

## 1 Peter 1:3-5 – Part R

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, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

The sum of our “**inheritance**” should be defined by words such as “**salvation, glory, redemption, grace, blessing**”, and “**eternal life**” – not things, not what we will get or have once we arrive. That is why the words that Peter uses to describe our inheritance are not tangible things, not physical things, but they are words that describe a completely different quality of life. This is really a very important distinction to appreciate simply because our lives are generally built and configured around what we have physically.

First, Peter says that our inheritance is “**incorruptible**” or “**imperishable**”. It is the Greek word “*aphtharton*” and means that it cannot perish, that it does not age, deteriorate, or die. The seed of corruption is not in it.<sup>1</sup> In this life, everything is perishable and corruptible. Everything decays, rusts, and returns to dust. Everything dies. However, what God has provided for us will never be corrupted, and it will never experience any kind of dying.

The second attribute is that our inheritance is “**undefiled**”. It is the Greek word “*amianton*” and it means that it cannot be polluted or defiled. Literally, it means that it cannot get any dirt on it (unsoiled). It cannot become infected or diseased in some way. It means that it has no kind of flaw or defect in it. It cannot get sick or be in an accident. It cannot get dirty or be polluted. It is absolutely free from any kind of defilement whatsoever. Nothing can corrupt it or defile it in any way – nothing. It will never be damaged in some way that you lose it and it no longer has any value to it.<sup>2</sup> Just think of all of the things in life that defile people and that corrupt and pollute their life. We live in a culture that is so corrupted and defiled. We are exposed to things that are unclean and impure. We are surrounded by that which is unholy, profane, wicked, dirty, vile, ungodly, and hateful of God and the things of God. Morality is almost nonexistent in some places and our children are being exposed to immorality and fornication at unprecedented levels on the Internet. However, our inheritance is utterly “undefiled” and cannot be touched by any of these things that would corrupt it or defile it in any way.

Thirdly, Peter says that the “**inheritance**” that we have “**does not fade away**”. It is the Greek word “*amaranton*” and means that it will not dry up and wither. It will last forever. I have a lot of plants in my garden that either are withering away or already have dried up and withered away. Nothing like that will ever happen to your inheritance. All that God has for His children will never be diminished or fade in any way. Our mind, our heart, our love for Christ, our body - they will never be wasted in some way or ever wear out. Everything that I currently own and possess is wearing out. Eventually, everything has to be replaced. My roof only has a 30 year warranty, my truck’s warranty is only for three years. My tractor’s warranty was only for one year. Why? It is because they all wear out. The tires on my car wear out, the submersible pump at my well wears out, my shoes wear out, my pants wear out, my eyes wear out, and my health wears out. The plants in my garden they “**fade away**”.

Everything is wearing out except for one thing – my inheritance. Heaven, its beauty and its glory, will never fade away and will never wear out. The quality of life that awaits the believer cannot be defined or understood simply because we have nothing with which it can be compared. We have nothing on this earth that meets these attributes and qualities – nothing. The sad part is when we become so enamored and enthralled by a world that the Bible declares is “**passing away**” that it takes precedent in our lives over that which will never “**fade away**”.

Then fourthly, Peter says that our inheritance is “**reserved in heaven**”. It actually means that it is being guarded and fully protected by God.<sup>3</sup> It is the idea that no one or anything can break in and steal what God is protecting. God is the ultimate defense mechanism that is guarding and protecting what He has designed for us. Nothing can take it away from you.

**1 Peter 1:5** further builds on this idea by saying that we are being “**kept by the power of God**” for this “**salvation**”. It is important to notice that Peter switches words here and now describes our “**inheritance**” as “**salvation**” (*soteria*). This word “**salvation**” can be defined in this context as being rescued from God’s judgment and wrath. For instance, **Romans 5:9** says,

Ro 5:9 (NKJV) **Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:9** says,

1Th 5:9 (NKJV) **For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

What a great picture Peter provides here in v5. The word “**kept**” means to be guarded as well. It is a participle that is in the present tense which means that not only is our inheritance in Christ being guarded, but **we** are always being guarded by God as well. The present participle implies action that is always going on. It is actually a military term which means to guard or to protect.<sup>4</sup> Nothing could have any greater level of security than the believer and their salvation

When we get to the phrase “**through faith**” it is important to understand exactly what the phrase means. Personal faith in God and in His sovereign power is the practical outworking of God’s protection. However, the first and pre-eminent idea is that the “**power of God**” alone is the sole basis of the protection of our eternal salvation. The problem we often have is that of thinking only in terms of this life, but the specific protection that Paul is addressing is that of our salvation being protected. Obviously, it may have a general reference to our daily protection from the evil that surrounds us, but that is not the major focus of this passage. In my address at graduation this year, I mentioned the word “**evil**” in **Ephesians 5:15-16** which says,

Eph 5:15 (NKJV) **See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,<sup>16</sup> redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

The Greek word for “**evil**” here is “*poneros*” which refers to that which is hurtful in its effect and influence. It is evil in active opposition, active hostility, and active resistance to that which is godly and Christlike in our life. The evil days in which we live are always actively working against our godly values and convictions to weaken us and to destroy and harm us.

