

96-09-27b

OK, we're ready now to resume after our break. And before we continue with the remaining passages in the New Testament that talk about inheritance, let me review once again in case I think I may have tangled my phraseology a little bit on the passage we covered regarding the sheep and goats judgment. That judgment is a judgment for the living survivors, if you will, of the millennial kingdom.

As you know, at the end of the millennium, there will be the Gog-Nagog rebellion. There's going to be quite a few who lose their lives in the course of the resolution of that. But there will be those who survive.

And the living remnants of those who came to the point of decision about Jesus Christ in the millennium, this is not Old Testament saints or unbelievers. It's not New Testament saints or unbelievers. It is strictly those who during that thousand year earthly reign of Christ came to the point of accountability for eternal salvation and who are still alive at the end of the millennial kingdom.

Jesus will gather them before him. He already knows which ones are sheep and which ones are goats. They are already believers or unbelievers.

Now, those who made their decision during the millennium that perished during the millennium, if they are unbelievers, they will be resurrected at the great white throne judgment because the unbelieving dead of every age are raised and judged at the great white throne judgment that's spoken of in Revelation chapter 20. And at some point, probably when we do our topical studies, we will go into the resurrections and we'll cover this in more detail. But I just wanted to clarify that.

So if you want to count up the judgments for human beings, the first judgment is the judgment seat of Christ which occurs at the rapture, shortly after the rapture, for an indeterminate period of time after we join the Lord in the air. The judgment seat of Christ takes place. That is the believers in the New Testament age.

The second judgment will occur at the inception of the millennial kingdom. And that is the Old Testament believers judgment. It's the Old Testament equivalent of the judgment seat of Christ.

It takes place at the beginning of the millennial kingdom. The third judgment is the sheep and goats judgment at the end of the millennial kingdom. And that covers both believers and living unbelievers at the end of the millennium.

The final judgment is the great white throne judgment which is the unbelieving dead of every age. And that is very close in time to the sheep and goats judgment. I suspect that hard on the heels of the sheep and goats judgment comes the great white throne judgment.

Those sessions will probably be held back to back. So those are the four judgments that we have recorded in Scripture regarding human beings. There was, of course, a judgment for angels that took place prior to human history.

Satan and his angels have already been judged and found guilty. They have already been sentenced to the lake of fire. That's why the New Testament refers to the lake of fire as the place prepared for the devil and his angels.

And that becomes an issue as we take a look at inheritance. Now we've seen the gospel passages which talk about inheritance for Old Testament saints. Let's look now at the New Testament passages that talk about our inheritance.

We start in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 9. You remember that 1 Corinthians is a letter written to the church in Corinth where there were many disobedient believers. It was the most immature, problem-racked church that Paul addressed in the Scriptures that we have. And in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, he is talking to these people.

He says in chapter 5, it's reported that there's sexual immorality among you that's so bad it's not even named among the Gentiles. You all are puffed up, you're arrogant, you haven't mourned about this and so forth. Then in chapter 6, he says you're having squabbles with each other.

You're believers and you're squabbling with each other and taking each other to court before the Gentiles. They're in Corinth. They're up in the Roman Empire.

One believer has an issue and a grudge and feels that he's been wronged by another believer. So they sue each other and take each other to court. He says, dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? Do you not know that saints will judge the world? So what are we talking about here? This is all believers, right? Look down in verse 7 and 8. It is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another.

Why do you not rather accept wrong? It would be better for you to be wronged by another believer and just accept it. Let that be a part of sharing the suffering of Christ and let that contribute to your eternal inheritance rather than getting in a huff and putting your own interests ahead of the plan and purpose of God. Why do you not rather let yourself be cheated, he says in verse 7? No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat and you do these things to your brethren.

Now look at verse 9. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? He says, don't you know this? If you knew this, you wouldn't be taking each other to law. You wouldn't be cheating each other and squabbling with one another and wronging one another. Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit? He wouldn't suddenly jump out and start making a reference to unbelievers here.

