

church

THE CHURCH IN SINGAPORE

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The Truth Of The Gospel

The Inheritance of the Saints in the Light

Brothers and sisters, have you considered why God redeemed us to be His children through Jesus Christ? Is salvation merely to be saved from this evil age, have our sins forgiven, be spared from the coming judgement, and then have eternal life? No, God's salvation far exceeds all these!

The purpose of salvation- the many sons as co-heirs with Christ

"I now send you [Paul], to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:17-18).

This verse mentions two things: receive forgiveness of sins and receive an inheritance. The Lord specifically told Paul that we shall receive an inheritance. Paul was a faithful servant; ever since God revealed this to him, he mentioned about the inheritance in all his epistles.

In Ephesians 1:11, Paul said that we have obtained an inheritance in Christ. This verse can be rendered in two ways: 1) We have gained an inheritance in Christ, 2) We are made His inheritance in Christ. In other words, God gives us an inheritance and at the same time, we become God's inheritance.

For us to receive this inheritance, there were two "sendings" from God: First, He sent His beloved Son Jesus Christ to redeem us so that our sins might be forgiven. Then He sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!". Therefore, we are no longer a slave but a son, an heir of God through Christ (Gal 4:4-7). God's purpose in redeeming us is to make us His children, His heirs to receive the inheritance.

Romans 8:15-17 affirms this: "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption (or, sonship) by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ".

Paul continued in Ephesians 1:13-14 that "having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory".

In Ephesians 3:6, Paul revealed that the mystery of Christ is closely related to the inheritance: "that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs ... in Christ through the gospel!". The mystery of Christ is that we, the Gentiles, are fellow heirs with the Jews in Christ.

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We have entered the 21st Century. As the worldly people celebrate the new beginning and plan for a brighter future, how about we Christians? Are our eyes set on the things of this world as well? May the Lord lead us to focus on the incorruptible, undefiled and unfading inheritance reserved in heaven for us (1 Pet 1:4), so that we may establish a proper spiritual life before Him!

In this and the next issue, we feature two messages on the inheritance of the saints in the light. May God enlighten us to see the surpassing inheritance He has prepared for us, an inheritance which we can already enjoy today! For example, the hymn writer M E Barber experienced God as her almighty Provider, a brother found true rest in the Lord in the lowest period of his life, and another sister realised the many blessings that the Father has been giving.

For Teens Today, we highlight some steadfast and unchanging truths to help us resist the present evil age. In addition, we have a new column which features some basic truths. May the Lord teach us to discern the truth, withstand the winds of false teaching, and fight the good fight for His truth!

The editors

Hebrews 9:15 tells us: "And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance".

1 Peter 1:3-4 also says that the Father has "begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you".

Like Paul, we must thank the Father that He has "qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light" (Col 1:12)!

Christ, the unique Heir

Why must we be co-heirs with Christ? Hebrews 1:2 states that God has appointed Christ as the Heir of all things. To receive God's inheritance, or to be made His inheritance, we cannot be separated from Christ, the unique Heir. It is only as co-heirs with Christ that we can receive God's inheritance.

Galatians 3:16 explains: "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds', as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed', who is Christ".

Receiving the inheritance - by being baptised into Christ

How shall we be co-heirs with Christ? Since Christ has been appointed the Heir of all things, we must be baptised into Him to be co-heirs with Him. God's desire is not for many heirs, but only one Heir. Galatians 3:27-29 declares: "For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise".

• Having terminated all differences

Through baptism, we are made one in Christ Jesus. This shows an important truth - we are one with Christ. This oneness is very important. If we belittle it, we will lose our inheritance, for we have been baptised into Christ to be one with Him.

The oneness that Paul mentioned here is very practical. In this oneness, there is neither Jews nor Greeks, slaves nor free, for the Lord has nailed all differences on the cross.

In the world, the Jews and the Gentiles were segregated because of the law of commandments contained in ordinances (Eph 2:15), but today, the Lord has broken down the middle wall of partition through His body. Hence, we must bury all differences in Christ.

To be one in Christ is both a serious and practical matter. Baptism means that we have died with Christ. Our flesh, which is the old man, has been crucified with Christ.

