

Romans 8:17

Part 2

Romans 8:16-17

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Now, Romans 8:17 says that we are heirs of God *and* joint-heirs with Christ, *if so be we suffer with Him*, and we discussed how suffering *with* Him involves us living out of the doctrine, living out of our sanctified identity that God provided for us through the gospel, which requires us *minding the things of the Spirit*, so that we're led of the Spirit, so that we can live free from the power of sin which is within our flesh and actually begin to be "educated" as *sons of God*, so that we can have the mind and character of Jesus Christ developed within us—so that we can be conformed to the image of the Son of God.

This process, we have seen, is similar, though of course not identical, to the process Christ Himself went through. Jesus Christ did not need to be "educated" in the sense that we do, but He Himself still went through a process as a man whereby He purposely engaged in a relationship with the Father, through the word of God and prayer, and in reliance on the Father, was able to perform the work needed for His earthly ministry and the work of redemption. He did not need to be "educated" in the sense that He needed to *acquire* knowledge, nor be "perfected" in the sense that there was something somehow *lacking* in His character or moral goodness. No, through suffering He was perfected having experienced the full weight of human obedience to God even in the face of pain and adversity, *even unto death*, and in this, He fully identified with mankind.

Jesus, as JEHOVAH, had all knowledge and was in His very essence *perfect moral goodness* itself. His education and His perfection came in the form of the practical application of doctrine, out of the scriptures, as a mere man. He did not *lay aside* His deity—He simply did not live out of the resources available to Him *because* of His deity. Jesus had to live *out of His identity* as God's Son, just as we are learning that we too, in our sanctified lives, must live out of our identity in Christ. God the Holy Spirit is within every one of us, and yet, though He has all power to perform any and all things possible for us, He is not. We do not have those resources at our disposal. Instead, He has baptized us into Christ—has put to death our old nature so that we can now

share in the nature of Christ Himself. But we must learn to live out of this identity in Christ by simple faith in what the word of God says. Jesus had all of the resources of God because of His deity, and yet was not utilizing those resources for the purpose of human redemption. No, He chose to engage in a real Father/Son relationship with the Father and took on the place of humanity in both life and death, so that the offering He made would be equitable to the parties He was making it for—us.

This situation is similar to how God has often operated in history. Many people often have trouble understanding how God can be *all powerful*, *all knowing*, and yet be love itself, and still be responsible for the events that occur in this world. But you can't impute *motive* simply for the fact of *foreknowledge*: I can see that a car is about to run off the road, and I may have foreknowledge of what's going to happen, and yet I am not *causing* it to happen. Neither can you impute *responsibility* simply for the sake of *power*. God has the power to stop all of the evil in this present world, and yet why doesn't He? Is God responsible for the evil things that mankind chooses with their own free will? And yet He still takes *the fall* for their sinful deeds, pun intended, because humanity largely credits *Him* for the condition of things as they currently are on the earth.

See, God has the "resources" available to do anything we might imagine, as long as it is not in conflict with who He is, and yet He has a purpose He is fulfilling in not immediately doing those things we might expect of Him. The skeptic might say *God isn't real* and appeal to the suffering we see so prevalent in this world and say, "See, what kind of loving God would allow *this*?" But what they are ignorant of is that God is not simply love in the empathetic, emotional sense we know, but He is *Holy*, and *just*, and a God of *righteous judgment*, who sees the end from the beginning, and who has a plan that excels our nearsighted expectations for the here and now. God knows exactly what needs to happen to see His creation eternally redeemed and restored. God isn't fixing the world's problems at this moment because He actually has a purpose He is accomplishing today in His saints, which will correlate to the future redemption of creation itself. You think He's pleased with the pain and suffering of this world? He's not. But He's always not putting a stop to it all in this very moment. God has all power, and yet doesn't always utilize His power as God in every circumstance.

Well, Jesus too, as a man, and yet the eternal God of creation, had the resource of His divinity at His disposal, and yet chose not to utilize that for this work of redemption because He had a *purpose* to fulfill, one that could not be fulfilled unless He lived out of the resources available to Him as a simple man.