This is believers. Unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived.

And this is what has happened today. The bulk of Christianity is deceived because we don't think this applies to us. Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners will not inherit the kingdom of God.

And these are believers who practice these things. They will not inherit the kingdom of God. Now, just as a, and he says in verse 11, And such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

And what he's saying is, don't, you've been given the potential for all of these things. Don't fall back and lose it all. Like Esau did.

The analogy that comes to my mind, and once again, I'm a victim of my own experiences, but in this whole issue of calling and the things that come to those who are called and those who love God and respond to that calling according to his purpose. And we say, well, but aren't all believers in that group? It reminds me of what happens in the process of going to a service academy, whether it's West Point or Air Force or Navy or any of the service academies. You, first of all, have to express a desire to go.

With the exception of a few athletes, the service academies don't come looking for you. You apply. You say, I see that there's a service academy there.

I see that this is the route to a great career and to self-improvement, good education and so forth. And you apply and you say, I would like to come. And if you qualify, you receive a nomination, which is basically an invitation to come.

And not everyone who gets a nomination gets an appointment. A nomination means you're qualified. There's nothing standing in your way except numerical requirements.

And so then you get an appointment and you get a letter in the mail that says you have been appointed to be a midshipman in the United States Naval Academy. Now, in my analogy, that appointment basically corresponds to salvation. You are now a midshipman.

You're appointed as it used to be, you know, you're a gentleman by an act of Congress type of thing. You have an appointment. You're there.

You're going. You are a midshipman. So you go and you go through induction day and you get your uniforms and you get your head shaved and you get all your stuff.

Okay, now you're a midshipman. Now, when my class started on July the 7th, 1975, there were fourteen hundred odd appointees. This would be our pool of all believers in my comparison.

Now, when you have that appointment and when you arrive and we're there, you've got basically you've got your four years to fulfill and you're going to get commissioned in the Marine Corps or in the Navy. You're going to have a guaranteed five or six years or longer employment in the armed

forces. It's a done deal.

You have it. All you have to do is not bail out, not fail, but it's yours. It's given to you on the day that you get that appointment.

That's all yours. That's a part of being a midshipman. The whole idea of being a midshipman is that you're going to be commissioned and you're going to receive all of these things.

However, from the fourteen hundred and twenty-three members of the class of 1979, there were just slightly over eight hundred that graduated. We lost almost six hundred members of my class. This is the difference between those who start out having everything and those who actually receive those things that come to an appointee to the Naval Academy.

If you see my analogy, you've got to pursue. You've got to want it. You've got to stick.

You've got to not disqualify yourself. During that period, everyone is an appointee. Everyone is encouraged to take hold of these things, but not everyone does.

People decide they don't like it. They decide they don't want it. They don't like the discipline.

They don't like the environment. They're not willing to do the academic work. They hurt themselves physically.

Whatever happens, nearly six hundred members of my class didn't take possession of the things that are the heritage of an appointee. That's the difference between being saved and being in that group that receives the inheritance. It's potential for everyone.

It's the right and the promise to everyone. But you can disqualify yourself and you can lose it if you don't want it, if it's not important enough to you to persevere and to stick, to obey, to strive, and to seize and take hold of that thing that is your right by virtue of being an appointee to the Academy. That's what we as believers face.

There is suffering at a service academy, and you have to go through a lot of grief to take hold of what's at the end of that period of training. And the process is designed to weed those out that don't have a strong commitment and a strong desire and an ambition for those things. This life does the same thing for believers.

If we are shallow soil, that word and spirit that God plants in us may bloom for a time, but under pressure it's going to wither and die. And believers who are that type of soil are not going to receive the inheritance. And that's what Paul is telling the Corinthians.

He says, look, you're getting distracted. You think that it's important to win a suit in court so that you'll have what's coming to you. He's saying, think about the eternal.

You're going to lose your eternal inheritance. You may win the court battle. You're going to lose

your eternal reward.

