

1 Peter 1:3-5 – Part Q

1Pe 1:3 (NKJV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

As we continue to look at these three specific blessings that God has provided to us, we see that the second blessing is that we have an “**inheritance**” (v4) that is “**incorruptible, undefiled, does not fade away**”, and is “**reserved in heaven**” for us. Each of these adjectives are just pregnant with meaning. We really have no comprehension of the quality and magnitude of the inheritance that God has awaiting for us – no idea whatsoever. If any of us were called on to try and actually describe to someone what heaven is going to be like, I imagine that we all would fall miserably short in our description. The Bible is very clear that none of us really understand the actual realities of what God has in store for those who love Him. [1 Corinthians 2:9](#) says,

1Co 2:9 (NKJV) But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

In [Ephesians 1:18](#) Paul prayed the following prayer for the believers because he knew full well that without God’s enlightenment that we as believers could never comprehend what awaits us on our own.

Eph 1:18 (NKJV) the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

It is like Paul is saying “*if we just knew what God has provided for us, if we just knew*”.

Now, the first thing that we need to do is to define the word “**inheritance**” and to see if we can understand what it means to us in a practical way. If someone inherits something from someone else, it means that that individual is an heir. So whenever we think of an inheritance, normally we think of it as receiving something from someone else. In earthly terms, it could be money, land, or miscellaneous items such as furniture, jewelry, or even a house. However, in [1 Peter 1:4](#), the primary reference is not to all of the things that we may be given in heaven, but it refers specifically to the imperishable inheritance of eternal life. Salvation is the reward and the destiny of all of those who have been called by God to Jesus Christ.¹ If I can explain it this way, it is not that when we arrive in heaven that we are immediately going to be given a new set of toys. It is not that we are going to just get some new things that are of a higher quality than what we already have – not at all. The real reward in heaven is not that we are going to get something, but that we are going to be given someone. That someone is Christ. It should be relatively clear to us that no one can have this inheritance apart from a meaningful and vital relationship with Jesus Christ. It is very interesting to me that if you read v4 carefully, that the three attributes that Peter gives relative to our inheritance are all negative – will not perish, will not be corrupted, does not fade away. In reality, Peter could not actually define what heaven would be like, but simply had to tell us what it is not.

The conversation that Jesus Christ had with the rich young ruler clearly identifies that eternal life will only be given to those who obediently and in faith come to Christ on His terms.² We live in a spiritual

culture that is constantly redefining obedience, faith, and commitment to Christ suit its own personal choices, lifestyles, and desires. Unfortunately, in that cultural process of redefining truth to suit cultural and personal cravings, the church itself has very often bought into this cultural transposition of truth. The result is that people are very often given the impression that they are saved in part of God's kingdom, while the truth is that there is nothing in their life or their lifestyle that would ever reflect that reality. [1 John 5:12](#) says,

1Jn 5:12 (NKJV) He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

What that verse clearly indicates is that if someone is truly united to Christ by faith, then their life will demonstrate His life that is actually in them, working in them, and accomplishing God's sanctifying work in them. In other words, someone who is truly a Christian has God's life, and that life has a very distinctive and defining quality to it. It reflects God. It reflects Christ. The tense of the verb "has" is in the present tense which simply indicates that it is a present possession that has a God-like quality to it that continues to reveal itself. Think of it this way. When we receive salvation, or what we could actually call "God's life", it is a kind of life that is genuinely reflective of Christ. If a person consistently disdains obedience to God's Word and is unwilling to submit their life to Christ, it is only evidence of the simple fact that they do not have the life of God in them. **God's salvation always produces Christ's life and Christlikeness in the believer.** God's life always produces Christ's life. It really is that simple. The person who refuses to honor Christ in their life and who is consistently content with living as they please and doing those things that are utterly contrary to the will of God do not have God and do not know God. They are self-deceived and living under the wrath of God. The testimony of their life is that they believe God to be a "liar". [John 3:36](#) reiterates this truth when it proclaims the following,

Jn 3:36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

All that a person has to do is to complete a self-examination of their life. It should be immediately obvious as to whether or not they actually do possess God's life or if they do not. If they do possess God's life, then they are clearly reflecting Christ in all that they do. If they do not possess God's life, then their life is not reflecting Christ in what they do. Once again, it is that simple. So many people are evaluating the reality of whether or not they possess eternal life based on some decision that they made many years ago that has no bearing on their life today. However, the real test of whether someone is a Christian or not is the fact that their life is presently an ongoing testimony of Christ. It is a life that consistently, presently, and enduringly reflects Christ. That is when you can truly know that you possess God's life. It is futile to even address the idea of "inheritance" or being a "joint heir" if we do not actually possess God's life within us.

[2 John 9](#), a similar type verse to [1 John 5:12](#), says,

2Jn 1:9 (NKJV) Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

I love John. I love how he writes. He is so transparent about the things that really matter in a person's life. It is like he does not want anyone to miss out on salvation because someone else failed to properly

communicate the realities, the actualities, and the divine truths that comprise what genuine salvation really is.

The only negative aspect for the Greek word representing our “**inheritance**” is found in [Ephesians 5:5](#) and is somewhat of a piggy-back to these two previous verses.

Eph 5:5 (NKJV) For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

So, if we are ever going to enjoy the “**inheritance**” of being a part of God’s kingdom, then obviously we have to be rightly related to God and not just culturally related to Him – which many are. To many believers, it seems that the demands of the Christian life or more of an interference to their life than actually being their life.

If we truly understand the reality of the word “**inheritance**” in [1 Peter 1:4](#), Jesus Christ is the actual “**heir**” and we as the body of Christ are His inheritance. [Hebrews 1:1-2](#) says,

Heb 1:1 (NKJV) God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

[Romans 8:17](#) says that we are “**joint heirs with Christ**”.

Ro 8:17 (NKJV) and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

So because we are “**in Christ**”, whatever the Father gives to Christ also becomes ours. It is not that any of us have earned or merited or have done something to deserve this inheritance - not at all. Whatever we receive in heaven will all be because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. We may receive some rewards because of how we lived, but the inheritance itself is not a reward for good behavior. The inheritance is the gift of salvation given to the believer because of the gift of God’s grace that has operated in their life and brought them to Christ. No one will stand at the throne of God and boast about anything that they have done for Him. To the contrary, we will each fall on our face in absolute humility and worship of God who far exceeds our understanding of who He really is and what He has really done.

ENDNOTES

¹ Renn, 518.

² Verbrugge, 309.

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Verbrugge, Verlyn D., ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Abridged. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000.