividly, Moses states it again in Deuteronomy chapter 28 verses 47–48, and here the blessing and the curse are set directly side by side. Verse 47 ***"Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things,"*** [Now notice, that's God's will. That's the result of obedience, that we serve God with joy and a glad heart for the *abundance of all things*. Abundance is the outcome of obedience. But the alternative, and it's a very grim alternative, is stated in verse 48 for those who will not serve the Lord with joy and a glad heart.] ***"Therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD shall send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things, and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you."*** (NAS) Well, you couldn't have the two alternatives more clearly pictured than in those two verses. The results of obedience, the abundance of all things, serving God with joy and a glad heart. The results of disobedience, we have to serve not the Lord but our enemies, and we serve him in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things.

As I was meditating on those words one day, I saw that this is a description of *absolute poverty*. A person who is hungry, has nothing to eat, thirsty, has nothing to drink, naked, no clothes to wear, and in lack of all things. That person is in a condition of absolute poverty. It is impossible to picture greater poverty than that, hunger, thirst, nakedness, and lack of all things. And the important thing to see is that

poverty is a curse. Poverty is not a mark of holiness. If it takes poverty to make you or me holy, I question how holy we really are. Poverty is a curse. It does *not belong to the people of God*. What joy and release came into my own soul when I saw this one day so clearly, that poverty is not for the children of God. It's not for God's redeemed people. For God's redeemed people, the will of God is abundance that we may serve Him with joy and with gladness of heart.

This understanding of the material blessings due to obedience and the material curses that result from disobedience was brought home to me personally in a very vivid way, a way I shall never forget. Some years ago I was preaching in the country of New Zealand and I was teaching on God's financial provision for His people. I had my note outline prepared and I was following through with it, but while I was speaking from my note outline, inwardly in my mind I was seeing something I'd never seen before. I was seeing in a mental picture, Jesus as He hung there on the cross atoning for our sins. And as I unfolded the full extent of the poverty curse, hunger, thirst, nakedness and the lack of all things, it was as if the Holy Spirit was pointing to Jesus on the cross as He hung there, and showing me that every one of those four conditions that make up total poverty was fulfilled in the person of Jesus as He hung on the cross. He was hungry, He hadn't eaten for nearly 24 hours. He was thirsty. One of His last utterances on the cross was *"I thirst."* He was naked, and let no pretty religious pictures ever deceive you about that. The Scripture states that the soldiers who carried out the execution stripped Him of all of His clothes and then divided them between them. He was naked. He was in lack of all things. He had nothing. He was buried in a borrowed burial robe and in a borrowed tomb. He literally had *absolutely nothing!* And as I was preaching there to that congregation in New Zealand, I was still going through my note outline, but the Holy Spirit was simultaneously showing me something in my own spirit and mind, something that's remained with me ever since. I can never totally forget that picture of Jesus hanging there on the cross. And the Holy Spirit showed me *why* Jesus was hungry, why He was thirsty, why He was naked, why He was in want of all things. The reason, it had to be so because He *exhausted* on our behalf the poverty curse. He took the complete curse away once and for all that you and I, redeemed believers through the blood of Jesus, might not have to endure that yoke of iron, that poverty curse. That is not the result of blessing and of obedience, but is the result of disobedience. Thank God, though all of us have been disobedient, Jesus took upon Himself the iniquity of us all. Our rebellion and all its evil consequences, *including poverty*, were visited upon Jesus as He hung there on the cross.

Now this exchange is clearly summed up in the New Testament. In 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and chapter 9, we get the two aspects of the exchange in the material realm. In 2 Corinthians 8:9, Paul says, ***"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."*** (NAS) What's the exchange there? It is very clear. Jesus took our poverty on the cross that we in turn might have access to His wealth, to His abundance. And it's grace. Grace comes only through Jesus Christ. Grace cannot be earned. Grace is appropriated only by faith. Then the opposite side is stated in 2 Corinthians 9:8, ***"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that in all ways having all sufficiency in all things you may have abundance for every good deed..."*** In the original Greek that statement is amazing. The word "abound" occurs twice, the word "all" occurs five times in that one verse. And all of it says, this is what Jesus has obtained for us. He exhausted the poverty curse that we might inherit the blessings.

Let me say again, as I said earlier in this series of talks, the blessings in all three areas obtained for us by Jesus, the spiritual, the physical and the material, are summed up in that beautiful verse of the third epistle of John, verse 2, where John says, ***"Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper [that's the material] and be in good health, [that's the physical] just as your soul prospers"*** [that's the spiritual]. (NAS) So bear in mind, *that's* the will of God, *that's* your inheritance.