That's strong motivation to stop worrying about the things of this life. And that's why Paul says it in verse 9, don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit? If you pursue these things, fornication, idolatry, adultery, homosexuals, sodomites, there's something for the quote unquote Christian homosexual community. They can certainly be saved, but they're not going to have an inheritance if they continue to practice that lifestyle.

Thieves, covetous, there's just a lifestyle of desiring what other people have. If we as a believer go through life wishing that we had what somebody else has, we forfeit our inheritance. And we'll spend eternity, in a sense, wishing we had what other people have because that's the way we lived our life.

These other things are often symbolic. Drunkards, what is that? That's excess. That's a desire for stimulation or a desire for getting away from the pressures of life in a false way.

Revilers, if we spend our life bringing charges against others, as many believers do, because they have an idea of what righteousness is and they love to cut down believers around them that they don't think are witnessing enough or ministering enough. Revilers have no inheritance. Extortioners, people who put pressure on others to extract something from them.

Believers today put pressure on each other to extract obedience, to extract a better lifestyle, to extract participation, to extract money, to extract efforts and so forth. That's extortion. And extortioners lose their inheritance as believers.

This is a serious issue and you have to look hard to find anyone that's making an issue out of it for believers today. But it's a central part of scripture. Let's look at some of these other passages.

That was 1 Corinthians 6, verse 9. Unrighteous believers will not inherit the kingdom of God. In this same book, over in chapter 15, when he's talking about the inheritance, we don't necessarily need to turn there, but you remember 1 Corinthians 15, he's talking about it's like a seed, it's sown in an earthly body, it's raised incorruptible and so forth. And he says, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

What's the point there? In the context of our study, this kingdom of God is not just talking about blessing and time. If flesh and blood cannot inherit this kingdom of God that's on the line, this is eternal reward we're talking about. This is what's coming up in the millennial kingdom and beyond.

This is the same kingdom of God that's being spoken of back in chapter 6. And if you don't have an inheritance because of bad lifestyle, evil patterns of life, you're forfeiting something in the eternal realm. A lot of times people say, well, you'll have discipline in time, but once you're glorified, you're going to have the same package as everyone else. Flesh and blood can't inherit

this inheritance.

This is an inheritance that comes in a resurrection body. And what's the point? We're determining our level of privilege, our level of reward, our level of opportunity in the eternal future by what we do now. Flesh and blood can't inherit this kingdom that he's talking about in chapter 6. This is making a difference in the eternal future.

Galatians chapter 4, verse 30, take a look at that. Galatians chapter 4, verse 30. You remember Galatians is another one of the books where Paul is addressing this terrible problem of people imposing a false standard of righteousness on one another.

Keep the works of the law. Conform to my idea of what's righteous. Look, starting in chapter 28, he's comparing those who pursue righteousness by faith to Isaac and those who pursue righteousness by works to Ishmael.

And he says in verse 28, we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But just as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted the one who was born according to the spirit, even so it is now. And people who pursue righteousness by works aren't content to just do that for themselves.

They're going to persecute people who want to pursue righteousness by faith. We will experience pressure from the Christian community if we pursue righteousness by faith. That's what scripture says.

We should expect it. We shouldn't be surprised by it. Legalistic believers, believers that think you have to minister and have to witness to be righteous before God are going to put pressure on people who don't.

That's just the way it's going to be. Even so it is now. Nevertheless, what does scripture say? And this is the answer we need to come back with.

This is what we're doing tonight. What does the scripture say? Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. And if people are engaged in spirituality by works, righteousness by human effort, pursuing a false righteousness in a false way, no inheritance will not be an heir.

We have an inheritance when we pursue righteousness by faith. And if we don't pursue it by faith, we can lose it. That's what Galatians chapter 4 verse 30 tells us.

You can also look a page over in Galatians 5 verse 21. This is almost the same thing we just got through seeing. You can actually start this back in verse 18.

