

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

LESSON 25: CHAPTER 21

20 November 2015

UNDERSTANDING THE BELIEVER'S INHERITANCE (Acts 20:32)

1. Believers are joint heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17).
2. The believer's inheritance is incorruptible, undefiled, fadeth not away, reserved in heaven (1 Pet. 1:4).
3. The believer has an eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15, Col. 1:12, 3:24). You can't lose something that is eternal.
4. Yet, there are verses in the New Testament that clearly indicate that a believer's inheritance may be withheld due to ungodly behavior. (Eph. 5:5, Gal. 5:19-21, 1 Cor. 6:9-10).
5. The Bible does not contain any contradictions. Therefore, if not a contradiction, how can we reconcile this obvious difference? (Eternal inheritance vs. conditional inheritance).
 - a. Meditate upon Acts 20:32, which speaks of an inheritance which a believer may partake of during his time of sanctification and building up (here on earth before death).
 - b. Identify the inheritance. The believer is destined to be like Christ in heaven (1 Jn. 3:2).
 - i. This is the part of our inheritance that we can begin to partake of today (2 Cor. 3:18). We can be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29) and transformed today (Rom. 12:2).
 - c. Conditions for partaking of our inheritance today:
 - i. Don't make provisions for the flesh (Rom. 13:14)
 - ii. Don't sin; don't walk in the flesh, but walk in the Spirit. (Eph. 5:5, Gal. 5:16-21, 1 Cor. 6:9-10).
 - iii. Put off the old man, put on the new man, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind (Eph. 4:22-24, Col. 3:8-10).
 - iv. Add to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).
 - v. Read the Bible: reading and meditating upon the "word of his grace" (Acts 20:32) will renew your mind so that you'll be able to partake of your inheritance today.
 1. Conversely, neglect of Bible reading and Bible study will hinder a believer from enjoying his inheritance today. He'll receive it in eternity, but he'll have to wait.
 - d. Remember that the "Kingdom of God" is not a physical kingdom (Rom. 14:17, Luke 17:20-21). We enter the kingdom of God upon our faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:5). The unrighteous shall not "INHERIT" the (spiritual) kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 15:50, Gal. 5:21). He won't be like Christ today; he'll have to wait until eternity.
 - i. Lay hold upon the glory of Christ's "inheritance IN the saints" today (Eph. 1:15-18).
 - ii. Attain UNTO the resurrection of the dead (Phil. 3:11); begin attaining in this life the (spiritual) things which you SHALL HAVE—after your resurrection. (See Phil. 3:8-11).

ACTS CHAPTER 21

Vss. 1-7 Paul and his company departed Miletus (Acts 20:17) after his farewell speech to the Ephesian elders. They sailed to several lands on the way to Jerusalem. Note: Cyprus (vs. 3) is called Chittim in the Old Testament. Along the way, they stopped in Tyre for seven days. There Paul was warned by the Holy Spirit (through some disciples) not to go to Jerusalem (vs. 4). Paul did not heed the warning and continued the journey by ship toward Jerusalem.

Vss. 8-9 Paul and company arrived in Caesarea and abode with Philip the evangelist (Acts 6:5, 8:26, 40). Philip had four daughters "which did prophesy" (vs. 9). Prophecy is a spiritual gift given to certain members of the Church (1 Cor 12:10, Eph 4:11). Women are not forbidden to prophesy. They may boldly proclaim God's truth to saints and sinners.

Note: the law and the prophets ended with John the Baptist (Luke 16:16). This is a reference to the written commands contained in the Old Testament. Prophesying did not end (for example, John prophesied in Revelation, Paul prophesied about the Antichrist in 2 Thess. 2).

- Vss. 10-14** Agabus the prophet came to Caesarea from Judaea. He prophesied that if Paul went to Jerusalem, he would be bound and delivered to the Gentiles. Paul's companions tried to persuade him not to go (vs. 12. Vs. 14), but he would not heed their warnings. Paul's great love for his people (the Jews) supersedes his love for God at this stage. Paul is prepared to rebel against the Holy Spirit of God in order to reach out to the Jews. He's in the flesh (Isa. 40:6, 1 Pet. 1:24), he's a man (Psa. 118:8), and he made up his mind he was going to Jerusalem no matter what.
- Vss. 15-19** They arrived in Jerusalem and the brethren gladly received them (vs. 17). Paul visited James and the elders the next day and gave a missionary report.
- Vs. 20** The Jerusalem brethren glorified the Lord (vs. 20) upon hearing Paul's report. They also reported that thousands of Jews believed. Unfortunately, ALL of those believers were "**zealous of the LAW.**" They refused to give up the practices and requirements of the Old Testament Law; practices which are now vain in light of the Lord's free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Vss. 21-24** The believers in Jerusalem had been informed that Paul had been teaching Jews in other places to forsake Moses, the Law, and all the Jewish customs and practices. Paul is advised to purify himself and take certain actions to show the people that the reports they'd heard about him were false and to convince them that he still keeps the Law. Paul is in Jerusalem outside of the will of God. Therefore he is going to make some bad decisions.
- Vs. 25** The Jewish believers made a separation between the Gentile believers and themselves. Gentile believers don't have to observe the Law, but Jewish believers do. God said there's one body, one church, one head, and we're all members of that one church (1 Cor. 12:13).
- Vs. 26** Paul followed their unwise instructions. He entered the temple to be purified by an offering, ignoring the fact that he was already purified by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Titus 2:14, Heb. 9:14).
- Paul is compromising the truth to win his brethren whom he loved (Rom. 9:3). It is the equivalent of joining the Catholics in their practices when you know that those practices are wrong. The message you send to those people is: "Your religion is good." You can't win people to Christ that way. You cannot "**do evil, that good may come**" (Rom. 3:8). Your "good" will be evil spoken of (Rom. 14:6).
- Vss. 27-29** Jews from Asia saw Paul in the temple and exposed him as a fraud and a liar. Now he has lost his credibility. In 1 Cor. 9:20 when Paul said, "**unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews,**" that doesn't mean you ought to DO what they DO! It means you should avoid actions that would offend them.
- Vss. 30-40** Paul was kicked out of the temple, beaten, and about to be killed, but Roman soldiers came and arrested him, saving his life. He was bound with two chains (fulfilled prophecy) and carried to the castle for questioning. At the castle Paul asked permission to speak to the Jews. The chief captain permitted it. On the steps of the castle, Paul begins to give his testimony in the Hebrew tongue.
- Notice that Paul is now on the defense (Chapter 22, vs. 1). This also is a result of being out of God's will.