• Put on Christ

We who were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. In Galatians, Paul exhorted us to put off the old man and put on the new. Divisions arise in the church because we are unwilling to put off our old man. Hence, we must put on Christ because we have become one body in Christ.

• No divisions in the body

When Paul said that there should be no schism in the body in 1 Corinthians 12:25, he meant division in a practical sense. For instance, who would like to see that in a family, the parents and children all meet with different Christian groups, or who would like a marriage to break up? Anyone with normal

discernment will know that such division is wrong, not to mention the Lord's body with His life!

• The importance of oneness

Oneness is very important; Galatians shows that oneness is related to our inheritance. Paul did not stop at chapter 3. In 4:30 he quoted "Cast out the bondwoman and her son"! Ishmael cannot inherit the inheritance because he was not the heir born according to promise. Today, Hagar and Ishmael represent our flesh. If we do not cast them out (the source and feelings of the flesh), our inheritance will be taken away.

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like" (Gal 5:19-21). The worst of these - selfish ambitions and dissensions - cause biting and devouring of one another, with no control over the flesh. Therefore, Paul warned that if we bite and devour one another, we would be consumed by one another, and "those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:15, 21). If we do not seriously practice oneness, we will lose our inheritance in the millennial kingdom. May we treasure the inheritance of God as well as the oneness in Christ!

The inheritance of the saints

What then is our inheritance? Oh, it is too wonderful! It is from this age to eternity, it is spiritual, heavenly and eternal, it is God Himself, Christ, the promised Spirit, eternal salvation, the grace of life, righteousness, the kingdom and the heavenly Jerusalem; and in the coming age, the nations, the earth, the world and even all things! (Details of our inheritance will be covered in the next issue.)

How do we keep the inheritance?

Only Christ can inherit the inheritance, so we must learn to put on Christ practically, to cast away all cultural, national, religious and natural differences, and really experience the oneness in Christ. Then we shall be Abraham's children, we shall be co-heirs with Christ!

(Abstracted from messages of the December 1999 Church Conferences in Singapore and South San Francisco)

"El Shaddai"

by M E Barber

"El Shaddai" is the Hebrew word translated into "Almighty God". Its first appearance in Genesis 17:1 is very meaningful: God had earlier promised Abraham that he would have an heir, and that he would inherit the land (Gen 15:4,7). But as Sarah still did not conceive after they had dwelt 10 years in the land of Canaan, Abraham accepted her suggestion and begot Ishmael through the maidservant Hagar (Gen 16:3-4). Thereafter, God did not appear to Abraham again until 13 years later, when Abraham was 99 years old. This time, God first revealed Himself as "El Shaddai", the Almighty God, and charged Abraham to walk before Him and be blameless. Then He renewed His covenant with him and repeated His promise that Sarah shall bear a son, Isaac, with whom He would establish an everlasting covenant.

Some years later, God tested Abraham by asking him to offer up this only son Isaac. Abraham obeyed, for he has learnt that since the Almighty God could call those things which do not exist into existence, He could also give life to the dead (Rom 4:17). This time, Abraham knew God as Jehovah Jireh, The-LORD-Will-Provide (Gen 22:14).

*Deep down into the depths of this Thy Name,
My God, I sink and dwell in calm delight,
Thou art enough however long the day,
Thou art enough however long the night.*

*Thou art my God - the All-sufficient One,
Thou canst create for me what'er I lack;
Thy mighty hand has strewn the lonely track
With miracles of love and tender care.*

*For me Thy trusting one. My God I dare
Once more to fling myself upon Thy breast,
And there adore Thy ways in faith's deep rest,
And there adore Thy ways in faith's quiet rest.*

Margaret Elizabeth Barber, the writer of this hymn, was a British missionary who spent some 31 years in China. After years of labour in the gospel, she deeply sensed that God had to gain a group of Chinese workers who were absolute for Him. For this, she prayed fervently with another sister for about 10 years. Finally, some young people, including Watchman Nee, were raised up by the Lord.

Till she rested in the Lord in 1930, M E Barber was a mentor to the young people who often visited her. Watchman Nee, in particular, received much spiritual help from her. He once testified: "She is a sister who is very deep in

"I am Almighty God (El Shaddai); walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." (Gen 17:1-2)

the Lord. In China, I've yet to see anyone who is as spiritual as her!"