If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The works of the flesh are evident, which are... Now notice again, this is at the end of Galatians. This is a book to believers, right? Paul

wrote this to believers saying, don't get caught up in righteousness by works.

That's the theme of the book. So he's talking to believers here, and what does he say? Here are the works of the flesh. Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambition, dissension, heresy, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like.

The very same thing we saw over in 1 Corinthians, wasn't it? Of which I told you beforehand, just as I told you in times past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. This is believers losing their inheritance because of a lifestyle characterized by these things. We can lose inheritance through disobedience.

Inheritance comes through obedience. It comes through following Christ. Just like it did in the Old Testament age when Jesus was talking to the rich young ruler.

Just like it came in the Old Testament age when Jesus was talking to the lawyer. This is a condition in the eternal future that is dependent on what we decide and how we live now. And what comes right after this? One of the famous verses that everybody goes to, Galatians 5.22, the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

Attitudes of the heart that are in complete contradistinction, complete opposite of what we just saw in verses 19, 20, and 21. That's the choice we face. It's the fruit of the spirit or it's loss of inheritance.

It's not just making ourselves miserable in this life. It's the loss of the privilege of reflecting the glory of God in the eternal future. Take a look at Hebrews chapter 6, verse 12.

Hebrews chapter 6, one of my favorite sections of scripture. We looked at it a little bit last time. I just want to point out very quickly verse 12 in Hebrews chapter 6. Do not become sluggish but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Now, is patience a requirement for salvation from the lake of fire? Obviously not. So to inherit the promises, this is an obedience thing. This is a lifestyle thing for believers.

If you want to inherit the promises of God, it takes continuing in faith. It takes continuing in patience, which is part of the fruit of the spirit. The same thing we saw in Romans chapter 2. Patience, continuance, and well-doing.

Seeking for glory, honor, and immortality. God will give eternal life. It's such a shame that we've made eternal life a synonym for escaping the lake of fire rather than seeing that it is a synonym for the inheritance.

It's a synonym for reward and reflecting the glory of God in the eternal future. Hebrews chapter

12. The author is talking about Jacob and Esau once again.

And in Hebrews 12.17, talking about Esau, he says, look up in verse 14 of Hebrews 12. Pursue peace with all people and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. Now, he is encouraging believers to pursue peace and holiness, right? He's not talking to unbelievers in chapter 12 of Hebrews.

He's telling them to pursue peace and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. So are we saying that it's possible for a believer to not see the Lord? Yes, we are. And that sounds shocking.

But read the passage. Without peace, without holiness, believers will not see the Lord. How can that be? We're going to see it.

Looking carefully, lest anyone fall short of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled. Reminds us of 1 Corinthians 6. It reminds us of Galatians 4. Lest there be any fornicator. Fornication has been mentioned consistently in all of these passages.

What is fornication? Fornication is rebellion against the standard that God has set. God has organized human society. God has placed structure to guide us and to keep us.

There's marriage. There's family. There's the nation and law and order.

A fornicator disregards that and pursues his own desire at the expense of people around him. At the expense of his future and the future of the person he fornicates with. At the expense of the nation.

At the expense of the standards and the structures that God has put in place. A fornicator says what I want is more important than any of those things. That's why fornication is consistently mentioned.

We're going to see one more passage where it's mentioned. If we put self-interest ahead of God's interest, we're going to lose out. If there's a fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright, you know that afterward when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected.

For he found no place for repentance, even though he sought it diligently with tears. There are going to be tears. There is going to be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth when people realize what they have forfeited by self-indulgence in this life.

By failing to be poor in spirit. By failing to be meek. By failing to patiently continue in well-doing and seek for glory and honor and immortality.

It's a big deal. It's amazing to me that as important as this is for us as believers, this is the issue. This is what we face every hour of our waking life.

And we hardly ever hear about it. We hear about, oh, I'm unhappy in my circumstances. Or I don't have what's coming to me.

