

The Inheritance of Jesus Christ

by T. Austin-Sparks

The book of Revelation reveals the nature of the inheritance of Jesus Christ, and the great issue of government that is central to God's purpose in creation and redemption.

Scripture: Revelation 1:3, Revelation 5:9, Revelation 21:2

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Inheritance of Christ"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the central theme of the 'Revelation of Jesus Christ' as the governing principle of the entire book, focusing on the nature, battle, and victory of Jesus' inheritance. He highlights the significance of the phrase 'now is come the Kingdom' as a triumphant declaration that encapsulates the essence of Christ's reign and the ongoing spiritual battle faced by the Church. Sparks acknowledges the challenges of interpreting the book due to its symbolism and various schools of thought, yet insists on the blessing promised to those who engage with it. He stresses that the book serves as a culmination of God's purpose for creation, redemption, and the ultimate governance of the universe through Christ and His Church. Ultimately, he calls for a response from believers to align with God's eternal intention and the significance of their role in His divine plan.

Transcript

Revelation of Jesus Christ. That is to be the object of our occupation at this time and while it will come to us through the book which bears that name, it is not the book, as such, that we are to study but that central, inclusive, underlying theme - revelation of Jesus Christ. We can drop out the article and say 'revelation of Jesus Christ'.

A subtitle might be:

The Nature, the Battle and the Victory of the Inheritance of Jesus Christ.

The one, great, triumphant cry which arises at a certain point in the procedure recorded here is 'now is come the Kingdom'. And in that phrase everything that is in this book is governed: His inheritance, His kingdom, His reign, His rights; His everything. That is the governing thing in the whole book. It is a revelation of Jesus Christ in that sense. We hardly begin to read the book without the consciousness breaking upon us that we are moving into battle - terrific battle - battle with many aspects. But with all the aspects of the battle, one issue: His Kingdom.

We are not, let me say here, going to try to go through this book. I think at most we shall be occupied, and that quite imperfectly, with the first chapters. But I do want to indicate that inasmuch as those chapters particularly concern the people of God, the Church, at this time, that is but one phase of this great question, His inheritance, His Kingdom.

We shall have to say some things about the book in general before we can come to the particular message which I feel the Lord has given for this time together. As to this book there are these things to be said. Of course it is a most bewildering book; and because it is so bewildering, many have given it up and after perhaps chapter five, they can't find their way any further and it is not, therefore, a book that is greatly beloved of the Lord's people. It might be necessary to qualify that statement, but I repeat, it is certainly a bewildering book.

Someone said, I don't know that I agree with them, that if you're not mad before you start reading the book, you will be when you get to the end! That is only a way of saying it is not an easy book to understand. And there are reasons for that, but I want you to remember that right at the commencement it is stated that there is a particular blessing attached to this book. Indeed, this is the only book in the Bible where it is so stated that there is a BLESSING. I don't mean that this is the only book that has a blessing; it is definitely stated that there is a blessing to those who read and those who keep what is written therein. This is a blessing that is promised to the servants of the Lord. May the Lord give us that blessing; bring that blessing to us as we dwell in it.

Now there are two main reasons for the difficulty which is found in reading and studying this book; that is, the difficulty is due to two main things, first of all its method, that is its symbolism. There are books in the Bible which have a lot of symbolism in them but there is no book to compare with this, it is one vast system of symbols.

If you want to do some close study you can go through from beginning to end and see how many symbols you can find. What you will find is that every thing in this created universe is taken hold of in some way or another symbolically; that is - and used to symbolize some other thing, some spiritual thing. Heaven, earth, sea. All parts and departments of the creation. Every phenomenon. Far too vast to comprehend in a few sentences. A book full of symbols. It's not easy to understand always the symbolism. I am not even referring to some of them.

The numbers themselves, if we should touch any one symbolic aspect, are tremendously significant and comprehensive from one through many particular numbers until you get to two hundred million; ten thousand times ten thousand. And all is symbolic and significant.

We pick out number seven. Fifty four times number seven occurs, which must mean something. You see what I mean? But all that constitutes a difficulty; you wonder why that was necessary. Well, for one or two reasons, but for this particular reason, it was a NECESSITY in a time of persecution. You will notice that when the hostile world rulers were in the ascendant over the people of God, symbolism was a particular feature of ministry. Take Ezekiel and Daniel; crammed with symbolism, but nothing to compare with this. For here you have this time of unspeakable suffering for the people of God in which this book was written. And because it was so dangerous to speak in plain language that the enemy could recognize and understand, symbolism was resorted to and only the instructed WOULD understand. That is significant in itself. You see, Rome was the great hostile power. The people of God were suffering at this time as they had never suffered before, at the hands of Rome, but you don't find the word 'Rome' mentioned. Rome

has to be covered up with another name; Babylon. See, it was necessary to speak amongst themselves in a way in which THEY would understand and the world would not. And that should bring a sympathetic note in our approach to the Word. There is a language amongst the Lord's people which only they understand, but they DO understand. The world does not understand.