PART SIX - The Holy Spirit, Our Helper



This week I'll be explaining the practical principles that are the key to claiming all the blessings that Christ has made available to us, and thus entering into our full inheritance. We'll turn again to the key Scripture that speaks about redemption and deliverance from the curse of the Law, that is, the curse of disobedience to God. This is Galatians 3 verses 13–14, ***"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree' 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."*** (NAS)

Last week I explained the basic principle that the Scripture reveals through the Holy Spirit, that when Jesus hung on the cross He was visibly and demonstrably presented as bearing a curse, because in the Old Covenant in the book of Deuteronomy it was written, *"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"* but that Jesus bore the curse not for Himself, but for us. He was our substitute! Our Kinsman-redeemer! The one who took our nature that He might take our place! And so the curses due to *our* disobedience came upon Jesus, the positive purpose being that in return, through our faith in Him, the blessings due to *His* obedience might be made available to *us*. You have to understand the exchange. Jesus took the curse that we might have the blessing. Jesus took the evil due to us, that we might receive the good due to Him. That's the *key* to understanding the cross, and the cross is the key to understanding the *whole message of the gospel*.

Now, in Galatians 3:14, I'll read the words again, Paul is somewhat more specific than I've been up to this point in describing the blessing. He says, *"in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles."* Elsewhere in the epistle to the Galatians, he explains that through our faith in Jesus, the seed of Abraham, we can be reckoned as the descendants of Abraham. And so, although we are not descendants of Abraham (those of us who are Gentiles and non-Jewish), we are not the descendants of Abraham by *natural* descent, through our faith in Jesus, the promised seed of Abraham, we enter into the inheritance of Abraham, and we *become* heir to the blessings that God promised to Abraham and to his descendants. So that God makes available to us, through faith in Christ, the blessing of Abraham. Of course, He makes it available both to Jews and to Gentiles. Because Jesus, through His death on the cross, has made possible redemption from the curse of the broken law for the Jewish people and also included us, who are Gentiles, in the inheritance of Abraham.

Now we need to know what exactly is covered by the blessing of Abraham, which is now made available to us, and this is very clearly stated in Scripture. In Genesis chapter 24 verse 1 we read this, ***"Now Abraham was old, advanced in age, and the LORD had blessed Abraham in every way."*** (NAS) One of the other versions says *"in everything."* So the blessing of Abraham is a very beautiful blessing. It's *"in every way"*! It's *"in everything"*! It covers *every area of our lives*! Nothing is omitted from that blessing of Abraham. I said last week that the blessings and the curses both cover three main areas: spiritual, physical and material, that's *"in everything!"* However, going back again to Galatians 3:14, we discover that Paul speaks about one specific blessing which he singles out from all the others. He says, *"so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."* The word "Spirit" there has a capital "S," it's a title of the Holy Spirit. So, out of all the blessings and all the promises made available to us through our faith in Jesus, there's *one* blessing and *one* promise that is singled out from all the others, it's the *promise of the Spirit*. Elsewhere in the New Testament Jesus speaks about this and He calls it *"the promise of the Father."* It's the specific, special promise of God the Father to those of us who

become His children through faith in Jesus Christ. The reason why the promise of the Spirit is singled out is that it's the key to all the other blessings. Without receiving the Holy Spirit, we are not able, we are not qualified to enter into our inheritance. The Holy Spirit is the one who *administers* the inheritance and makes it available to us.

We'll turn now to John chapter 14 verses 15–18, where Jesus is speaking to His disciples just before He's about to leave them and be taken from them in physical presence, and He says, ***“As I’m going, I’m going to send somebody else who’ll take My place and stay with you.”*** In effect He says, “I’ve only been with you a brief three and one-half years, but the *other* One who’s coming to take My place will never leave you. He’ll be with you forever.” This *other one* whom Jesus said He would send is the Holy Spirit. And Jesus gives Him here one special title, the *Helper* (or in the King James Version, the *Comforter*). This is what Jesus says, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

16 ***“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever,*** [I’m going, but another one is coming in My place and He’s going to stay.] verse 17 ***that is the Spirit of truth*** [that’s one of the titles of the Holy Spirit], ***whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.*** verse 18 ***“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*** (NAS) You see there the picture. Without the Holy Spirit, the disciples would have been left as orphans, little children without anybody to help them or advise them or to stand by them or to show them how they could gain their inheritance that Jesus had bequeathed to them through His death on the cross. But when the Holy Spirit comes, He no longer leaves us in the position of helpless orphans, but He comes to our help, He comes as our Helper, and He shows us how we can claim and enter into our inheritance bequeathed to us through the death of Jesus.

Now I’m going to speak about some of the specific ways in which the Holy Spirit helps us. In John 14:26, Jesus says to His disciples, ***“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”*** (NAS) There are two great ministries of the Holy Spirit to us, the disciples of Jesus. He teaches us all that we need to know of Scripture and divine revelation, and He brings to our remembrance the things that Jesus has taught that we might otherwise forget. That’s why I believe in the absolute accuracy of the New Testament record because I do not believe that it depends on human thought or human memory. But I believe that those who wrote the New Testament, that the Holy Spirit taught them and He brought to their remembrance the things that they needed to remember.

