

Th131 God's Plan

Lesson Th131-44 Judgment of the Righteous

"Not until I had children of my own, did I truly understand God's love for me." Many Christians agree with this statement. Our hearts are filled with love when we become pregnant and wait with great expectation for the birth of our children. We have such great hopes for them and their lives. When they are born, we care for them and protect them. We try to teach them all we know, in the hope and expectation that they will love us in return. As they grow and mature into adults, we look forward to the day that they will assume responsibility in the family business. One day all of the wealth we have accumulated will be given to them as their inheritance. And in all this, we catch a small glimpse of God's love for us.

With the judgment of Satan and the wicked we come to the end of history on the planet Earth, for it has served its purpose. God's plan is complete. He wanted to have children, created in His image and likeness, whom He could love, and who would freely love Him in return. The entire history of the universe has been for this single purpose. And now, the children have come of age. It is time for them to inherit what their loving Father has prepared for them.

Now, God is a cosmic God. He spoke the entire universe into being with His word. He is eternal, without beginning or end. During the Millennium, we, His children, will have been given immortal bodies just like Jesus. The apostle Paul wrote this in his letter to the Romans. He said, "For those whom God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters" (Rom 8:29). We will be able to travel anywhere within God's creation—both the spirit world and the physical world. Paul also wrote, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ...you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then we are heirs also, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:14-17).

So we, the children of God, will share in the inheritance of Jesus Christ our elder brother. What is this inheritance? What does God's Word reveal to us? First we know that part of the inheritance is eternal life. If our inheritance were nothing more than this, we would cry out to God and give Him glory and honor and worship for all of eternity. But the apostle Paul gave us a clue to our inheritance when he wrote, "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived—these are the things God has prepared for those who love him" (1Cor 2:9).

Now we know that God has revealed to us that we are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. This means that whatever Jesus inherits, we his fellow-heirs, will share. The Book of Hebrews reveals to us what Jesus will inherit. It says, "In these last days [God] has spoken to us by His Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe" (Heb 1:2). And with this we see that a cosmic God created the entire universe as a cosmic inheritance for His children. What does this mean? What are we going to do with this immense inheritance? The apostle Paul gives us an intriguing insight when he wrote, "For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all

creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time" (Rom 8:19-22). The universe is waiting for us to set it free.

But first we will all be judged for what we did with Jesus' power and authority. Jesus told this story as a way of explaining what He expects from His brothers and sisters. Jesus said the kingdom of God will be like the story of a man who was going on a journey. He called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five million dollars; to another, two million dollars; to a third, one million dollars—to each according to his ability. Then the master went on his journey. Immediately the servant who received the five million dollars went and invested the money wisely. Over time it doubled in value to 10 million dollars! Likewise, the one who received two million dollars invested it and doubled it to four million dollars. But the man who received the one million dollars went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money.

After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The first servant presented himself before the master and said, "Master, you gave me five million dollars. See, I have earned five million more."

His master praised him, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you greater responsibilities. Come; share your master's joy."

Then the one who had received two million dollars also came forward and said, "Master, you gave me two million dollars. See, I have made two more."

His master said to him, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you greater responsibilities. Come; share your master's joy."

Then the one who had received the one million dollars came forward and said, "Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went off and buried your money in the ground. Here it is back."

His master said to him in reply, "You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have gotten it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the one million dollars from him and give it to the one with 10 million. To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth" (Matt 25:14-30).

In Jesus' story the master entrusted to each servant a huge amount of money. When the master trusted these men, he was giving them authority to manage the money. The sums of money were large and represented power and prestige within society. So the master gave to his servants authority and power. When he returned he wanted to know what they had done with his power and authority. The first two were faithful and showed a great profit. Here is what is

interesting, the master rewarded them not by giving them gold or silver, but rather he rewarded them by giving them greater responsibilities and a place within their master's joy.

In the same way every saint will be judged. We have all been entrusted with Christ's authority and the power of the Holy Spirit. We have learned that this authority and power is to be used for making disciples and witnessing for Christ. One day we will stand before Christ and our works will be judged. If we were faithful in this small work upon the earth, we will be given great responsibility in Christ's inheritance, the universe.

With this lesson we come to the end of God's plan as it is revealed in the Bible. We are left with a great challenge to be faithful with the power and authority that is entrusted to us by Jesus. We must never lose sight of the fact that the purpose of this power and authority is for us to make disciples and be witnesses of Christ to the lost.

This lesson is **important** because it tells us that we will share in the inheritance of Jesus Christ our elder Brother. The inheritance is things that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and things that have never entered our minds. This is because He loves us. He has given us authority and power to win as many as possible to Christ, to share in this inheritance too.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that Jesus at the final judgment will reward faithful believers. Their reward will not be great riches, but rather greater responsibilities in His kingdom. Until that time, we must be faithful to witness for Christ and make disciples as he commanded us.

Let's **review** what you learned in this lesson.

1. What do the children of God inherit? [Pause 5 seconds]
 - A. If you said that the children of God share in Jesus' inheritance of both the spirit world and the universe, then you are correct.
2. Do all saints receive the same inheritance? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that each saint's work will be judged and they will be rewarded appropriately, then you answered correctly.
3. What is the one common thing that all saints inherit? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, "All saints will inherit an immortal body," then you are right.

The **assignment** is to review this lesson at least three times. Meditate upon the story Jesus taught about the master who went on a journey and entrusted his wealth to his servants. What kind of servant are you? Are you being a faithful steward of Christ's power and authority? Discuss this with a friend and challenge each other to become a stronger witness for Christ.