

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Heirs According To God's Promise

by Dan Trygg

“He saved us, not out from deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy-that-acts, by a washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ in order that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:5-7

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.” Romans 8:16-17

“And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:29

“And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba, Father!’ ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.” Galatians 4:6,7

“Because God wanted to show His unchangeable purpose even *more* clearly to the heirs of the promise, He guaranteed it with an oath, ¹⁸ so that... we... might have strong encouragement to **seize** the hope set before us.” Hebrews 6:17,18

As we have seen, over and over, there are aspects of God's salvation plan that have been obscured, ignored, de-emphasized or filtered out of most peoples' awareness. The followers of Jesus in the first century had a very different idea of what God *had done*, *was doing*, and *was willing to do* in their lives, now that they were His “born again and made new” children. They had a clear understanding that their standing with God was *totally* based upon His active-mercy and grace. They had done nothing, and could do nothing, to save themselves, or make themselves acceptable to God by their own merits. *GOD* had saved *them*. It was *HIS* work, ...*HIS* mercy, ...*HIS* grace, ...*HIS* Spirit poured out upon them richly through Jesus Christ, which brought about the transformative changes. Some people today, ...people both inside and outside of the church..., have lost sight of even that most clear and basic truth. They don't understand, or see the necessity for, God's grace provided through Jesus. They don't understand, or see the necessity for, the radical, inworking, recreating new life from the Holy Spirit that makes us new. *Of course*, if they have not *experienced* the rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit, they would not understand, ...but you can't explain that to someone on the outside. It is like trying to explain sight to a person who has been blind from birth. They *can't* really grasp or appreciate what you are saying. They *can't* really relate.

Our study today focuses on another aspect of God's salvation plan that has been poorly or rarely taught, ...and in many circles, is rarely considered or discussed at all. It is that **God had a purpose for saving us, ...a purpose that has to do with our inheritance or “allotted-portion” in God's kingdom enterprise.** We either don't talk about that, at all, ...or we “mush it all together” under the idea that we “will receive eternal life”. Let's work through the passages listed above, and see if we can “unpack” a fuller understanding of what Paul meant by calling us “heirs” of God.

In **Titus 3:7**, the original language strongly communicates a purpose clause: “He saved us, ...in order that...we might become heirs...”. **God had a purpose in saving us, ...and it has to do with us becoming an “heir”, ...whatever that is. This is a critical issue, ...what does it mean to be an “heir”?** Today, in our culture, we think of an “heir” in terms of one who will receive the worldly goods of someone who will some day die. Well, God is not about to die, ...and He is not about to bequeath to us His worldly (or celestial) possessions. Obviously, *that* understanding of an “heir” does not fit when applied to God. That should be our first clue that maybe we ought to dig a bit deeper. **The Greek word translated as “heir” is *klēronomos*. This word refers to “one who receives an allotted possession” by virtue of being a son or daughter.** This can happen *before* or *after* a parent might die. The focus is *not* on the death of the parent. The focus is on the allotment or portion. *Klēronomos* is derived from two basic words: *Klēros*, which referred to the “casting of a lot”. This was the method often used to distribute portions of property, responsibilities, duties or assignments; and *nemomai*, which means “to possess”. This is how the Joshua and the tribal leaders apportioned out the land to the tribes of Israel in Joshua 13-22. The portions were *not* the same. They were determined in advance, yet, somehow, they were appropriate to the size of the tribe that would receive them. Each portion had its own peculiarities, ...its geography, resources, potential, and its own entrenched hostile inhabitants. The portions were distributed by lot. **To be an “heir”, then, ...a *klēronomos*..., meant that you possessed the right and responsibility to take possession of that allotted-portion, to remove entrenched resistance, to develop it, and to make it fruitful and productive.** This is the Biblical meaning of the word, “heir”. So, **if we apply this to our verse, God saved us in order that He might assign us an allotted-portion which we are to take, to clear of enemy strongholds, to develop, and to make fruitful and productive.** The prepositional phrase that is meant to further clarify this process is “according to the expectation of age-type life”. **We are to do this by the power of God's life operational within our own, ...the life of the kingdom of God working within us.** This is a very different notion of

“heir” or “inheritance” than we would typically read into this passage. **There is nothing passive about *this*.** We are given the responsibility and “allotted-portion”, *now*. ***This is our assignment, our stewardship.***