Then in John 16 verses 13–14 Jesus goes on again. He says, ***“But when He, the Spirit of truth*** [and notice that He emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is a person, not just an influence. He calls Him “He,” not “it.”] ***But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14 “He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you.”*** (NAS) In those verses Jesus indicates three more ministries of the Holy Spirit that He will fulfill in our lives when He comes as our Helper. He will guide us into all the truth and into the entire knowledge of all that God has for us in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is our guide. He’s like the one who leads us into a land through which we otherwise could not find our way, the land of God’s promises! The land of our inheritance! And then again, Jesus says, ***“He will disclose to you what is to come.”*** He will take away the veil that covers the future and reveal to us those things in the future that we need to know.

I believe we’re living, as the Bible indicates, in perilous times when tremendous dangers are going to sweep across the face of this earth, and we’re going to be confronted with challenges and opposition that are beyond anything the previous generations have seen on the face of the earth. And I believe our *safety* is going to depend on the Holy Spirit revealing to us what we need to know about the future, so that we can avoid Satan’s dangers and pitfalls and snares and come safely through the experiences that lie ahead of us. I don’t believe that’s a luxury, I believe it’s a necessity that the Holy Spirit *will* be able to reveal to us the things that are to come.

And Jesus says, thirdly, in that passage in John 16, ***“He shall glorify Me.”*** Remember, the Holy Spirit never comes to glorify Himself or to talk about Himself, but He glorifies Jesus and He reveals what He Himself has heard in heaven, He speaks to us on earth. And then He says, ***“He shall take of Mine***

[Jesus is speaking], *and shall disclose it to you.*" In other words, the Holy Spirit takes all that is rightfully belonging to Jesus, which is *our* inheritance, and discloses it to us. So through the Holy Spirit, we come to know our inheritance in Christ. We may sum this up in one key word that's used elsewhere in the New Testament in 1 John chapter 2 verse 1. The same word that's translated "Helper" in John 14 is translated "Advocate" and it's applied to Jesus. The point I wish to make is that the Holy Spirit comes as our advocate. Now that's a *legal* word. It's the same as 'attorney'. So the Holy Spirit is heaven's best lawyer, sent to us so that we shall not be orphans, but able to interpret to us our inheritance in Christ and to show us the conditions that we have to fulfill to enter into that inheritance. He's our Advocate, our Attorney. That's what He comes to do for us.

PART SEVEN - The Holy Spirit: Our Servant-Guide



Today I am going to explain more fully the part that the Holy Spirit plays in bringing us into our inheritance in Christ. I'm going to take a very vivid and beautiful picture from the Old Testament to illustrate this. The picture that I'm going to take is found in Genesis chapter 24. This is the story of how Abraham obtained a bride for his son Isaac. Of course, it's a series of historical incidents that actually took place and even in that sense, it's a beautiful story. But it's also a kind of parable acted out in history that reveals to us other spiritual truths that are even more important and which concern us, as believers in Jesus, today.

By this time, Abraham was settled in the land that God had promised him, the land of Canaan, and he had received the miracle son, Isaac, who was to be the heir of all that God had promised. And he needed a wife for Isaac, but he did not want to take a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites, so he called his senior servant, the main steward of his house, and told him to go back to Mesopotamia, which was the country of Abraham's origin, and to find a bride from Abraham's own clan there in Mesopotamia. So the servant equipped himself with ten camels laden with gifts and good things and set out for Mesopotamia. On the way he prayed that God would direct him to the young woman of God's choice to be the bride for Isaac and when he came to Mesopotamia, he stopped at a well and he specifically prayed that when the right woman came along he would ask her to give him a drink and she would respond by not merely giving *him* water, but by drawing water from the well for all his camels. And in this way he would know that she was the woman chosen to be Isaac's bride.

Well, after he had finished praying, Rebekah, who was a member of the same clan as Abraham, came along with her flock. The servant asked her for a drink. She gave him drink and she immediately also of her own initiative proceeded to draw water for his camels. Now that's significant because he had ten camels and they'd made a long journey through a desert, and it's estimated that a thirsty camel can drink about forty gallons of water. So, if she had to draw water for ten camels, she was an active, vigorous woman because she had to draw about four hundred gallons of water with a bucket out of a well! I think that says a lot.

Well, then the servant brought out the gifts that he was carrying, and he gave her some beautiful gifts which she immediately adorned herself with and then she introduced the servant to her family. The family welcomed him and his camels into their home. He presented the destiny that God had for Rebekah and she responded in faith that she would go. Her family blessed her and so she set out with the servant and the camels once again to take that long journey back to find the man that she was due to marry. And bear in mind, she'd never seen Abraham. She'd never seen Isaac. Her only contact with the family into which she was going to marry was through the servant.

Now the parable is this: It's a parable of God finding a bride for Jesus Christ, His only Son, and of course, the bride is the church. In this interpretation, Abraham, the father of Isaac, represents God the Father. Isaac, the only son, represents Jesus, the only Son. Rebekah, the chosen bride, represents the church, and we're left with one more major character, the unnamed servant. But I see the unnamed servant as the Holy Spirit's self-portrait. I think perhaps it's the clearest portrait in all Scripture of who

the Holy Spirit is and what He does. And it always blesses me that the Holy Spirit is so modest and unassuming that He never even gives Himself a name. All He's called is "the servant."

