



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study

THE ETERNAL INHERITANCE OF THE REDEEMED

1 Peter 1:3-5

The First epistle of Peter is very instructive and encouraging to believers, especially those who are suffering persecution. The Christians were suffering persecution. One and a half years before the Epistle was written, Nero, the Roman emperor had burnt down Rome because he wanted to rebuild it. In July 64 A.D., for three days and three nights, all the buildings, temples and household idols were destroyed in flames. The people became homeless and helpless and resentment was bitter and deadly. Then Nero turned around to blame the Christians for the burning. That brought hatred and intense persecution against the Christians in Rome and in the Roman empire in general. The Christians needed encouragement and instruction on how to conduct themselves in crisis.

Suffering is the background of the Epistle (1 Peter 1:6,7; 2:19,20; 3:14; 4:12,13,16; 5:10) but the Second Coming of Christ is the theme of the Epistle (1 Peter 1:5,7,13; 2:12; 4:7,13; 5:1,4). Running like a thread in both of his Epistles is the Second Coming of Christ. No matter what the Christian is going through, the soon return of Christ is the motive and strength for enduring trials. It was tough and rough to be a Christian but Christians were to maintain a living, lively hope (1 Peter 1:3,13,21; 3:15). In the persecution and even the possibility of dying, Peter speaks of living hope (1 Peter 1:3), living word (1 Peter 1:23) and living stones (1 Peter 2:5).

REGENERATION AND OUR PURIFYING HOPE

1 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; 2:4-10; Titus 3:4-6; John 3:3-8; James 1:18; Romans 15:13; Colossians 1:23,27; Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:1-3.

Peter begins with praise to God, "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**". All who have been redeemed through divine mercy must always express their gratitude to God, acknowledging what He has done. "**According to His abundant mercy (He) hath begotten us again unto a lively hope.**" God did more than forgive; in His mercy, He begat us again. Forgiven and saved, yes; but we are born-again, regenerated, converted, transformed!

A Christian is a man or woman who has been begotten by God to a new kind of life. When someone is begotten of God, there comes into his life a change so radical that the only thing that can be said is that life has begun all over again for him. Regeneration, the new birth happens by the will and by the act of God (John 1:13; James 1:18). It is not something which a man achieves by himself any more than he achieved his physical birth. (1) It is the work of the Spirit of God (John 3:3-8). It is not attained by man's effort, it is a work of re-creation by the Spirit of God in him. (2) The result of this regeneration or re-creation is that the Christian is brought in touch with eternity and receives eternal life and he is a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17). (3) Such a man is begotten to a living hope (1 Peter 1:3). The sinner is without hope (Ephesians 2:12). (4) The rebirth of the christian is a rebirth to righteousness (1 John 2:29; 3:9; 5:18). He is cleansed from his sins and the shackle of bad habits is broken and destroyed. He has been given power which enables him to walk in righteousness. (5) The new birth of the Christian is a birth to love (1 John 4:7). Born as a result of God's love, he is born into love and he is born to love. (6) The Christian who is born of God is free from unforgiving bitterness of the self-centred life in the world and he has victory (1 John 5:4). Life ceases to be continual, daily defeat; now he has victory over sins and pleasures of the flesh and of the world. **God... hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST from the dead**" (1 Peter 1:3).

THE RESERVATION OF OUR PERMANENT HERITAGE

1 Peter 1:4; Acts 20:32; 26:18; Ephesians 1:13,14,18; Hebrews 9:15; 1 Corinthians 9:25; 15:51-54; Revelation 21:27; 1 Peter 5:4; Colossians 1:5; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Corinthians 2:9.

"**To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you**" (1 Peter 1:4). The heavenly inheritance is the ultimate end of our regeneration and the hope of that inheritance is the present joy of the Christian life. The many mansions in our Father's House have been kept from the

beginning and still are kept for the redeemed. They are being guarded by the power of God and no corruption, defilement or destruction can reach them in that heavenly shelter.

That inheritance is (1) incorruptible. Our best possessions on earth perish, even "**The earth and the heavens shall perish**" (Hebrews 1:10-12), but "**the new heavens and the new earth**" and our inheritance therein abide forever. (2) It is undefiled. There is no earthly beauty, no earthly possession, which is free from blemish. The heavenly inheritance is wholly, entirely, eternally pure. Nothing defiling can enter there. (3) It fadeth not away. The lapse time does not affect its beauty. We ourselves will be in perpetual youth and our inheritance will retain its eternal glory.

Our inheritance is already in existence in heaven even while we who one day will possess it are toiling here on earth. The Divine Hand is guarding the inheritance for the heirs. Guarded by His Hand, it is safe. "**Reserved in heaven for you.**" Kept by God and lodged in heaven, our riches cannot perish.

THE REDEEMED, KEPT AS PRESERVED HEIRS

1 Peter 1:5; John 17:11,12,15; Philippians 1:6; 1 Samuel 2:9; Proverbs 2:8; Jude 1,20,24; Romans 11:19-22; 1 Peter 1:13; Job 19:25; Romans 8:31-39.

"**Who are kept by the power of God through faith**" (1 Peter 1:5). The word "kept" in the original (Greek) contains a military metaphor. The same word is used in its literal sense in 2 Corinthians 11:32 - "kept with a garrison." We, the redeemed, the heirs of the incorruptible inheritance, are kept, guarded, garrisoned as it were by reinforcements of Divine strength. We are kept by (and in) the power of God. Think of that power as lying around us like some fortress, whose massive walls kept the feeblest in safety. If we keep within our castle, no harm shall befall us. The enemies may prowl round the base of the fortress reared high on the cliff, but they cannot climb to it, and their fire cannot shake a stone in its walls. If we dwell in God, we dwell in safety, and whatever storms rage without, deep peace abides within.

The power of God works on both sides of the veil - preserving the inheritance for the heirs (1 Peter 1:4), and keeping the heirs for the inheritance (1 Peter 1:5). He will help our weakness and will eventually bring us to possess the heavenly inheritance. Faith is the necessary condition on which God's power works in and on us. That faith is absolute dependence on God in Christ, a calm confidence and expectation of victory. The measure of our faith will be the measure of God's power working on our behalf.

The "**salvation ready to be revealed in the last time**" (1 Peter 1:5) is equivalent to the "inheritance" spoken of in verse 4. It refers to our complete and eternal possession of all the perfection and blessedness possible to glorified humanity. Christ has gone to prepare a place for us, now He is preparing us for that place of glory. Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people.

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