Or I need this or I need that or I want this or I want that. When God's eternal purpose is on the line, and there is a point of no return. When God put discipline on Israel, they turned to Him and He turned a deaf ear to their prayers.

There's going to be a point at which, like Esau, people are going to be knocking on the door and saying, Lord, Lord, in Your name, I did all these things. And He's going to say, I don't know you. You can't see me.

You're outside the door. I'm inside the door. And this is for believers.

Look at the context of every one of these references. It's always believers. There's not a hint of eternal salvation from the lake of fire.

It's never predicated on faith in Christ alone, for salvation alone. It's always lifestyle for believers in every single case. That's what we see there in Hebrews 12, 17.

And remember back in Matthew 5, where we started tonight in the Beatitudes. And what did He say in verse 8 of Matthew 5? Blessed are the pure in heart. Why? For they shall see God.

Now, pure in heart is not a condition for salvation. Pure in heart is a lifestyle for believers. And the pure in heart will see God.

That's a privilege in the eternal future, seeing God. We're going to see the specifics of that as we move forward. But you might just make a note of Matthew 5, 8 next to Hebrews 12, 17 and vice versa, because seeing God is a part of that eternal life inheritance package that is on the line for believers.

You can be a believer and be in the eternal future and not have the privilege of being in the immediate presence of God. That's strong stuff. It's so strong that people don't want to believe it and they'll find ways to explain it away, but that's what Scripture says.

If you look at the context, none of this has to do with salvation from the lake of fire. Look at 1 Peter 3, 9. I've been trying to get to 1 Peter 3 for about four lessons and we're just now getting here. There are so many great points that can be made.

Calling is in here. Election is in here. Inheritance is in here.

But we're finally here as well. 1 Peter 3. He begins the chapter talking about wives being

submissive to their husbands. There's suffering and a challenge right there.

He talks about the women in former times like Sarah who obeyed Abraham calling him Lord in verse 6. See there? You talk about affliction and suffering in this life. Husbands likewise in verse 7. Dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel, as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. Finally, all of you be of one... Now, all of you.

Who's he talking to here? Believers or unbelievers? Believers. All of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another. Compassion is part of the fruit of the Spirit.

Love as brothers. Be tenderhearted. Be courteous.

This is all fruit of the Spirit. Look at verse 9. Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, blessing. Knowing that you were called to this.

This is our calling. This is the calling of Romans 8.28 and 29. That you may inherit a blessing.

Inheriting the blessing is contingent on responding to the call. The call to holiness. The call to the fruit of the Spirit.

And if you don't do this, you don't inherit a blessing. And in 1 Peter 3.13, we have an echo of what we're seeing in the last part of Romans 8 where he says, who will bring a charge against God's elect? Look at verse 13. Who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? Even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed.

Do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. Having a good conscience that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. It is better if it is the will of God to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

And people who follow false standards of righteousness are doing evil. And we will suffer at their hands. And yet, that's where inheriting the blessing comes from.

Now, finally, let's turn to our clincher passage here in Revelation chapter 21. Revelation chapter 21. Now, we want to be sure we understand where we are here.

This is the eternal future. Remember, Revelation chapter 20 has the great white throne judgment. This is after the millennium.

This is after the sheep and goats judgment. It's after the great white throne judgment. All of the unbelievers of every age are already in the lake of fire.

Take a look at chapter 20. You have the millennium at the beginning. The rest of the dead in

verse 5 did not live until the thousand years were finished.

This is the first resurrection and so forth. And then in verse 7, when the thousand years have expired. End of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

This is the end of the kingdom of the Son. The thousand years have expired. Satan is released.

You have the Gog Magog rebellion. And then in verse 10, at the resolution of that rebellion, the devil is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and false prophet are. Notice, end of the millennial kingdom.

Who's in the lake of fire? Two occupants. The beast and the false prophet. What does that tell us about the sheep and goats judgment? Hasn't happened yet.

Because the goats go into the lake of fire. Occupant number one, the beast. Occupant number two, false prophet.