So you see the application of the story to present truth, Abraham typifies God the Father; Isaac typifies God the Son; Rebekah typifies the Church, the chosen bride, and we're left with the servant, who typifies the Holy Spirit. In the light of that, I want to point out to you seven facts about the servant and his relationship to Rebekah and to Abraham and Isaac.

1. It's stated very clearly in that account that he, the servant, had charge of all that Abraham owned. He was in complete control of the entire inheritance.
2. He sought nothing for himself, but only for Abraham and Isaac.
3. It was his responsibility to find a bride for Isaac.
4. He came with ten camels bearing gifts.
5. He confronted Rebekah with the choice that settled her destiny.
6. He was Rebekah's only source of information concerning Abraham and Isaac.
7. It was he who guided Rebekah to her bridegroom.

Now, let's quickly apply those truths about the servant to the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Church.

1. The Holy Spirit is the administer of the total inheritance. He's the one who takes the things of Christ and discloses them and imparts them to us.
2. The Holy Spirit seeks nothing for Himself. His aim is to glorify the Father and the Son.
3. It's the responsibility of the Holy Spirit in the world today to find the Church, the bride for the Son of God, Jesus Christ.
4. When the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, He comes with many, many beautiful and wonderful gifts.
5. He's the one who confronts us with the choice concerning Jesus that settles our destiny for time and eternity.
6. He's our only source of direct information concerning God the Father and God the Son. We do not see the other persons of the Godhead, but the Holy Spirit reveals them to us.
7. He's the one who's going to guide us through this world to our meeting with our heavenly Bridegroom.

I've explained to you how the servant of Abraham is a picture of the Holy Spirit in His relationship to the Bride of Christ, the Church. Now I want to look at it from the other point of view, and I want to explain to you how Rebekah is a picture of the church and of the response that the church has to make to the Holy Spirit in order to qualify to be the Bride of Christ. And I'm going to point out seven facts about Rebekah's response and then show you their significance for us as believers in Jesus.

1. Her first contact was with the servant, not with Abraham or with Isaac.
2. Her response to the servant determined her destiny.
3. Her response was to serve the servant. She immediately began to draw water for his camels, very hard work.
4. She received the gifts the servant brought.
5. The gifts, when she placed them upon her, visibly marked her out as the chosen bride.
6. She made room in her home for the servant and his camels (and let me point out that camels take a lot of room!).
7. She followed the servant in faith to her destination.

Now, let's just see how this all typifies the way in which we are required to respond to the Holy Spirit:

1. Our first contact with God is *always* through the Holy Spirit. He's the one that first reaches into our lives and begins to *reveal* to us the Father and the Son.
2. It's our *response* to the Holy Spirit that will determine our destiny for time and eternity. At that point, through the servant, Rebekah was faced with a decision that determined her destiny for the rest of her life. If she said 'yes' to the servant, her destiny was in accordance with the will of God and was good; but if she said 'no' to the servant, then the rest of her destiny would never have been revealed to her and she would have missed all that God had purposed for her.
3. Rebekah's response was to *serve the servant*. I call that "faith with works." She didn't just believe, she didn't say yes, but she, as it were, got busy, dipped down her bucket into that well and drew something like 400 gallons of water. I believe that Christianity has got to be a religion of *active faith*, *faith with works*. And I think Rebekah drawing the water from the well is a good picture of what that means.
4. She *received* the gifts the servant brought her. We cannot entertain a man and reject his gifts. That's true in life. If a young man saves up to buy a beautiful engagement ring for the young woman he wants to marry, never will it happen that the young woman will refuse the ring and marry the man. Accepting or rejecting the ring is an indication of her attitude toward the man. And so it is with us in relationship to the Holy Spirit. *We cannot reject the gifts of the Holy Spirit and expect to be part of the Bride of Christ.*
5. The gifts visibly marked out Rebekah as the chosen bride and it's when these gifts come into operation in the church that the church is visibly set apart as the Bride of Christ.
6. Rebekah made room for the servant and his camels. Taking the Holy Spirit into our lives means a *lot of changes*. It means we've got to get *rid* of a lot of things in order to make room for what God wants in our lives. It means *radical changes*! It means putting the will of God before our own convenience.
7. She followed the servant to her appointed destination. And the only way we'll make our way through this world and come to that encounter with our Heavenly Bridegroom is through following the Holy Spirit.

See, what I want to point out to you is that Rebekah's relationship to the servant was *essential to her destiny in God*. And equally so for us as believers in Jesus Christ, it's *our relationship to the Holy Spirit that's going to determine our destiny*. If we snub the Holy Spirit we cannot enter into our destiny. He's the helper sent to enable us to claim and receive our inheritance.