As one wholly dependent on the Almighty God to supply all her needs, M E Barber surely experienced many "miracles of love". The following is one such instance which engendered this encouraging hymn.

There was once an urgent need for about \$150. It was a Saturday, and the sum was required on the following Monday. At that time, M E Barber had only two dollars in hand, so she prayed to the Father about the need. God said to her: "You still have two dollars, and today is only Saturday. Wait till these are gone, and we'll talk about it next week." She submitted to the Lord and waited to see how the two dollars would be spent.

She went out to preach and met a hired cleaner. As usual, she paid him a dollar's wage. As she walked further, a beggar came to her and asked her for some money. She considered: This is the last dollar, so it must be spent very carefully. She thought of changing it into coins so that she might give the beggar 50 cents and keep the rest. But the Lord said: "Give all to him!" She replied: "That won't do. If I give him all, I would have nothing left!" The Lord asked: "Do you depend on Me or on this dollar?" She answered: "Of course I depend on You!" The Lord said: "Since you depend on Me, first give away all that you have." But she still had a struggle within

At last, she submitted to the Lord and gave the entire dollar away. Instantly, joy flooded her. Now she had no more cares in the world, God would take care of her! She slept very well that night and on the following Lord's Day, she worked as usual.

On Monday, she received a sum via telegraphic transfer from Panton in England - of exactly \$150! Later, Panton said that at that time, he suddenly felt that M E Barber in faraway China had an urgent need, so he quickly sent her the offering. Oh, what a wonderful El Shaddai is our God!

(Reference: "The Hymnists and Their Hymns (Vol 2)" by Newman Sze, Testimony Publications, 1988)

Thank you

Oh, Thank you, Father!

Experiences of a Taiwan Trip

Recently, I went to Taiwan with two sisters, first on a tour package, after which we visited some sisters in Taichung. This eventful trip opened my eyes to see how blessed we are to enjoy a quiet and peaceable life (1 Tim 2:2). It also helped me appreciate Christ and the church more. Indeed, "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph 1:3)!"

The tour was quite nice until the fourth day when someone lost her passport. Immediately, all sorts of comments showed themselves. Unfortunately, they were mostly discouraging ones that only added to her misery. I was sorry for her but felt worse when I saw how some of her friends told her in the face that if she couldn't get a temporary pass in time, they would just return to Singapore without her! I could not help but feel that human friendship is often times just so pragmatic, helpless, short-lived and even selfish. And I am so thankful that I have Jesus, my never-failing Friend, to go through every situation in life with me! Then the Lord reminded me that He came to dwell with man and to wipe away every tear from their eyes (Rev 21:3-4). So I prayed for this "auntie" and tried to comfort her. Thank God that everything was fine in the end.

We also visited the site of the great earthquake last year, and I deeply realised how merciful God is! Although casualties were already considerable, the centre of the quake was not a densely-populated or highly built-up area. Imagine if it had happened in the heart of Taipei, how many more would have perished! I remember God's words to Jonah, who was very unhappy that God had spared the sinful Nineveh that repented: "And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than 120 thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left - and much livestock?" (Jonah 4:11). Our God is truly so longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance!

The last few days with the sisters were the most enjoyable as we were refreshed and encouraged by the mutual faith (Rom 1:12) to go on with the Lord. Besides sharing with one another about how the Lord had been taking care of us since we last met, we also preached the gospel and prayed together. And of course, the sisters brought us to some interesting places not frequented by tour groups, where we sometimes "braved" their local specialties together. Oh, how precious it is to be part of "His inheritance in the saints" (Eph 1:18)! I am so thankful to the Father for Christ and the church, for all the saints with whom we comprehend "the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ" (Eph 3:18-19)!

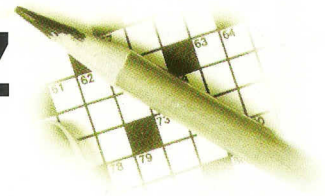
Sis Lee Sai Guek

ANSWERS TO TEENS TODAY QUIZ # 13

(Things that Jesus said or did)

1. False, it was in the wilderness - Matt 4:1-4.
2. True - Matt 4:12-17.
3. True - John 2:1-11.
4. False - He came to fulfil - Matt 5:17.
5. True - Mark 5:1-13.
6. False, He healed a cripple there - John 5:8-9.
7. False, He asked them not to enter - Matt 10:5.
8. False, He fed 5000 men - Matt 14:21.
9. True - Matt 15:11.
10. True - Matt 17:1-2; Mark 9:2.
11. True - Matt 17:24-27.
12. False, it is easier - Mark 10:25.
13. False, He drove them out because they made the temple a den of thieves - Matt 21:12-13.
14. True - Matt 26:39-46.
15. False - Simon Peter found linen cloths in the tomb - John 20:6.