But then, another difficulty which has arisen since then and is with us today in relation to this book, is the many schools of interpretation. There are at least six different schools of interpretation of this book. I'm not even going to name them; it would only confuse many of you and would not be at all helpful at this time. But there they are, six, at least, different schools of interpretation and very few of them agreeing with each other on more than a point or two. Volumes upon volumes having been written saying 'And THIS is the meaning' or 'THIS is the meaning' and all in conflict with one another. We find ourselves in these days in the midst of that kind of thing and it's exceedingly bewildering. We might well give it up as Martin Luther did; he said this book is all rubbish, nonsense; no one will ever be able to understand it. Well, alright, throw the blessing away! There's a blessing.

However, that is one of the difficulties in our taking up this book and not pursuing it. You will not imagine that I am going to adopt any one of the six and I do trust that you will not think for a moment that I am going to give you an improvement upon them all or think that I can. You will have to go on patiently with me and see whether the way in which we approach it is a way of blessing, a way of spiritual helpfulness. And I would ask you this one thing, that you will believe that I am not seeking to give some private interpretation but seeking to get right through ALL this to the real blessing that is in this book. If we can come out at the end with that, then we shall have been justified in tackling it.

Well now, what about the nature and the purpose of the whole book? It is quite clear that this book contains or presents the consummation of all the ages and the consummation of this age. I use that word carefully. The summation of the ages and the summation of THIS age. This book comprehends the WHOLE Bible and bounds ALL history. It compasses creation, redemption, and perdition. It embraces God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit. It embraces man and his history and the purpose of his being. It embraces the history, work and doom of Satan.

It will impress you I am sure, when I tell you that there are no less than four hundred allusions to the Old Testament in this book. There's a bit of study for you. I mention it in order to bear out what I've said, this is a summation this book. This is a gathering up of everything unto the end. But when we have said that and all such things and have recognized it all as true, one question arises; IS there, IS there one thing that interprets and explains everything in this book? And the answer is yes. There is one all-inclusive issue running from beginning to end. It is the Purpose of God as to the eternal government of this universe and this earth in particular.

The issue and question of the government of God's creation through eternal ages. That explains everything that is here. You have to read backward of course, from the end of the book, for all has moved toward that. Steady movement through every phase and aspect unto that one end, "I saw the holy City, new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven". Here you have the metropolis, the center of government; that is the end - the government of everything established, again in a symbolic representation, the holy City. Well that implies government, I say everything in the book moves toward that and you have to read everything from beginning onward in the light of that final, wonderful issue. WHO is going to govern God's created universe through all ages of eternity? HOW is that government going to be reached? And WHAT is the nature of that government? Those are the questions that are answered in this

book.

How great it is that when you come to the City, that is the realization of this great divine object; the government of all things as from heaven. You find that that government is just as much a matter of character or nature as it is of power. That is a VERY important thing to remember. It is not only official authority established at last, the iron hand of government in control. It is a government of a certain KIND of nature. The City is the embodiment not only of strength but of character and nature; everything that is precious in the sight of God. And those two things are brought together and they run through this whole book. Those two things are implicit in the first chapters as we shall see in the presentation of the Son of Man Himself and then in the messages to the churches. So they run on. It's a reaching of the place of ascendancy by conformity to a certain nature. It's a tremendous thing to come to that nature, to that character.

It is no less a question, an issue, in the nature of things than the government of this universe. What kind of thing will it be that governs at last? That's the big question. And so page after page is dealing with that. Page after page, phrase after phrase. It is not just the crashing of something against the mastery, it is the getting rid of a certain character and nature and kind, to put in its place another kind. From center to circumference. Remember it is a law always of God and of the Word of God that power is by character and not by office. And so it is here, it is a tremendous question in this matter of ascendancy, the throne, the government, the dominion. I say again, it governs everything through this book. In a word, it is the nature of God's Son as Son of Man, standing over everything. He, in Person and divinely appointed destiny, but He particularly in character. That brings everything under it. This great issue of government.

