

Possession Is Nine Tenths of the Law

Have you heard it said that “possession is nine tenths of the law?” Once you have something, it’s up to someone else to take it from you. In a legal battle, you are much more likely to win if you are already in possession of the disputed item. The other guy is the one who has to initiate the legal action, pay for an attorney, and provide the evidence needed to prove that the item in question actually does not belong to you. The process of taking that possession away from you becomes even more difficult, actually impossible, if the item really does legally belong to you and there is no proof to be found that it does not.

Christian salvation and the benefits of being a child of God are not things that you acquire, but instead they are things that are already in your possession to begin with. A good analogy would be finding an old painting in the attic covered with an accumulation of dust and grime to the point where the picture can no longer be seen. The painting is still there, just not visible. When we remove the dirt we are not creating a new painting. Instead, we are performing a restoration of something that was already there.

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but because of the One who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until the present time.” (Romans 8:20-22)

“Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.” (Acts 3:21)

According to the above Scripture passages, our individual and corporate salvation is a process of restoration. God Himself is responsible for our fallen condition. It is God who subjected His creation to bondage and decay. As individuals, we are flawed by design. Why? So that we may learn many important life lessons that we could not otherwise learn. Eventually we will all find our way back to God, only to realize that He was there all the time, *“...for God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.”* Romans 11:32

Receiving Christ as Savior and Lord should not be regarded as “becoming” a child of God. Instead, it should be seen as a restoration of sorts, as in the case of the Prodigal Son who, upon returning home, was welcomed back by someone who had never ceased to be his father.

In the Bible, salvation is sometimes viewed as a completed process, sometimes as a continuing process, and sometimes as a future event. What we need to keep in mind is that our salvation is not a process of creation but instead a process of restoration.