

Treasure or Trash

The contemporary Christian religion is so deeply involved in neo-Gnosticism that it poses a greater threat to the Truth of God's Word and the Gospel than it's first century predecessor.

NOTE: Gnostic means having secret knowledge not revealed but knowledge only known to the initiates.

Deuteronomy 29:29 says

"Secrets are known to God and what He wills for us to know He has revealed."

The Bible contains God's revealed Truth, our exploration of this knowledge is to be found in His inspired Word.

Hebrews 1:1-2 *"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe."*

Private interpretation of Scripture, like the Gnostics, is to be shunned - please read **2 Peter 1:2-21**.

2 Peter 2:1-3 *"But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping."*

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Illustration

Dr Collyer was a very successful medical doctor in New York City. When he died his two sons inherited his estate and fortune. The Collyer brothers, chose peculiar lifestyle, not at all consistent with the status of their father and public image.

They sold all of their fathers assets and chose to live in absolute isolation and boarded up their house and padlocked the doors. All utilities, including water, were shut off. No one saw them come or go.

In 1947 the police received a phone call from a neighbour who tipped them off that someone living in the house had died. The police broke into the house after having to clear the overgrowth of a lawn that had not been cut for decades. Inside they found both brothers had died.



It seems the brothers were hoarders, they collected junk. The house was crammed full of broken machinery, instruments, rags, boxes, etc. ! All of it was worthless. The enormous mountain of debris blocked the front door. The one brother was found under piles of rubbish and the other brother was found on a bed clutching an old newspaper dated 22 February 1920.. The garbage, eventually removed, totalled 140 tons!

The two men had stockpiled their pathetic treasures. They deprived themselves and lived in squaller, spurning their father's legacy, they lived on scraps to survive and became urban hermits.

Worthless Pursuits

Like the Collyer bothers too many Christians neglect their spiritual treasure trove and accumulate worthless things that cannot satisfy the soul. When we are so consumed by material treasures, we deprive ourselves of the spiritual benefits of living a life pleasing to God.

Some Christians spend their lives pointlessly accumulating sensational experiences, novel teachings, motivational guru', etc. These are only diversions from spiritual values that fulfil us.

Is Christ inadequate? Is He not able to meet our spiritual needs? Is He not our sufficiency? **Romans 8:31.**

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Why have we got the notion that we need “blessings” and prophets to sustain our spirituality? We are the beneficiaries of Christ’s inheritance:-

Romans 8:16-17 *“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”*

We share in the inheritance of the saints (spiritual icons) **Colossians 1:12** *“And giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.”* (What is the kingdom of light? Spiritual enlightenment).

Two Concepts

Focusing on our eternal inheritance is a key factor in maintaining a proper perspective on the sufficiency of Christ, especially in the middle of difficult circumstances. That’s not always easy because we’re prone toward self-centredness and instant gratification. Advertising feeds that mentality by telling us we can have all we want, and we can have it right now! Of course, having it all usually means buying on credit whatever product they’re selling. A steady diet of that philosophy has captured our society with self-indulgence and impatience. People find it difficult to cope with life if they can’t instantly gratify every desire. They want to eliminate any discomfort, difficulty, injustice, or deprivation immediately.

Scripture responds with two revolutionary concepts:

- Heavenly mindedness,
- And delayed gratification.

Heavenly mindedness is taking our eyes off the world’s offerings for fulfilment and focusing them on God’s sufficient provision for our satisfaction. It’s what Paul meant when he told us to set our minds on the things of above, not on earthly things—**Colossians 3:2** *“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”* And it’s what John meant when he said, *“Do not love the world, nor the things of the world”* **1 John 2:15**—*“I will give you water that you will not thirst again”* **John 4:14**.

Delayed gratification is simply deferring to God’s will and God’s timing, the essence of patience. All His promises will be fulfilled, His righteousness and authority will be fully realised, His Son and His saints will be fully vindicated, but in His time, not ours. Many of the difficulties we experience will not be resolved in this life because His purpose transcends our temporal situations. So there’s no point in running impatiently for relief to people offering “solutions” that ignore God’s objectives and timetable.

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Behold, the farmer waits for the precious, produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it the early and late rains. You too should be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand—James 5:7-8. I'm sure the dear saints to whom James was writing longed for God's comfort and justice against their persecutors; but God wanted them to cultivate patience, strength of heart, and a joyful anticipation of Christ's return. These are far greater benefits than immediate relief from the difficulties and injustices we face. God will vindicate us, but in His own time.

Our Eternal Inheritance

Heavenly minded patience includes looking forward to our eternal inheritance and honouring God for it despite our temporal circumstances.

Our Inheritance

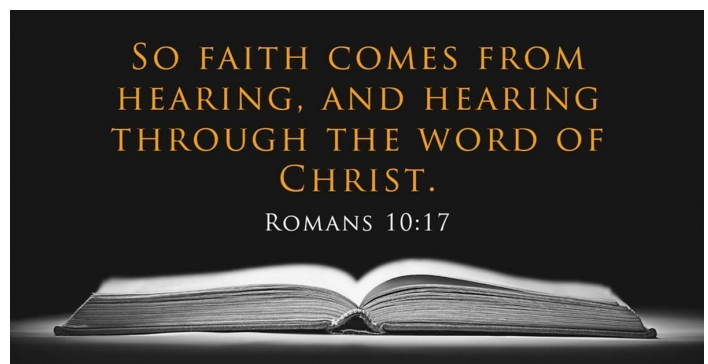
The Greek word translated "inheritance" in **1 Peter 1:4** (*kleronomia*) speaks of possessions passed on down from generation to generation. You don't earn or purchase them; you receive them simply because you're a family member. Peter describes in verse 3 the means by which believers gain membership in the family of God: "*(He) causes us to be born again to be a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*" We receive our eternal inheritance by means of spiritual rebirth—the only solution to our sinful condition and alienation from God. Jesus made that very clear when He said to the Jewish leader Nicodemus, "*unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" We were first born as sinful creatures, dead in trespasses and sins and indulging the desires of our flesh and mind. We were by nature children of wrath, separate from Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world (**Ephesians 2:1-3, 12**). We were no more able to change our condition than we could alter the colour of our skin, or than a leopard could change its spots (**Jeremiah 13:23**).

A person in that condition must be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the new birth, the Spirit makes us a new creation in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:17**), taking up residence in the believer and transforming that person's thinking and behaviour. Perspective and values change and the focus shift from self to Christ. Ego-centric to Christ—central.

The Holy Spirit works through the Word to activate faith—**Romans 10:17**.

God never gives up.

Why should you?



(This an edited, condensed and para-phrased version by Bruce Woolard of our Sufficiency in Christ by John MacArthur)



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