QUIZ



WHAT WAS THE SIGN GIVEN TO ...

- 1 Noah to confirm God's promise that He would not destroy the earth with a great flood again?
- 2 Abraham to confirm that God would give him the good land as an inheritance?
- 3 Moses before God revealed Himself as the "I AM WHO I AM" and sent him to bring God's people out of Egypt?
- 4 Joshua to show God's people that God had chosen Joshua to lead His people and would be with Joshua as He was with Moses?
- 5 Gideon to show him that God would deliver Israel from the Midianites and the Amalekites by his hand?
- 6 Hezekiah when God promised to prolong his life by another 15 years?
- 7 Ezekiel when God revealed that He would revive His people one day even if they were like dead bones?
- 8 Jonah to show him God's compassion for mankind and even all living creatures?
- 9 Zacharias that Elizabeth would give birth to John, the forerunner of Jesus Christ?
- 10 Peter when God sent him to preach the gospel to Cornelius?

TEENS TODAY QUIZ #14

Name : _____

Tel No. : _____

Address : _____

All students are invited to send their answers under Teens Today Quiz #14 to 1 Derbyshire Road, Singapore 309457

teens

FOR THE YOUTHS AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

today

Steadfast & Unchanging Truths for Christian Youths

We live in the 21st century where information technology dominates our lifestyle, medical science defies nature, and moral standards are disappearing. Faced with issues like cloning, violence, drug abuse, perversion and a sex-obsessed media, where do we stand? What are some unchanging truths in our faith that we can uphold in these perilous times?

1. Christ our Redeemer, Saviour and coming King

Be firm in your faith of who Christ is. We became a Christian by confessing our sins to the Lord Jesus and believing that He died for our sins, rose on the third day and lives forever more. We have entered by faith and will continue to walk by faith until we see the Lord.

If we experience the Lord in prayer and His word, our faith will not be shaken. I once asked a young Christian if he had experienced the Lord. He replied earnestly: "Yes, and in so many ways!" He recounted how in a stormy evening along a quiet stretch of road, he prayed for a taxi in order to make it to a church meeting. When he opened his eyes, a cab pulled up right in front of him! We need such simplicity of faith and we can experience God even in trivial matters.

"Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet 1:8-9). Christ has redeemed us by His blood. As the Spirit in us today, He continues to save us from self and sin. One day, He will reward those who love and obey Him. This is God's unchanging promise!

2. The unchanging word of God

Have you ever heard people say: "it's okay to be promiscuous, it's okay to be homosexual"? But the Bible says that "the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God ... Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites" (1 Cor 6:9). Though the world may fashion her views to suit man's lusts, God's word will never change or pass away.

The Lord said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). Each day, let us spend time in His word that we may be kept, nourished and so grow in Him.

3. The blood of the Lamb - overcoming the devil and cleansing our sins

We are still in this body of sin and are constantly under Satan's attack.

The devil will sometimes attack our emotions, making us feel lousy and not in the mood to read the Bible or pray. Or he may continue to accuse us even after we have confessed our sins to the Lord, or tempt us to look at defiling pictures. So what shall we do?

In the first two cases, exercise your will to go before the Lord in faith, knowing that the blood of Christ has cleansed away your darkest sins. You can tell Him: "Lord, I come before you just as I am. Actually, Lord, I don't feel like talking to You now, but please help me. Take away my sins and darkness!" The Lord will surely answer your earnest pleas. Then resist Satan with God's word: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Rev 12:11).

In the third case, recall 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you ... Abstain from every form of evil". If we have a wonderful fellowship with the Lord and the saints, we will have no taste for defiling things. However, being fallen, we may sometimes sin. But God promised that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

4. Do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together

Finally, do not forsake "the assembling of ourselves together ... but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb 10:25). We belong to the Body of Christ, and we need one another for support, edification and protection. So always maintain a close contact with the brothers and sisters and pray for one another constantly.