PART EIGHT - God's Provision Is in His Promises



Today I'm going to explain the actual form in which our inheritance comes to us. This is very important and it's something that many Christians have never seen clearly. Consequently, they have not been able to enter into their inheritance as God intends they should. The key passage for understanding this is found in the second epistle of Peter chapter 1 verses 2–4. I'll read these verses and then I'm going to make a number of comments on them. ***"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power [that's God's divine power] has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these* [that's the glory and goodness of Jesus] *he [God] has given us his very great and precious promises..."*** [Now that's the phrase that *you've got to fix in your mind*, God has given us his very great and precious promises, ***"so that through them,* [that is through the promises] ***you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."*** (NIV) I marvel sometimes at the writings of Peter because he was apparently a comparatively unlearned man, and yet there's so much of tremendous truth and so many concepts and words that indicate a high level of education. Of course, Peter got his education through the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is really the best educator in the world, and He still is today.**

Now let's look at what Peter is saying. I want to point out a number of important points to you in logical order. Going back to the second verse, ***"Grace and peace be yours in abundance. . ."*** The first thing I need to point out is that God's provision for us is in *abundance*. God is not a stingy God. He's not poor. He's not in financial need. He's not in spiritual need. He's the author and source of everything in the universe and when He provides for us, His people, He provides in abundance. Peter goes on, ***"Through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."*** This indicates that every provision of God comes through knowing God and Jesus. There's no other way that provision can come except through knowing God and Jesus. I put it this way, God is the only source, Jesus is the only channel. And I want to emphasize the word "only." God is the *only* source; Jesus, the *only* channel!

And then we come to that astonishing statement at the beginning of verse 3 where it says, ***"God has already given us everything we need . . ."*** and we must be careful to observe the tense of the verb. It does not say that God *will* give us, it says *God has already given us everything we need*. God has already supplied all our needs. Lay hold of that fact because if you miss that, then you're not going to be able to understand the nature of God's provision. God has *already* given us *everything we need*.

And then in the second part of verse 3, Peter returns to the theme that it's all contained in Jesus, ***"through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue."*** It's so important that we understand that it's all contained in Jesus that Peter states that twice. However, in that second passage the word that's translated in the English version "knowledge" is not exactly the same word as is translated "knowledge" in the previous verse. In that third verse, the word "knowledge" in Greek means "acknowledging." So it's not just an intellectual or theological knowledge of Jesus, but it means *acknowledging* Him, *seeing* who He is, *recognizing* Him and giving Him His rightful place in our lives.

Let's go back over those four comments that I've made already as the basis of what I'm going to say next:

1. God's provision for us is in *abundance*.
2. God is the *only* source. Jesus is the *only* channel.
3. God's power has *already* given us everything we're ever going to need, and I emphasize the perfect tense. It's all been done. God has already given!
4. It's all contained in knowing Jesus. But it's not just knowing Him intellectually or theologically or having doctrines about Jesus, but it's knowing Him as a *person* and giving Him His *right place in our lives*. It's really making Jesus Lord in every area of our lives. That's what's contained in the word "acknowledging Jesus."

I've been saying that God has already given us everything we're ever going to need. Now you may look at your life at this point and say, "Well, if God has given it, I don't see it. There are needs in my life that have not been met, and yet I'm a believer and I'm doing my best to walk the Christian road and to serve God and to be one of God's people." Well, here's the really important key. This is something that the Holy Spirit revealed to me years ago and it's been a major factor in my own spiritual progress. Where is everything? If God has already given it, why don't we see it? Why don't we seem to have it? Now, here's the answer. I'll read the words of Peter and then I'll comment on it. **"Through these** [that's through the glory and goodness of Jesus] **God has given us his very great and precious promises..."** (NIV) In the previous verse we read, "God has given us everything we need." Now in this verse we read, "God has given us His very great and precious promises." What is the conclusion? It's very simple and very logical. Everything we need is contained in the promises of God, so when God has given us His promises, *in them* He has given us everything we're going to need for time and eternity. I say it this way, *"The provision is in the promises."* Now that's so important that I want you to fix it in your mind. I'm going to say it again. **"The provision is in the promises."** That explains why, on the one hand, God says He's given us everything and on the other hand, so many Christians are obviously lacking things they need. The answer is they haven't discovered where God's provision is. God's provision is in His promises. Logically therefore, in order to receive your provision, you have to *know* the promises of God and you have to know how to *claim* those promises, how to *move in* and *possess* the promises of God.