And so I want us to understand that, while the process we are engaged in is similar to what Jesus went through, it is not identical in every sense. Jesus was omniscient—we are not. Jesus had no law of sin in His physical body—we do. Jesus's pattern was under the Law of Moses—ours is not. But the process He went through in utilizing the scriptures to be perfected is much the same as what we ourselves are engaged in. And if we do engage in this process, we

are suffering *with* Him, because that process ultimately led Him to being rejected by men and the cross itself, and is what perfected Him as a Son. As we will learn later in this chapter, we too, as we progress in our edification, are appointed to sufferings—it is the inevitable result of manifesting true *godliness* in a world governed and inhabited by *ungodly* forces.

Now *if* we suffer with Christ—if we in fact be *dead with Him*, if we be crucified with Him in our daily living, if *His* life is then manifested in our mortal bodies to *quicken* us, we will be *joint-heirs with Him*. That is the reality that is set forth to us in Romans 8:17. But then we must ask ourselves, what is Jesus Christ an heir *of*? Because if we're joint-heirs *with* Him, then we should know what His inheritance consists *of*, as that inheritance is now available to us as well.

Romans 8:17 itself obviously doesn't tell us. But there are things that we should already know, had we come through the Bible chronologically.

We should have already known and understood that Jesus was going to reign over the nations, that He was going to inherit the earth:

Psalm 2:7-12

7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Psalm 72:1-11

1 Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.

4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

- 5** *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.*
- 6** *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.*
- 7** *In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.*
- 8** *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.*
- 9** *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.*
- 10** *The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.*
- 11** *Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.*

So, we see in the prophetic scriptures over and over again that Jesus, as the Messiah, is going to actually subdue the nations and reign over them.

But there is another aspect of Christ's inheritance that is not *directly* mentioned in the prophetic scriptures, one that relates to the heavens. It is not directly mentioned, but there are things contained in the prophetic Old Testament scriptures that indicate that Christ Himself would be more than simply a king to Israel and judge of the nations, but that He Himself would be God, and that He would somehow be involved in things pertaining to the heavens as well, because, as we will see, there was something terribly wrong with the heavenly places, something that needed redeemed.

In the beginning, God chose to create two distinct spheres that, while distinct, would function together in harmony. God created the heaven, and He created the earth. But subsequent to Lucifer's rebellion, that unified creation was divided, and the singular *heaven* was divided by a *firmament* on the second day of creation, resulting in *heavens*, plural. This is the only aspect of the creation account that God does not call good, and it is because this was something God did in response to Satan's fall, so that he could not continue with his plan to be like the Most High, to be possessor of heaven and earth. As a result of this firmament, there are actually three heavens now described in the Bible: the heaven where God's throne is, and what Paul refers to as the *third heaven*; then there is the *second heaven*, or the *firmament*, which is separating the third heaven from the first—this is what we know as “outer space,” or “the universe”; then there is the *first heaven*, which is the atmosphere surrounding the earth, what we call the sky. This firmament, this *second heaven*, is currently preventing the heaven and earth from operating in unity the way it was originally designed. Had God not created that firmament on day two, Satan would have had full control over the entire creation as a single unit. Instead, God subjected what scripture is going to call the creature—the heavenly place—to vanity; He essentially disabled it. Thus, we look out into the night sky, or probe space with our advanced telescopes, and see a vast expanse of endless darkness rather than the light and glory of God.

God however has a plan to restore this connection between heaven and earth, so that it once again functions as it was intended to—something which we will look at in more detail in a future lesson.

But God created both realms, heaven and earth, for His purpose, and yet both realms fell into rebellion. Much of the Bible, written through man and for man by God, focuses on the earthly aspect of creation, as that is where man resides. And yet there are things contained in the Bible that show us clearly there is in fact something being carried out in opposition to God in the heavenly places.

Look what Eliphaz the Temanite says to Job:

Job 15:12-15

12 Why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thy eyes wink at,

13 That thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth?

14 What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

15 Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

He is essentially saying, You think you can be righteous, Job, when even the angelic realm is defiled? How much less are you compared to an angel?