Therefore, be steadfast in our faith and keep His word, for our Lord is coming to reward His good and faithful servants!

I have found **true** rest!

The Lord has been kind to me, blessing me with a comfortable and peaceful life from young. As the youngest child, my parents doted on me and provided me with everything I wanted, from education to material comfort. But three years ago, I realised that I could not go on in life without Jesus Christ. Prior to this, although I attended Christian meetings occasionally, I was never serious about God, it was more of an obligation to my Christian friends.

At that time, I was going through a difficult period, suffering under an unbearable work-load and insufficient rest. I felt that life was meaningless. Every day was simply about struggling to meet deadlines. Social life was minimal as Sundays and public holidays were spent doing office work at home. I felt withdrawn from everybody, not just my friends but also my family.

It happened late one Saturday afternoon when I finally realised that I needed someone to show me the way out. A colleague and friend passed by my office and saw that I was still slogging away. The stressful and resigned look on my face made him ask if he could be of any help. As I needed someone to talk to, I began to confide to him that I had difficulty coping with my work and I had no one to turn to for help.

In the midst of our conversation, he shared a simple but inspiring story

Truth Column

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

The Holy Spirit of Truth

The Lord Jesus told His disciples: "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever - the Spirit of truth", and "when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth ..." (John 14:16-17; 15:26).

These verses show that the Helper is the Holy Spirit, who is also the Spirit of truth. John 16:13 states: "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth ...".

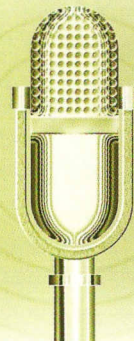
Earlier, the Lord told His disciples that He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). The truth is neither an abstract term nor a doctrine or theory. The truth is a living person - Christ Jesus Himself.

After the Lord's death, resurrection and ascension, the Father sent the Spirit. 1 John 5:6 states: "the Spirit is truth". Hence, Christ is the truth, and so is the Holy Spirit.

As the Spirit, He is no longer restricted by the flesh, so He can come into us easily. When the Lord Jesus talked about the Spirit of truth in John chapters 14, 15 and 16, He did not mean something outside of us, but the Spirit within us. By faith, we receive the Spirit into us, and He works in us: He reveals and we receive His revelation within; He shines and we receive His shining within; He speaks and this speaking is within. He works in our inner being and guides us to understand or enter into all truth.

The Holy Spirit reveals the truth by enlightening our eyes to see the reality of the truth. He also guides us to understand and enter into all truth so that our concepts, actions, living and goals may correspond to the truth. We must leave all lies, falsehood and vanity, expose Satan's lies, enter into the truth and become witnesses of the truth.

(Reference: "The Trumpet of Truth" lesson 60, by The Church in Hong Kong Bookroom)



with me about a little bird that was calm and composed despite being caught in a storm. He said that I could be like that little bird if I would ask Jesus to take control of my life. When he finished, he asked if he could pray for me. I nodded. As he began praying for me, I could feel the presence of God comforting me and relieving me of my stress. I just broke down and cried.

Since then, it has been great walking with Christ. Life has also become more meaningful and the path ahead more glorious!

Bro Chew Hock Meng

Announcements & Prayer Items

Baptism Meeting

Praise God that 25 brothers and sisters were baptized on 22 Jan 2000! Some of them are the children who have been attending the children's meeting since young. It is such a joy to see them grow in the church! And as we witness family members of the saints come to salvation, we worship God for His unfailing promise: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31)!

Message on the Lord's Day

Thank the Lord for leading the church through 1 Corinthians. Although the church in Corinth had many problems, God never forsook them; rather, He led them back to Christ through Paul. Yes, Christ and Him crucified is the only solution. Let us pray that in 2 Corinthians, we will see in Paul an example of one who truly bore the cross for the church, and learn to serve God faithfully as he did!

Adults' Conference

Date : 28-31 May 2000
Venue : Desaru, Malaysia

Students' Camp

Date : 11-14 June 2000
Venue : Hall 1

Children's Camp

Date : 22-24 June 2000
Venue : Hall 1