

INHERITANCE

When you die will you leave an inheritance for your children? An inheritance can be money or land or houses or anything that belongs to you in your lifetime, and still belongs to you when you die. An inheritance is a great gift.

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. Good morning and welcome to this program.

An inheritance is something that is passed from one generation to the next. God's book, the Bible, speaks much about inheritance. The word "heir" is the word that refers to the person who receives an inheritance, or who will receive the inheritance when the owner dies. Who are your heirs? Are you making a way for your heirs to carry your provisions into the next generation?

God, the creator of the earth and all its inhabitants, has an inheritance that He provides his children. However, God will not die and leave the inheritance. In fact, God will provide his children their inheritance when they die! God has prepared a place in His own land of heaven as an inheritance for those who love Him. This arrangement with God is very similar to that experienced by Abraham.

Abraham had no permanent dwelling. You might say that Abraham rented all of his life. He owned flocks and herds, he had men servants and their families, but Abraham owned no land, and never lived in a permanent dwelling. But yet, God promised Abraham that his descendants would inherit a land with houses, a place to call their own.

Abraham was 75 years old, and still without a descendant, still living in tents, when God called him to go into a land that God would show him. "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (9) By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. (10) For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God." (Heb 11:8-10 ESV) That which God promised to Abraham's descendants was indeed a "land of promise." However, it was about 400 years later when the land finally came to belong to the descendants of Abraham, and the promise was

fulfilled. Abraham himself did not own any of the land. Stephen preached that “And [God] gave [Abraham] none inheritance in it, no, not *so much as* to set his foot on: yet [God] promised that he would give it to [Abraham] for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* [Abraham] had no child.” (Acts 7:5 KJV)

Well, God keeps his promises. Did Abraham know that God had kept his promise for Abraham’s descendants after all those years? You see, although Abraham had been dead almost 400 years, Abraham was still alive; his spirit was with God. Abraham received a “city ... whose designer and builder is God.”

Just as Abraham did not receive the inheritance while he lived on this earth, Christians also do not receive the promised inheritance while in the flesh. Heaven is a land of promise. But, like Abraham, the promise will surely be fulfilled after the faithful Christian dies. Jesus’ apostle Peter praised God for this great promise: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, (5) who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1Peter 1:3-5 ESV.)

This great Christian inheritance is described as “imperishable.” Earthly inheritances can disappear in a matter of days. Family farms have been sold in order to pay government taxes. God’s promised inheritance to his children is also “undefiled.” Earthly inheritances can become corroded, rusty, defective. But God’s promised inheritance can never be defiled. Furthermore, God’s inheritance for his children is “unfading.” The glory and value of earthly things can fade. Things can become “old” to us. We become familiar with our new toys, and we soon grow tired of them. People even grow tired of their friends. But heaven will never lose its glory or its value to us. Friends, are you in line to receive God’s promised inheritance?

Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus so as to make Saul an apostle of Jesus Christ, and an announcer of the coming inheritance. When Jesus appeared to him, He told Saul why he was sending him out to preach: “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified

by faith that is in me.” (Acts 26:18 KJV.) In order to receive God’s great promised inheritance, sinners must be forgiven of sins and sanctified by their faith in Jesus Christ. The word “sanctified” means to be “set aside” for a purpose. The Christian’s obedience to Jesus Christ sets him or her aside so that Christ can use that person for godly purposes in the world.

You see, the Christian, when forgiven, is adopted into the family of God, and thus the Christian becomes eligible for the inheritance. The apostle Paul wrote, “...when the right time came, God sent his Son, who was born [of] a woman and lived under the law. (5) God did this so that he could buy the freedom of those who were under the law. God's purpose was to make us his [adopted] children. (6) Since you are now God's [adopted] children, he has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts. The Spirit cries out, "Abba, Father." (Galatians 4:4-6 ERV.) “Abba” is the word “father” in Hebrew. The idea is that in whatever language you say “father”, that’s the word you can use in referring to God when you are a Christian. All mankind is God’s children. However, all mankind will NOT be forgiven of sins! God formally adopts those who believe and obey His Son, Jesus Christ. These are the people who can truly call upon God as “Father.” These are the people who will inherit the promised inheritance.

Before our adoption, before we could believe and obey Christ, we were slaves under the Law that says that sinners must be separated from God. The old prophet Isaiah once wrote, “Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; (2) but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.” (Isa 59:1-2 ESV .) In our sins we are held captive under the law that rightly condemns our sins and brings upon us the penalty of eternal separation from God, our Father.

The apostle Paul, however, wrote of a new day and the new law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, “Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. (24) So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. (25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, (26) for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. (27) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in

Christ Jesus. (29) And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Gal 3:23-29 ESV.)

Friends, those who repent of their sins and are baptized into Jesus Christ are forgiven of their sins and made “heirs” of the promised land of heaven. Christians are given assurance of that inheritance. Our assurance is the Holy Spirit and all of the great blessings that God gives us in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul put this way in Ephesians, chapter 1: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...” The first great spiritual blessing that comes to the Christian actually happened in the promise of God even before the foundation of the world! That’s right! Like Abraham’s descendants were blessed with a promise 400 years before they received the promise, so likewise Christians were blessed before the foundation of the world when God decided to save people of faith through His Son Jesus Christ. Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:4, “he [God] chose us in him [in Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love (5) [God] predestined [Christians] for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ...” “In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, (8) which [God] lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight (9) making known to us the mystery of his will...” Just as it was a mystery as to how God would keep his promise to Abraham, it was also a mystery as to how God would keep his promise to the world of an eternal inheritance. God’s plan came to be known when Jesus Christ came into the world. God’s plan for “the fullness of time [was] to unite all things in [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth. (11) [And it is] In [Christ that Christians] have obtained an inheritance....” (Eph 1:3-12 ESV.)

Friend, are you a Christian? God’s great promise is made to all who will believe and obey His Son Jesus Christ. Will you bow down to the Savior of the world? One of these days he is coming back to the world, this is the salvation to be revealed in the end of time. Are you ready to receive your eternal inheritance?