Occupant number three, Satan. Category for the fourth and following occupants, the goats. From the sheep and goats judgment.

Then I saw a great white throne in him who sat on it from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. There was found no place for them. And I saw the dead.

Notice, this is the place where the first earth and heaven co-terminus sort of with the great white throne is where the old earth and heaven pass away and you have the new heavens and new earth. The dead, small and great stand before the great white throne judgment here in verse 12. The dead are judged according to their works.

Notice, the unbelievers at the sheep and goats judgment were judged according to their works even though faith is the issue. But the faith issue has already been decided because they were tagged as goats before the judgment ever started. But they're judged according to their works.

They get a chance to offer their best before God and it is shown to be insufficient and they go into the lake of fire. Same thing happens with the great white throne. They're judged according to their works.

The things written in the books. The sea, death and Hades all deliver these people for judgment. And it's interesting to work on why is it that there are three different sources for the dead to come stand before this.

Don't all the dead go to the same place but you've got some in the sea, some in death and some in Hades. And we're going to see that death and Hades are going to be cast into the lake of fire. Hopefully when we do our categorical studies we'll go into that in depth.

But what I want to notice here is in verse 15 anyone not found written in the book of life cast into the lake of fire. Now, in the same way that anyone that was not a sheep got cast into the lake of fire even though they were judged according to their works anyone not found in the book of life is cast into the lake of fire but they're still judged according to their works. So God is consistent in the sheep and goats judgment for the millennial people, the millennial survivors, if you will.

It's the same for the great right throne judgment. The basis for condemnation is no trust in Christ for salvation but your works are made an issue because your works are insufficient. You have no works that can meet God's standard.

So, out you go. Now, chapter 21. New heaven, new earth.

The first heaven and the first earth passed away. No more sea. Holy city, the new Jerusalem comes down and so forth.

And then you have a description of the new heavens and the new earth. You have the new Jerusalem. You have the 12 gates, the 12 foundations.

The gold and jasper and so forth. The pearly gates. And if people are waiting to enter heaven through the pearly gates as you hear in a lot of songs they're waiting about a thousand and some odd years too late because in this age we better be going into the eternal future at the rapture and these pearly gates are a thousand and seven years after our entrance into eternity.

But here's the 12 pearly gates in 21:21. There is no temple there in 22 for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or the moon to shine in it for the glory of God illuminates it.

The Lamb is its light. The nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day.

There shall be no night there and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. Now, notice, you have the city but you also have nations and kingdoms and kings. After the old earth and heavens have passed away and you have the new heavens and the new earth there are kingdoms and there are kings in the new earth and they're bringing glory into the kingdom and into the city within the kingdom, right? But obviously there's something outside the city because they're bringing glory into the city.

So there are kings and kingdoms and stuff outside, right? They're bringing the glory and the honor of the nations into it. There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles or causes an abomination or a lie but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Now, so we know the first qualification for entering the city is you have to be written in the Lamb's Book of Life and of course that's the only people that are going to be in that eternal future are those that are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

So, qualification number one, you have to have survived all of the other judgments to be there in the new heavens and the new earth. Then you have a description in 22 of what is inside the city. You have the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal.

The issuing forth from the throne of God in the Lamb. Each side of the river you have the tree of life. And so forth.

But what we're looking at is down here in verse 6 and following. The messenger says, These words are faithful and true. The Lord God, the Holy Prophet sent his angel to show his servants these things which must shortly take place.

And look at verse 14. Blessed are those who do his commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life. It doesn't say, Blessed are those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life for they shall have the right to the tree of life.

It says, Blessed are those who do his commandments because there are some people who are written in the Book of Life who are disobedient, aren't there? We have people in our personal experience. We know who are saved. They're believers.

They have eternal life. In the sense of not going to the lake of fire, they will be here in the new heavens and new earth. But they live a life of disobedience and a life of complete disregard for the things of God.