And is it necessary for me to say here that if ever there was a time in the history of this cosmos when the conflict, the battle for the government of this universe was raging; that time is now. We are all very conscious of mighty forces at work to get the control of this world and all that has to do with it. Of a tremendous battle raging as to who and what is going to have the dominion here. That only needs to be said to draw out a response and assent of recognition; it's on. And the point of the concentration of this conflict is the Church, the people of God! In some parts from without, in an outward way they're in it, but if it is not by outward persecution, spiritual people are conscious of TREMENDOUS spiritual pressure and conflict in these days which is increasing. Yes, it's quite patent that this is the issue. What is going to emerge, on top at last, what kind of a thing will it be, that is the question to be answered.

For this issue take up the whole book again, this issue is shown to be related to five things, first of all to the very purpose of God IN creation. The purpose of God in creation! There should be something answering to His heart and to His mind, to His thought for His full satisfaction in the works of His hands. Chapter four takes up, as you know, that creational aspect and the great song in heaven which bursts forth in that connection is "for thou createst or didst create all things for Thyself, for Thy pleasure" it is the song of a redeemed creation showing that it's all centred in the throne now. That chapter brings you right up into heaven, everything is up there and the throne is set, and everything is around that throne and the song in the first instance is the song of a redeemed creation. Centred in the throne, that's the meaning of the creation! A kind of creation absolutely grown united with the Throne at its centre. That's the purpose of creation and then the book moves to show that this, this issue, this great issue: government, is God's purpose in redemption.

Of course chapter five carries the theme further, it is still the theme in heaven but here the emphasis is upon redemption and the second great song breaks out "Thou hast redeemed". Thou hast redeemed! And

the throne is at the centre of redemption. Redemption has brought the throne to its place, government by redemption. We'll have more to say about this as we go on. In the third place this great purpose of world and universal government is shown to be God's purpose concerning His Son. The place that He occupies throughout is supreme and everything is working toward that end where HE, HE is Lord of all and in all things has the pre-eminence and in the book is seen at the end riding forth in majesty, ruling! As we shall see His very titles indicate universal lordship, God's purpose concerning His Son, the government of this world and of this universe.

In the fourth place this great purpose of dominion is shown to be God's purpose in choosing and raising up Israel as a nation, that in an earthly way Israel should set forth the principles of heavenly government, and all that focused in God's Son. That is why Israel was raised up. And that is touched upon here but Israel put the Son out! And Israel in turn was put out. The place that Israel occupies today, the most tragic place you could think of, is simply this: they failed in the purpose of God concerning His Son, His absolute Kingship and Lordship. And then the fifth connection the book shows that this great issue of dominion is bound up with the Church. The Church! The Church comes in here; it is not Christ in solitary isolation, the Church with Him in government eventually.

Well, you see how comprehensive the issue is, this book gathering all that up is the book of final recovery of God's eternal intention and it shows that it WILL be, it will be done. A large place, as you know, is given to prophecy in this book and right at the end, right at the end, it is gathered up in this way, "The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets hath sent His angel and signified these things." The God of the spirits of the prophets! Then there is this, the keeping of the prophecy of this book. And most of you know that prophetic ministry always had one thing in view: recovery of God's thought. Recovery! And inasmuch as this book has so much of the prophetic aspect in it, it indicates that that's what is in view, it's recovery! Something has been lost. Something has been lost! And that is going to be recovered. Something of divine purpose and intention has been lost and God in this book is seen as set and giving Himself to the recovery of that which has been lost of His intention and will concerning this creation AND the Church. It's a mighty, mighty issue that is being fought out, shall we say, through the pages of this book. Just to take a few minutes on that point alone and we'll leave it for the morning.

A revelation had been given. A revelation had been given by God in the old dispensation, in the Old Testament, and it does not need that anyone be very well instructed to see that as you read the Old Testament from the beginning of Genesis right to the last chapter of the book of Malachi, there is one thing that is involved in the whole story; it is this question of government! Dominion! Rulership! Sovereignty! Control of this world! Isn't that clear? Everywhere it's there. It is one continuous battle raging, the ups and downs, the fluctuations, sometimes it's one power in the ascendant and sometimes another. Sometimes the Lord's people in their right place of dominion and other times they're in subjugation and antagonistic powers are in the ascendant but this battle rages and sways through all those Old Testament generations but God had left no one in doubt as to what His mind about it was and His purpose.