Romans 8:16,17 cements this further. **Because we are God’s children, we are possessors of allotted-portions. Christ has *His* allotted-portion and responsibilities, ...and we have *ours*. Our portions or responsibilities are meant to work cooperatively with *His*, ...He is the King, we are answerable to Him. We are to be about kingdom business, together.** As we do this, we *will* suffer together with Him (There is *conflict* over our allotment, remember?), ...and **God’s purpose is that we might display the glory of Jesus operating within us.**

Galatians 3:29 is somewhat inadequately translated. It literally says, “If y’all are of Christ, consequently y’all are of the seed of Abraham, and according to promise [are] allotted-portion-possessors.” **This is not talking about being associated with Christ**, or members of a group. **This is talking about being “of Christ”, ...a reference to our spiritual birth and origin out from Him. If that is true, then you are rightful possessors of the allotted-portion that comes from the Abrahamic covenant.** The promise of Abraham is available and applicable to you.

Galatians 4:6,7 says that because we are children of God, we are also “allotted-portion-possessors”. Like Titus 3, Paul brings us right back to our hopeless state, ...lost and in bondage to the most basic forces of this world. But at the fullness of time God sent His Son, Jesus, to redeem us, and to give us adoption as His children. And because we are His children, God sent out the Spirit of Jesus into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’. The result is that **no longer are we slaves, but children of God, and therefore recipients of allotted-portions, through God’s plan, purpose and provision. The point is that salvation leads to sonship, and with that comes a calling and responsibility. We are not saved to SIT, ...we are saved to advance, rule and govern according to God’s leading and enablement.**

Hebrews 6:17,18. In order to understand this passage, we have to grasp what was transpiring. The Hebrew Christians to whom this letter was written were facing increasing persecution, and were considering “going back” to their former status as Jews. There were some limited protections under Roman law that the Jews enjoyed that did not necessarily apply to Christians. The writer of this letter was led by the Spirit to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT prophecies and hope, and He and the covenant He established is superior to anything that was in Judaism. Logically, spiritually and pragmatically, there was no “going back”. There was no other place to go! **The point is to GO ON, ...to EXPERIENTIALLY-OBTAIN WHAT JESUS MADE AVAILABLE!** The writer exhorted them to not become sluggish or lazy, but become imitators of those who through faith and patience inherited (verbal form – *klēronomeō* – obtained their allotted-portions) the promises (vs. 12). The writer then referred to the human practice of using an oath to guarantee a promise or covenant. He reminded them that God used an oath to show the “allotment-possessors” of His promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, so that we might have “strong encouragement” to “take hold” or “seize” the hope He has set before us. God is committed; His word and character are totally reliable. **There is and will be resistance, but with God, we can overcome and take possession of our allotted-portion.**

This is a powerful paradigm-shift for me. I had already made some of the same conclusions from other passages of scripture, but to see the word “heir” (“allotment-possessor”) in this light more deeply confirms the understanding of “Lordship” and “calling” I had already come to. It heightens, however, the consumer-mindset of so many of our understandings of salvation, ...especially the “me-centered” filter through which we have learned to interpret so many of our thoughts about what “salvation” is to mean. The other lesson that so strongly emerged for me, was the contrast between a *passive expectation* of what it means to follow Jesus, versus a *robust, active, participatory understanding*. What we *should* come to see, however, is the level of trust, possibility and partnership that God Himself is extending to us. This is an awesome *transformation of status* (from “outsider-slave” to “chosen child and heir”), ...and a *great potential*..., that God has assigned to us. When you think of it, however, it is really a return to our intended responsibility as stewards for God over this planet (Gen. 1:25-30; 2:15). Even *then*, we were called to *advance*, to *bring chaos to order*, to *use our rightful dominion*, and to *govern the planet* in partnership with God.

There are some obvious **applications to consider** in light of this understanding of being an “allotment-possessor”. **First, on an individual level, the paradigm clearly exposes our responsibility to actively advance our own spiritual growth.** Like the Israelites in the book of Joshua, God is telling us, “I have given you the land (the spiritual victory), go up and possess it.” This is *not a passive endeavor*, ...it involves *actively engaging* in the tools and avenues of growth that God has made available to you. Another aspect of this is that we are *not* the same. We all have our own histories, hurts, and brokenness to overcome, but, ...*with God* and His provision..., victory, healing, growth and maturity, spiritual giftedness, emerging strength and empowered effectiveness *will* take place. **Second, this is applicable to us as a group**, in whatever teams of individuals God may call us to interact with. God wants us to work on helping to advance the kingdom, displace the enemy, discover the empowering and inworking of the Spirit, and learn to work together to deepen each other’s lives. **Finally, God will give us duty-assignments where some of us are called to reach out into the community, or other places around the world, to accomplish what will bring Him glory.**