They don't do his commandments. Blessed are those who do his commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the city. Not only do you have to be written in the Book of Life, but you have to be characterized as one that does his commandments.

To have the right to partake of the tree of life and to enter through the gates of the city. Outside, now notice, new heavens and new earth, outside, what? Outside the kingdom? Outside the new heavens and new earth? No, this is outside the city. Outside the gates to the city are dogs, sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, and idolaters.

Doesn't this sound an awful lot like the list that we saw in 1 Corinthians 6, that we saw in Galatians 4, and that we've seen in many of these other passages? If you live a lifestyle of disobedience that doesn't reflect a calling, you're outside the city gate in the eternal future. Now, some people try to say, well, this is the ever-burning lake of fire that's right outside the gate. Well, let me ask you this.

If you've got kings and kingdoms and they're bringing the glory of God in, and you've got this huge heavens and this huge earth, would you cite the lake of fire directly outside the city and try to cram everyone who's in the Lamb's Book of Life inside? A city implies that there's something outside the city. Otherwise, there wouldn't be a reference to the city. It would just be the kingdom

of God.

But the city is analogous to Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom. There are going to be many who are in the millennium who do not live in Israel proper, who do not have access to Jerusalem proper. Old Testament saints, Jesus told the Pharisees, you will see many coming from the east and west and north and south and sitting down with Abraham and Isaac in the kingdom, but you yourselves will be cast out.

How are they going to see that? They're Old Testament saints, but they were disobedient. They tried to establish their righteousness by works, and they're going to see Gentiles coming in and eating with Abraham and Isaac, and they're going to be outside the city, outside the gates, because they had a lifestyle of disobedience. This is true in the eternal kingdom of the Father, which is what is spoken of in Revelation 22.

So this is the portion of inheritance. This is what's on the line when we determine our lifestyle. Are we going to be petty? Are we going to be self-centered? Are we going to be seeking our own interests? Are we going to be justifying ourselves in front of others? Are we going to be persecuting others who don't conform to our standards of righteousness? Or are we going to be the called? Are we going to be those who love God, who see the kingdom coming and are already producing the fruits of it? God told Israel, I'm going to take the kingdom away from you, and I'm going to give it to a nation who will produce the fruit of it.

That's us. That's what we're supposed to be doing. That's how we inherit the kingdom.

That's how we inherit the glory. That's how we inherit the eternal life that characterizes the millennium and the kingdom of the Father. That is the inheritance to which we are called.

And when we look at Romans 8 and passages like it that tell us about loving God and being called according to His purpose, that's the issue for us as believers. Every moment. It's not what we do, it's what we think.

It's our thought life that determines our inheritance. What do we prioritize? Why do we do what we do? We need the light of the Word of God shining brightly in our souls to rebuke, correct, and instruct us, to be a critic of the... Notice when it talks about the Word of God, it doesn't say that it's a judge of the deeds and the actions of the saints. It says it's a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart because that's where the battle is fought.

That's where the inheritance is won or lost. The Word of God is a judge or a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. That's where righteousness is gained by faith.

So, we have a great calling. We have great privilege awaiting us in the eternal future. And it is entirely up to us whether or not we partake and experience the full measure of that eternal life.

Whether we stand blameless and faultless and undefiled on Judgment Day as David claims that

he will stand. We saw last Sunday morning that he stands before God on his righteousness. He has claimed God's cleansing.

He's claimed God's purging. He has petitioned God to create in him a clean heart. That's what we need to be doing.

And we can be a part of that bride of Christ that he has built for himself, a church without spot or blemish or any such thing. Let's close here in prayer. Father, we thank you for the clarity with which you have communicated your purpose for us in this life and in this age.

We thank you for the privilege we have of being in that circumscribed group that you pre-designated in eternity past for conformity to Christ. We pray that through the provision that you have made, your word, your spirit, that we will be partakers of these things and be those who fulfill our heavenly calling. We pray that in all these things, our Savior Jesus Christ will be glorified.

We ask it in his name. Amen.