Now I'm going to deal with that part of the teaching more specifically later this week, but for the time being I just want to go back to this passage in 2 Peter and explain to you what happens in our lives when we realize that God's provision is in His promises, we find the promises that we need and we begin to claim them and apply them to our lives. There are two amazing results that follow. First of all, Peter says, **"...so that through them** [that's through the promises] **you may participate in the divine nature** [and then he goes on to say:] **and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.**" (NIV) So there are two results of claiming the promises of God. The first is positive, the second is negative. The positive result is that we *participate in the nature of God Himself*. That's an amazing statement. If it wasn't right there in the Bible, I don't think I'd ever dare to say it. But it's so explicitly stated there, that through appropriating God's promises we become partakers of God's nature. That is, through the promises, the *very nature of God Himself comes into us*. We become more and more divine. Do I dare to say that without offending you? I believe it's legitimate. The very nature of God Himself, through His promises, when we act upon them and appropriate them, when we make them ours in experience, then through that *the very nature of God begins to come into us*. And that leads us, logically, to the negative result which is *"that we escape the corruption in the world through evil desires."* Our old fallen nature is essentially corrupt, morally corrupt, spiritually corrupt and physically corrupt. But as the nature of God comes in, it *replaces* that corruption by the nature of God and the nature of God is, in essence, *incorruptible*. So a *new* kind of nature, a *new* kind of personality, a *new* kind of life comes into us as we appropriate the promises of God. It's the nature and the personality and the life of God Himself coming into us through the promises that He's given us in His Word in the Scripture. And you see, this leads us to a very important and wonderful conclusion. Ultimately, God *Himself becomes our inheritance*. Ultimately, it's not just things, it's not just blessings, it's not just experiences, but our ultimate inheritance is *God Himself*! We become partakers of the very nature of God!

Beloved, don't stop short of God! Don't stop at just experiences or blessings or gifts. They're all wonderful, but the *real purpose of God is that you inherit God Himself through His promises*.

PART NINE - The Promises Are Our Inheritance



Today I'm going to deal in a practical way with the actual steps we have to take to enter our inheritance. In the Old Testament there's one book which describes how God's people Israel entered into the inheritance that God had promised for them. It's the book of Joshua. Rightly understood, this book of Joshua provides a pattern that we too can follow as we enter into our inheritance in the New Testament.

I'm going to read the first three verses of the first chapter of the book of Joshua. ***"Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, 'Moses My servant is dead, now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. 'Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses.'"*** (Joshua 1:1–3, NAS) Now there are some important points for us to notice in this opening of the book of Joshua. It gives us the key to understanding what follows in the rest of the book. Bear in mind that God started what He had to say to Joshua with the statement, *"Moses, my servant is dead; now therefore. . ."* and I just want to point out a kind of principle in the spiritual life, that often a death has to precede a new move. So many times, something has to die before we can take the next move. Moses had been one of the greatest leaders that God ever gave to His people and yet it was only after his death that his people could move into their inheritance. So although they mourned the death of Moses, it was not a disaster, but it was a necessary preliminary to the next move.

I believe we find this in our own lives spiritually. It's even, I think, something like the cycle of the seasons. At the end of the summer there comes fall, and then winter which is a time of death. But out of the time of death of winter there comes the newness and renewal of spring. And I believe there's something like that in our lives. I've noticed so often, when God has something new before me, something old has to die first before I can move into the new.

Let's go on then with this lesson from Joshua. The second point is that God required that *all* the people cross over. That's so different from the contemporary church, where if we get a 50 percent response from the people we think we're doing pretty well. But at this point, in dealing with His people, God said not one of them is to be left behind. They are all to cross over. And I believe there's something ahead of the people of God in the next few years that's going to be very like that, where *all* the people who want to belong to God's people and into God's inheritance are *going to have to cross over*.

Then I want you to note the tenses that God uses. In verse 2 He uses the present tense, *"I am giving,"* but in verse 3 He uses the perfect tense, *"I have given them the land."* The lesson is this, Once God says, *"I give it to you,"* after that God doesn't have to give it again. After that, as far as God's concerned, *it has been given!* When God says, *"I give,"* that settles it. After that, it's *"I have given."* It has been given. Now from then on Israel had the legal right given them by God to the entire land, but they still did not have experiential possession of the land. They didn't own any more of the land experientially than they did before God spoke. So I want you to see this point, that there's a difference between the *legal right* and the *experiential possession* of what God has promised us. I think this is very important for us as Christians. I sometimes have commented that if Israel had been like some Christians, after God said to them in verse 3, *"I've given you the whole land,"* they would have lined up along the east bank of

the Jordan River, looked westward across the river into the land and said, “It’s all ours!” Well, it would have been true *legally*, but it was not true *experientially*. The Canaanites still dominated the land. So bear this principle in mind which emerges from the book of Joshua. It’s one thing to have the legal right, it’s another thing to have the experiential possession.

Now let’s look at the actual process by which Israel moved into the land. Their first two successes came through miracles. A miracle opened the way for them to cross the Jordan and through a miracle they captured the first city of Jericho. But listen to this: after that they had to fight for all the rest. And the *only way* that they actually gained experiential possession was by placing their feet actually on the ground that they were claiming. God said to them, **“Every place where you place the sole of your foot, that’s what’s yours in experience, not just in legal right.”** Now all this is a very close parallel for us in the New Testament as we gain our inheritance. Interestingly enough, the Hebrew name Joshua is the same in the original language as the name Jesus. There are just two different forms of the same name, and we kind of get this picture, In the Old Testament, under a leader named Joshua, God led His people into a promised land. In the New Testament, under a leader named Jesus (which is the same name) God leads His people into a land of promises. So you see the difference? In the Old Testament, the inheritance was a promised land. In the New Testament, the inheritance is a land of promises.