It is not that we as believers are totally passive in our life and never have to do anything to help protect ourselves, but rather it refers to the simple fact that God alone is the One who **ultimately** is able to protect us from the dangerous and often vicious moments of life itself. It is never that we can do it all on our own, but rather that we are always and constantly in need of God's sovereign power over all things to help us and to protect us from the evil that surrounds us. The way that His protection is realized in our life practically is simply by this phrase "**through faith**". We respond with faith. We grow in our faith and we learn how to place our reliance in our God who alone is able to keep us safe and to keep us secure from the evil that surrounds us. It does not mean that we are inactive and "*just let go and let God*" and sit back and do nothing – not at all. It does not mean that nothing harmful will ever come our way – not at all. Rather, we learn to actively yield ourselves to God, and to seek both His wisdom and protection from those things that would harm us and bring about evil. We should pray all the time for God's protection over our families, over this church. We should pray that God would protect us from the wiles and schemes of the devil that we can never see. We should constantly pray that God's sovereignty and providence protect us from evil and the evil generation in which we live. We pray and we keep on praying "**through faith**". That is the practical side of being protected by God. The key is our having an utter dependence in God, having complete confidence in Him and in His sovereign power to eternally protect us and to keep us. We trust in our amazing heavenly Father to give us the wisdom and insight to work through the difficulties and the evil that the world places before us.<sup>5</sup>

Now, what is practically important for us as believers is to embrace this particular truth regarding our future salvation. Everything we are addressing is referring to the future tense of our salvation. Salvation has a past tense to it – that moment when we were saved, justified, and adopted into God's family. There is the present tense to our salvation where we experience victory over sin and we grow in the things of God and in Christlikeness in our life. The part that Peter is addressing, however, is the future tense of our salvation – that moment when what has been concealed will finally be revealed to us. The Greek word from "**revealed**" (v5) - "*apokalupto*", simply means to uncover, to reveal, to manifest, and to make clearly known. It is this simple, yet divine "future" reality that nothing can remove the salvation that God has given to us that sustains us. This truth, this reality has been designed by God to stabilize and strengthen our "present" life. It has been given to us to enable our heart and our mind to bear up under the many difficult and various trials that we will invariably have to face.

Just to emphasize this aspect of what we are studying, the next section that we will study is [1 Peter 1:6-9](#) which reads,

1Pe 1:6 (NKJV) **In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,<sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,<sup>8</sup> whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,<sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of *your* souls.**

In fact, the words "**suffer**" or "**suffering**" are major words and concepts in [1 Peter](#) and are used in 10 different passages. Stated another way, in [1 Peter 4:12](#) he says,

**1Pe 4:12 (NKJV) Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;**

It should be obvious that Peter is not trying to hide or conceal the fact that in this world that we will face difficult moments and trials, but to the contrary he is writing all of this in the beginning as a source of both strength and encouragement for when those times actually come. They will come, and they will afflict you. No Christian is exempt from these trails. In one sense of the word, we could say that they are very normal and are to be expected and anticipated. The power of God is not something that we can assume just always protects or shields the believer from trials and from suffering.<sup>6</sup> We just received this week news that our extension church in Lahore, Pakistan sustained another bomb attack and 26 people died in that attack. This is the fourth major attack killing over 170 people in the last several years, not to mention all of the people that were severely injured for life.

What this particular phrase regarding being “**kept by the power of God**” is saying to us is that God’s power is the means by which our faith in Him is sustained, and especially when everything is going against the believer. This verse clearly speaks about a believer’s faith, and the simple fact that a true believer will maintain that faith throughout their life – but they do not do it alone. It is God who sustains the believer’s faith during the worst of times. It is God who supports and strengthens the believer when the enemy batters them. Theologically, it is called the doctrine of perseverance, or preservation (which I personally like much better). In all likelihood, the enemy knows where we are the weakest and what it is that may possibly cause us to fall away in unbelief. He knows where we can be the most easily discouraged and what it may take to prevent us from following Christ – and so he attacks. So, the function of this verse is to encourage us with the truth that God will preserve our faith when the trials, the temptations, and the sufferings that accompany salvation begin to assail our life. God is the One who fortifies and strengthens the believer’s faith with hope and encouragement. That is how Pastor Javid and his members in Lahore can continue to endure under the very worst of times. God is the One who is sustaining them. God is the One who is giving them the strength to persevere through the very worst of circumstances, and He will do the same for us.<sup>7</sup>

Now, just think for a moment of the man or the woman outside of Christ who has none of these spiritual possessions, who does not have a spiritual inheritance, and who never experience the spiritual blessings of God in their life. They are not saved, they have never been redeemed, they have never experienced God’s saving grace, they are exempt from His blessings, and they do not have “**eternal life**”. They have absolutely nothing that they can look forward to except eternal damnation. They may say that they do not believe in eternal judgment, but the Word of God says otherwise. Listen to how Paul described this in [Romans 1:18-19](#),

**Ro 1:18 (NKJV) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,<sup>19</sup> because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.**

[Romans 1:21](#) says,

**Ro 1:21 (NKJV) because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.**

**Romans 1:32** says,

**Ro 1:32 (NKJV) who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.**

When I read verses like these and I know and see the reality of these truths being played out in people's lives, I am deeply grateful that God in His sovereignty chose me and called me to Himself. For us as believers, these amazing promises in **1 Peter 1:3-5** regarding the safety and security of our salvation should cause us to express deep and profound worship for our God. Why? It is because we are forever secure and safe in His care. Our salvation cannot be marred, removed, diminished, or altered. It is reserved in heaven for us and is being guarded and kept by the very power of God.

### **ENDNOTES**

- <sup>1</sup> Preachers, 16.
- <sup>2</sup> Preachers, 16.
- <sup>3</sup> Strong, 1411.
- <sup>4</sup> Wuest, 22.
- <sup>5</sup> Precept, 1 Peter 1:5, ep.
- <sup>6</sup> Schreiner, 65.
- <sup>7</sup> Schreiner, 65.

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