It's all there! The revelation had been given. It had been given in the New Testament. Mark you, we come to the book of the Revelation we're at the end of the first Christian century. The book in all probability was written in the nineties of the first century. And the revelation had been given in the New Testament. What a revelation of God's intention, God's purpose, God's thought for the government of this world. And that revelation had been in a particular and peculiar way concentrated in the ministry of the apostle Paul, had come through Paul in a full and shall we say, a consummate way. For if you want to know about the ages of the ages and God's thought concerning Jesus Christ therein and the Church, it's to Paul you go. It's

been given! It's been given; and significantly enough, it was given in the Name to the churches in Asia. To the churches in Asia - we have Ephesians, Colossians - it had been given! It had been lost. It had been let go. Said Paul, "All they which be in Asia be turned from me". It had been let go. God had GIVEN the deposit of a FULL revelation of His intention from eternity concerning His Son, concerning the Church in the government, the ultimate government of this universe. It's there! It's been let go; now the book of Revelation comes in to show God's reaction to that, to recover. And significantly enough He will begin with the Churches in Asia.

There the greatest responsibility rests; where the greatest light has been given, where the knowledge of God's will has been most fully redeemed, there God will begin. He always does, He always does begin there, the point of the greatest responsibility. To recover! To recover! And while I anticipate a little, let me point out to you at this point that He's GOING to have that which does represent His recovery. In the churches He may not find a full, complete response by all the people of God but He will have there that which DOES answer - "to him that overcometh...". What God may not have in the whole He will have in a part.

I'm reading a book by a New Testament scholar this week, not one we would call a spiritually minded person but one of profound knowledge of things as to the Bible and I came on this, I think it's worth reading at this point. He says "We have made reference to the thought of a remnant", he's speaking about the faith of Israel, the history of Israel. "The community as a whole could be narrowed down to a part which could represent the whole and continue its inheritance. This idea of a remnant is found throughout the whole Bible, it is not confined to the prophets, though they say much about it. In the story of the flood Noah and his family constitute a remnant in whom the divine creative purpose is concentrated and preserved. The blessing promised to Abraham and his seed was limited to one of his sons, Isaac. In the time of Elijah we read of a righteous remnant of seven thousand which had not bowed the knee to Baal. This idea is found in Isaiah, in Jeremiah, in Ezekiel, in Amos, in Micah. Sometimes the remnant is thought of as bringing about the sparing of the whole community." Note that: that's tremendous! "Sometimes the remnant is thought of as bringing about the sparing of the whole community. If God could have found ten righteous in Sodom the whole community would have been saved. Sometimes the remnant itself is spared to convey to a future generation the knowledge of God's will. It is always thought of as a corporate body and not just so many individuals. Wherever it appears, the remnant is for that moment, THE people of God. Heirs of the promises and heirs of the revelation of God's purpose." I believe that's magnificent!

Carry that over here and see it gathered into the overcomers at the end. See on one side what a responsibility rests upon them, what a need the Lord has for such! What a tremendous thing is bound up with them, no less an issue than God's eternal intention concerning His Son, concerning the Church in the government of this universe. It seems, perhaps, presumption to think that we here, a little company of insignificant people in this world, might, as a part of others in the larger, be in that line of divine purpose. It might be, dear friends, I put it this way; it might be that that is why we are here at this very time. If we were to speak of the conflict that has preceded this time, the raging of the forces of evil, and all the determinations as are seen to make the continuance of this testimony and ministry possible, we are driven to ask one question: What can it mean? What can it mean? What are we? What do we amount to? And the answer must be this, has God abandoned His intention? And if not, He will STILL seek to have those who know what that is and who come into line with it. And, forgive me, and I know that I'll need a lot of forgiveness in some realms for saying it, but it is just possible that the gathering of just a handful here in these days has no less a significance in it than God's desire to make known to His people that He has not

given up His original purpose concerning His Son and the Church. If I should be right, may the Lord give to us a due sense of the tremendous significance of any time like this when He chooses to speak to us again about this matter of supreme and paramount importance; His inheritance in His Son. The Kingdom of His Son. His Son's place in this universe for all eternal ages. And of an instrument to His hand for the expression of His government and the administering of His kingdom. Now I have not said and am not thinking or saying that WE are the people for that. But that is the Lord's thought for as MANY of the Church universal as will give Him the response that He seeks when He says "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches". I venture to say to you dear friends, that we are gathered in no small matter. May the Lord give us eyes to see as we go on how this is to be, how He works it out, on what ground, in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/the-inheritance-of-jesus-christ/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net