I’ve explained that the example of Joshua and the Israelites entering their inheritance applies as a very clear and practical way to us as Christians entering our inheritance. You see, when we are born again and become God’s children legally, from then onwards we are heirs to all that God has.

This is what Paul says in Romans chapter 8 verses 16–17, **“The Spirit himself [that’s the Holy Spirit] testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”** That’s essential. We have to know, through the witness of the Holy Spirit, that we really are the children of God. Otherwise our claim to be God’s children is not endorsed by the Holy Spirit. We must have the Holy Spirit’s endorsement to our claim. Then Paul goes on to say, **“Now if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...”** That’s exciting. The *entire inheritance of God belongs to us*. We share the inheritance with Jesus Christ. Everything that belongs to Jesus Christ belongs likewise to us as sons of God. But there’s an “if” that follows and sometimes people read the Bible and skip the “if’s,” but this is a very important “if” and I want to read it, **“Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ [now here’s the “if”], if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”** (NIV) So we’re heirs to the whole inheritance. We’re heirs to all the blessings, but we’re also heirs to the sufferings. And we cannot skip the sufferings and expect to inherit the blessings. That’s very clear. The condition is *“if we suffer with Him.”* So, to gain experiential possession of our inheritance as Christians, we need to follow the example of Israel. It’s not enough just to line up on the east bank of the river and look across at our inheritance and say, *“I’ve got it all.”* I’ve met people who’ve told me, “I got it all when I accepted Jesus.” My answer is, “You got it all legally, but you don’t necessarily have it all experientially.” That’s exactly illustrated by the experience of Israel and sometimes I go so far as to say to people, “Well, if you’ve got it all, where is it all? Let’s see it! Demonstrate it! Use it! Let’s have the evidence.” But so many times people have it all in theory, they have it all in doctrine, but they don’t have it in real experience and there’s where we have to apply the lesson of Joshua.

What are the principles that apply to us? I would suggest these are the main principles, First of all, where necessary, God will do miracles. But God will not do miracles where they’re not necessary. Secondly, like Israel, for most of our inheritance we will have to fight. We will not enter into our inheritance unless we’re prepared to take on the powers of darkness that oppose us and defeat them with the weapons that God has made available to us. Christians who will not fight will not enter their inheritance.

There’s a little rather vulgar word that’s used in common speech today. It’s the word “guts.” Doesn’t sound good in a sermon. Some people call it “intestinal fortitude.” But I want to suggest to you that you probably will get to heaven without theology. I doubt whether you will get there without “guts.” It takes “guts” to be a Christian. It takes “guts” to enter our inheritance. The third principle from Israel under Joshua is this: that we have to *set our feet on what God has promised us*. We have to take

possession of it individually and personally for ourselves. And this is where the sufferings come in because when we do that, we'll find that we inevitably share in Christ's sufferings.

Let's then look briefly as I close at our two responsibilities, the two things we have to do. I'm going to say them in very short words. First of all, we've got to be prepared to *fight*. Secondly, we have to set our feet on what we claim to be ours of our inheritance.

FIGHT! SET OUR FEET!

PART TEN - All God's Promises are Now Available to Us



Today I'll be unfolding to you the full extent of our inheritance, which is no less than all the promises of God. The key verse that unfolds this to us is found in 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 20. Make a note of that verse, 2 Corinthians 1:20. It has so much to tell us. Now there are various different ways of translating this verse because the original language in the Greek of the New Testament is so condensed that it's hard to translate it. I'll read to you two translations. First of all, the King James Version which is very beautiful, which says this, ***"For all the promises of God in him [that's Jesus Christ] are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."*** (KJV) Now I'll read the New International Version which is also a very powerful translation of this particular verse, ***"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God."*** Let me read that last passage again. ***"And so through him [that's Jesus], the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God."***

Whichever translation we follow, and both of them are good, there are certain very important points that emerge, and I'll just simply explain them to you. First of all, it's *all* the promises. *All* God's promises are available to us. Not some of them, but all of them. The inheritance is *all* the promises of God. Secondly, it's in the present tense. *All* the promises of God are YES and AMEN. It's not in the past. It's not in the future. Some people have an unfortunate way of interpreting the Scripture that robs us in this present age of practically everything that's worth having. Miracles were for the past. Prosperity's for the millennium. In the meanwhile, we're just left hanging on to a bare crust that just barely sustains life. That's not what this Scripture says. It doesn't say *they were*. It doesn't say *they will be*. It says *they are now*. This is our inheritance right now. It's all the promises of God.

And then it says they are *"Yes, in Christ."* I've pointed out earlier this week there's only one source, that's God. There's only one channel, that's Jesus. There's no other way that these things can come to us but from God, through Jesus. They are "Yes." That's very emphatic! God doesn't make promises and then change His mind. He doesn't say, "I'll do this" and then, when you go to Him for it, He says, "Well, as a matter of fact, I'm not sure I will do it after all." But this is one of the most emphatic and positive verses in the whole Bible. *All the promises are yes*. Just a plain, simple, clear, emphatic yes. God says, "I promised it and I meant it, and I'll stand behind what I promised." However, *we* have to add something to God's "Yes." The New International Version that I read says, *"through him [Jesus] the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God."* I think this is a vivid picture. You find the promise. You say, "God, did you mean this?" And God says, "Yes, I meant it." It's "Yes," but in order to appropriate it we have to respond to God's "yes" by our "amen." You know, of course, the word "Amen" means *"so let it be,"* "be it established." So when God says "Yes," we appropriate it by our "Amen." It's our "Amen" that makes the promise ours at that given moment, in that given situation.