We again get a glimpse of this heavenly rebellion in Psalm 82:

Psalm 82

1 God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.

2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

5 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.

7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

God here is standing amongst the congregation of these angelic beings and indicting them for their unrighteousness. They were supposed to be governing over the nations of the earth in righteousness, and yet they had been corrupted. Where do we think the idea of idol worship arose from? The idea that there are “other gods” which should be worshipped? The apostle Paul says that those things the gentiles worshipped in times past were actually devils. We see the involvement of these beings in the governance of the nations and influencing the course of world history clearly depicted in the book of Daniel:

Daniel 10:11-13

11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

Daniel receives this vision from a heavenly messenger, who says that he was actually withheld from coming to Daniel immediately by a prince over the kingdom of Persia, the kingdom which was at that time the dominant power in the middle east. Later in the chapter, he makes reference to *the prince of Grecia*, which was the world power that would defeat the Media-Persian empire and become the dominant world power under Alexander the Great. You see, the course of this world and the events of the world are directed by forces and beings that are actually contrary to God. The spiritual governments of this world—the foundations of this world—are out of course, and they are directing humanity in a very specific direction.

But these beings are going to one day be judged, just like humanity will one day be judged. When the Day of the Lord begins, it actually begins in the heavenly places first. God is going to first “clean house” in the heavenly places, and then Jesus is going to return to the earth and do the same. We see this also depicted in prophecy:

Isaiah 24:20-22

20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

22 And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

Consider also Revelation 12:

Revelation 12:7-12

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

What I'm trying to get us to see is that scripture testifies to the heavenly realm being in rebellion, and God having a plan of redemption for those heavens—that there was a rebellion in the heavens and that God is somehow going to bring that rebellion to a final conclusion and restore those heavenly places and heavenly authorities back to God the Father, and that this is going to be accomplished through Jesus Christ. The cross itself provided for the redemption of both spheres, heaven and earth; and that is in fact what Colossians chapter 1 tells us in verse 20: *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.* And in the context, the “all things” are structures of governmental authority (thrones, dominions, principalities, powers.)

How did *the death of a man* reconcile the authorities in heaven? Didn't Jesus only die for man? Hebrews 2:5 tells us *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.* See, the cross didn't redeem the angelic beings themselves, the cross redeemed men

who were going to one day inherit those positions of authority. But this is all made possible only through Jesus Christ and the work He performed as a man. Consider what Jesus says after His resurrection:

Matthew 28:16-18

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Scripture testifies that Jesus would ascend into heaven. We have already seen in Psalm 72 verse 6 that *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.*

Consider Psalm 110:

Psalm 110:1-7

1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

2 The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

4 The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

The *LORD*, JEHOVAH, the eternally self-existent GodHead, said unto the *Lord*, Adonai, the One who would rule all creation, who we now know as God the Son incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ, "sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." Well, where is the right hand of JEHOVAH? It is *heaven*. Heaven is God's throne, and the earth is His footstool, Isaiah 66:1 tells us. This means that Jesus would ascend and sit at the right hand of God. This is a truth one could have deduced from the Old Testament.

And so we glean from the Old Testament prophecies that Jesus would of course, as the Messiah of Israel, inherit the earth, but we also glean that there was a profound issue in the heavens, and that God was going to do something about it, and that Jesus would actually ascend into the heavens and assume power over the heavenly realm. Jesus tells us plainly that all power in heaven and earth were given to Him. See, there is an aspect of Jesus's inheritance in the heavens. And so when we read in Romans 8:17 that if we suffer with Him, we will be joint-heirs with Him, we need to ask ourselves what inheritance this is even speaking to.

Ask yourself this question—why did Jesus need to ascend to heaven at all? Why didn't He just rise from the dead and proceed to conquer His enemies and set up His earthly kingdom? And of course there are multiple reasons as to why. What we need to understand is that Jesus actually ascended *twice*. The first time was immediately after His resurrection to apply His blood on the mercy seat. But then why did He need to ascend again after His 40 day ministry to the apostles?

