

First Corinthians

VERSE-BY-VERSE



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Verse 8– from session 18

There is no softer way to put it, **you yourselves do wrong and defraud** (cheat). The word **wrong** is to *act unjustly or wickedly*. Paul uses the same word **defraud**, ἀποστερέω, *apostereo* in [1st Timothy 6:5](#) to refer to one who does not teach the sound doctrine, but rather has a mind **destitute** (apostereo) of truth.

Keep in mind the context of Paul's letter. There is a problem with pride, leading to contentions, in the church.

When Paul first arrived in Corinth, in [Acts 18](#), he spent eighteen months teaching and instructing; giving this baby church **milk** so they could grow. By now, the church should have been eating **meat** and should have been able to chew on solid spiritual food, but they were still in the nursing stage of their Christian lives.

Pride had stunted their spiritual growth. The opposite of pride is humility. As we humble ourselves, and take our eyes off others and think of the cross of Christ, we can then begin to become more spiritually minded and grow stronger in our Christian walk. Pride was a destructive force in this church.

Verse 9,10–

Various interpretations. The conflict has to do with the word **inherit**. The most common interpretation is that the word has to do with eternal life. But does **inherit** mean “salvation?” Let me make a proposition that it does not. How do we discover a correct meaning? Follow the basic rules of interpretation.

- Primary rule: Let Scripture interpret Scripture.
 - Always start from the easiest passage and work from there. Is **inherit the kingdom of God** the same as salvation? It seems like an important thing for us to figure out! Because Paul says, *if you do certain things you're not going to inherit*.
- 1. What must one do to be saved?
 - Using the primary rule of interpretation, the most apparent answer is the one given to the Philippian guard ([Acts 16:12-34](#))
 - Here we learn that “to be saved” is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2. How is a person saved?
 - [Ephesians 2:8-9](#).
 - One believes, and by grace through faith salvation is given freely by God.
- 3. What does it mean to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?
 - At the very least, [1st Corinthians 15:3,4](#).

Notice there is no “inheritance” mentioned when it comes to salvation. So what is happening in [1st Corinthians 6:9,10](#)? If it is not salvation, then what does it mean to **inherit the kingdom of God**?

Remember our rule of interpretation? Let Scripture interpret Scripture. The Old Testament provides a chain of evidence as to what is the inheritance and who receives it.

[Genesis 15:7](#): The first promise of an inheritance.

[Genesis 28:4](#): Land.

[Exodus 32:13](#): Moses repeats the promise.

[Isaiah 54:3](#): Israel inherits the Gentiles.

[Isaiah 65:9](#): Mountains.

It is clear from the Old Testament that the inheritance belongs to the Nation of Israel. Therefore, when Paul writes **inherit the kingdom of God** he must have Israel in mind. This makes sense when we remember that this Corinthian church, while there were non-Jews present, was a largely Jewish congregation. The nation of Israel, therefore the Jewish people, inherit the kingdom, not the Church (or the body of Christ). In fact, Gentile believers in Corinth would not have had a clue what Paul meant about an inheritance, but because of the Old Testament Scriptures, the Jews would have known exactly what Paul meant.

We cannot apply the promises (and curses) belonging to Israel, to the Body of Christ. We need to study this further, but the key is to remember Israel and the Church are not the same.

Another thought on the word **inherit**:

Do people **inherit** everlasting life? If we take the word **inherit** in its literal sense, that is, something handed down by legal right and lineage—if that is the case, then the answer is “no” we do not **inherit** eternal life. It is a gift of grace given to those who place their faith/trust in Jesus Christ. Clearly, this passage is not about salvation.

Yet, the passage is clear: **that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God**. Look at it closely—what it does NOT say: *if anyone actively, or perpetually, or unrepentantly* does these things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. It is pretty clear in the passage there is no rationalizing: Do these things and the person does not inherit the kingdom of God. If this means salvation, then we are all in big trouble.

So what are we to do with the passage?

The real question to ask is, *Does any Gentile Christian (regardless of behavior) inherit the kingdom of God?*

The word **inherit** is from the Greek word *kleronomeo*, a compound word that means *the lot of the law*. Scripturally speaking, there is only one heir to the Kingdom, it is righteous Israel and those who align with Israel in the Judgment of the Nations ([Matthew 25:34](#)). The inheritance of the Kingdom, then, is an added benefit for the believing Jews.

Additionally, it was appropriate for Paul to talk about inheriting the kingdom to the church at Corinth because it was a Messianic congregation. We would not necessarily talk about inheriting the kingdom to a Gentile audience. There are two other places Paul mentions certain behavioral conditions and the kingdom, and that is in Galatians (a Jewish environment), and in Ephesians (also a large Jewish congregation).

If we equate this passage with entrance into heaven, are we ready to say that any **drunkard** will not go to heaven? Or, how about someone who is **covetous**? For me, I am just not willing to say that, because our eternal salvation is not based on behavior, it is based on grace through faith.

This passage is not speaking about everlasting life in heaven, it is directed to the Jews and specifically to their inheritance in the kingdom of God.

Verse 11–

For all Christians, any sin is forgiven. And, any sin is forgivable (including those in the previous verses). In the context, for this Jewish congregation, Paul is telling them that their forgiveness not only gives them everlasting life but makes them whole for the future kingdom. When it comes to salvation (not kingdom inheritance) all those who believe, Jew or Greek, **are washed, sanctified, and justified**. These are all one time, once and for all events **in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God**.