Now the next exciting statement is that all this is *"by us."* Oh, how glad I am for those two words, each of two letters: "by us." "Us" means you and me. It means people just like ourselves. It doesn't say, "by the apostles" or "by great preachers" or "by evangelists" or "missionaries" or "by great

saints in the past.” It says, “*by us.*” All God’s promises are available to *us*, to people like you and me, here and now.

Then, the other point that we need to see is that they are “*to the glory of God.*” The ultimate purpose of existence is to glorify God, and God has so arranged the promises He’s given us that every time we appropriate those promises in faith, we glorify God. The more we appropriate God’s promises, the more we glorify Him!

You see really, there are two alternatives before us, Unbelief, that robs God of His glory; or faith, that gives God the glory due to Him. Romans 3:23, a familiar verse, says, “***For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*** (KJV) The essential nature of sin is, it’s robbing God of the glory that’s due to Him. On the other hand, in Romans 4 we have the pattern of Abraham who’s set forth before us as the father or the leader of all who believe. And this is what Paul says in Romans 4 verses 20–21 about Abraham: 20 ***Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.*** (NIV) Notice Abraham’s conviction, that if God promised anything, He had the power to do it. He didn’t waver. He just responded to God’s “Yes” with his “Amen” and in that way he gave glory to God. So, claiming the promises of God in unwavering faith gives God the glory that is due to Him. But unbelief robs God of the glory that is due to Him.

I’ve been expounding to you 2 Corinthians 1:20, “*For all the promises of God in him [Jesus] are yea, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*” Or the New International Version: “*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘yes’ in Christ.*” And so through him the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us to the glory of God.” I’ve pointed out that it’s *all* the promises of God. Now, someone calculated that there are about 8,000 promises of God in the Bible and they’re *all* available to us when we need them, but we don’t need them all at any given moment. At any given moment we need to put our foot on one particular promise that represents God’s provision for our need in that given situation. So the way I sum up 2 Corinthians 1:20 is this: “*Every promise that fits my situation and meets my need is for me now.*” Let me say that once more: “*Every promise that fits my situation and meets my need is for me now.*” And remember the ultimate objective is the glory of God. They’re all for the glory of God.

Now I want to point out an important thing that many Christians overlook. *Most of God’s promises are conditional!* In other words, in most cases, but not in all cases, when God gives a promise He says to His people, “If you will do so-and-so, then I will do so-and-so.” But we have no right to claim the promise unless we first meet the condition. A good example of this is the promises of blessings that I was dealing with last week. I found in Deuteronomy chapter 28 the whole list of blessings, but we need to bear in mind that the condition stated first of all is, “*If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God.*” So, if we do not diligently listen to the voice of the Lord, we have no scriptural right to claim those blessings. We have to fulfill God’s conditions.

Then the next thing we need to see, and this is also very important, is that the fulfillment of God’s promises does not depend upon our circumstances, but upon our fulfilling God’s conditions. In other words, we have to keep our eyes on the conditions, make sure that we fulfill them. We do not have to be influenced by the circumstances. What often happens to God’s people is that a believer finds a promise which he needs and he begins to claim it, and then he looks at his circumstances and he finds that his circumstances are totally unfavorable. And so he more or less concludes, “Well, it’s true. God made that promise, but this is not the situation in which God can fulfill that promise.” Now, that’s *totally wrong*. That’s where many of us lose our inheritance. We can go back again for a moment to the example of Abraham. God had promised Abraham a son of his own body who was to be his heir. He reached the age of 99 and *no son had come*. He tried on his own and all he’d produced was Ishmael, who was not to be the heir.

Why did God allow Abraham to get to the age of 99 before He fulfilled His promise? Why does God often allow us to come to a position of seeming impossibility before He comes out and fulfills the promises we are claiming? I believe there are two practical reasons. Of course, there may be many more. But first of all, we are *emptied of self-confidence*. We come to the point where we know that if it’s going to be done, *God* is going to be the one that does it. That’s where Abraham came. He knew his own

body was, from the view of procreation, dead. He knew that Sarah's womb was dead. He knew that there was *no natural possibility any longer for the promise to be fulfilled*. Therefore, he *had* to focus his eyes solely and exclusively on God. There was *no one who could do it but God*. The second reason, I believe, is that when this happens all the glory goes to God. And remember, that's the purpose of the promises, that God may be glorified. When there's a possibility that we can do it by our own effort, then we may take some of the credit for it, but when we come to the place where we know we cannot do it by our own effort, we're exhausted of self-confidence, *then the glory truly goes to God!*