When Jesus ascended on high He actually took captivity itself captive, He spoiled principalities and powers, and became the head of all principality and power, and the head of a heavenly body, what we now know as the church, the Body of Christ. Jesus had to ascend to do something in regards to those heavenly places, so that He Himself could obtain the legal rights to those positions of authority. He had to first *ascend* in order to apply His blood on the mercy seat for all of mankind, so that that blood would be offered as an atoning force before the Father. He ascended a second time so that, in His absence, He could now fulfill a purpose on earth, in mankind, but which relates to the heavens. And that is what we are actively a part of when we engage in the ministry He is performing through His word and the Holy Spirit. He is preparing us in our inner man for positions in those places of authority in the heavens.

Ephesians 1:20-23

20 ...Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Ephesians 4:8-13

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

9 *(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?*

10 *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

11 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

12 *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ...*

That phrase, *leading captivity captive*, is a reference to Jesus taking captive those forces that had been holding *men* captive—He took *our* captivity captive. This is not a reference to Jesus taking Old Testament saints into heaven after His death. There are other verses you can use to teach that the Old Testament saints were taken into heaven, but this is not one of them. This exact phrase is used in Judges 5, in the song of Deborah, and it is used in regards to Barak defeating the Canaanites, who were oppressing Israel.

But we see here how Jesus *ascended* so that He might *fill* those “all things” we spoke of earlier—the positions of authority. And He *gave* some things back there in the first century, prior to the completion of the canon of scripture, to fulfill a function, and that function was the perfecting of the saints, it was the edifying of the body of Christ—something we are now engaging in through the completed written word of God.

Now of course some object to the idea that not all in the Body of Christ will “reign with Christ,” as they don't interpret Romans 8:17 as containing any conditional clause. But the idea of only certain individuals receiving specific roles of authority based upon some condition is not without precedent in the Scripture.

Think about it: did everyone who believed in Jesus and follow Jesus in his earthly ministry receive the same position of authority? They did not. Consider Matthew 19:

Matthew 19:27-29

27 *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?*

28 *And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

29 *And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.*

Just as a side note, we see here that those that have forsaken houses and families and lands for Jesus's name's sake are going to actually receive a hundred fold in return. And so, are they promised eventual earthly blessings? They are. And so, there's the so-called "prosperity gospel" in the Bible. The problem is, that promise is in a very particular context and does not even apply to the Church the Body of Christ today. These had to forsake all and endure tribulation in order to receive their inheritance in the earthly kingdom under Christ.

We already know from the prophetic scriptures that Israel is going to have an inheritance through Christ *on the earth*. And we're not going to detail all of those verses in this lesson—we've discussed that at length before. But it is clear that when God is engaged in the restoration of the earthly realm, which He is not doing today, He will do so through the agency of the only nation He ever created, and it will only be that portion of that nation that is born again through Jesus Christ. Before we conclude, let's consider one more passage.

Jesus, speaking to His disciples, a part of that believing remnant of Israel during His ministry to the circumcision in the gospels, gives this parable:

Luke 19:11-27

11 *And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.*

12 *He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.*

13 *And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.*

14 *But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.*

15 *And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.*

16 *Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.*

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

We see what's in view with the circumcision is governmental authority *on earth*—over *tribes* and over *cities* and as we see from other passages, over *nations* themselves. Jesus says to that believing remnant of Israel in Revelation 2:26 that he who overcomes will be given power over *the nations*.

But if Christ's inheritance on the earth is going to be co-governed by the believing remnant of Israel, that portion of Israel that's *in Christ*, then what other aspect of Christ's inheritance is left? Only the heavens are left. We are not Israel—we are not *a nation*, and we are not the physical descendents of *Jacob*, whose name was *Israel*. We are baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore have been identified with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. And thus, we are not identified with our flesh *whatsoever*. Our flesh is judicially crucified: this is why there is no Jew nor Greek in the body of Christ; this is why we are not bound to earthly commandments involving *days* and *foods*; this is why we are dead to the Law itself. Thus, our identity is distinct from that of Israel, and thus our inheritance must be something distinct as well. We do not usurp their promises. We in fact have our own.

