

SERIES: "THE RICHES OF SALVATION"

MESSAGE #3 "THE POSSESSION IN SALVATION"

I Peter 1:4

Two bankers were at a cemetery attending the burial ceremony of a deceased friend. One asked the other, "How much did he leave?" The reply was, "He left it all!"

The interest and emphasis of most of the world's citizenry is focused upon possessing and protecting tangible assets. Jesus said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26) I have never heard of an attempt to answer those two questions.

The Christians to whom Peter writes have suffered the loss of all earthly possessions as a consequence of the Neroian persecution. However, Peter encourages them by reminding them, and us, of the true and timeless treasures kept in reserve for the loved one of the Lord.

He reminds them that they have been "begotten" – born-again, (v.3) into the family whose Father owns all and their inheritance is awaiting. They are heirs of fortunes that are literally out of this world!

He writes that they are heirs "***To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you.***" (v.4) This statement contains a four-fold description of the inheritance of all born into the Father's family. We will concentrate on the Qualities of Our Inheritance, the Question About Our Inheritance and the Qualifications for The Inheritance.

I. THE QUALITIES OF THE INHERITANCE.

"an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven...."

A. The Qualities Considered Negatively.

It seems that Peter cannot find words adequate to describe the inheritance. He contents himself by employing negatives to describe this inheritance – It is so much easier to say what it is not:

- *It is not corruptible* – "an inheritance incorruptible." Jesus warned about laying up treasures where moth and rust corrupt.. (Matt. 6:19) The things of earth are either corrupt or they have the potential of being corrupted. The inheritance that God has for His children are neither corrupt or corruptible. That means, among other things, that this inheritance has never been in a sinful environment.
- *It is not defiled* – What defiles? Sin! This inheritance has never been touched by sinful hands; has never been in an earthly bank; has never been in the pockets of booze brewers, drug runners, Las Vegas gamblers, prostitutes or stingy Christians! It has ever been and will remain in heaven's Trust Fund!
- *It does not fade* – Its value will never vanish; its worth will not wilt, weaken or wither! it will never be devalued, recalled or cancelled. It is forever fadeless.

- *It will never be in jeopardy* – it is “reserved in heaven.” It is not kept in the Federal Reserve Bank on earth but in the Father’s Reserve Bank in heaven! There are no bankruptcies or bailouts, forgeries, foreclosures or fiscal failures there. “Heaven’s bank ain’t busted” and it never will be!

B. The Qualities Considered Positively.

- *It is perfect* – “incorruptible” – No imperfection is to be found in it;
- *It is pure* – “undefiled”;
- *It is permanent* – “fades not away”. Earthly inheritances can fade away – (“My money talks, its voice is strong, loud and clear it says “so long”!);
- *It is protected* – “reserved in heaven” ;
- *It is personal* – “reserved in heaven *for you*”

Certified Public Accountants talk about “balance sheets.” Peter is a spiritual CPA and he sets down in clear columns an asset assessment sheet comparing earthly inheritances with heavenly inheritances. Why anyone would purposefully opt for attempting to “gain the whole world, and lose his own soul” I will never understand this side of eternity. Have you counted the cost if your soul should be lost?

II. THE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INHERITANCE.

Peter has already answered several questions about the inheritance, but there is one question that I have been asked repeatedly and that is, “What is the inheritance?” I will answer the question from both the negative and positive perspectives:

A. What Is The Inheritance – from the negative perspective?

- A Being the inquisitive beings that we are, we want to know what we will inherit. That is
 B understandable, so let us do an analysis based upon scripture not conjecture. What I
 C am going to state right here is this: it is not “things”! Now, that may disappoint some
 D but it nevertheless is true. I will begin by dispelling some myths:
- It is not golden harps;
 - It is not angels wings;
 - It is not “pie in the sky by and by”;
 - It is not an eternal Disneyland!

Disappointed? Well, just wait, there is more of what the inheritance is not:

- *It is not redemption!* We have already been redeemed. “*Christ has redeemed us*” – (Gal. 3:13) That is past tense!
- *It is not eternal life* – we already have that. Remember Nicodemus in John 3 asked Jesus “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus as good as told him “you can’t inherit eternal life – you must be born spiritually to get it.” I John 5:12,13 tells us that we already have eternal life if we have Jesus Christ as Savior: “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

B. What Is The Inheritance – from the positive perspective?

Let's cut to the chase – the inheritance is everything that God has prepared for His children that we have not yet received here on earth!

ILLUST. Recall the story of the Prodigal Son that Jesus told. When the son returned home the older brother who had stayed at home said to his father, “you never gave me a feast.” And what did his father say to him? “Son, you are with me always and *all that I have is yours.*” (Luke 15:31) Does that help answer the question? If not read:

Numbers 18:20 - “The LORD said to Aaron, “You will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any share among them; *I am your share and your inheritance* among the Israelites.” Are you getting the idea? Maybe Psalm 16:5 will help: “The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance.”

I do not know everything that the promised inheritance is, but I know the Father and He is generous and full of surprises! He is too good to be unkind and too wise to make mistakes. He has a record of doing “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20) Whatever the inheritance involves, it will be more than we deserve and more than the devil's children will ever have!

III. THE QUALIFICATION FOR THE INHERITANCE.

Peter says this inheritance is “reserved in heaven for *you.*”

Who qualifies to receive the inheritance? *Children of God are the heirs!* Will we need more than a couple of infallible, inerrant words from the God “that cannot lie” (Titus 1:2) to settle the question? I think not!

Here is proof enough that the children of God are the inheritors: “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” (Romans 8:16-17) Look closely at that statement with me:

A. *The certificate of proof that we are heirs* – “The Spirit himself bears witness.”

The transaction is signed and sealed and the proof is resident within each heir: That proof is “the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” (Eph. 1:14)

B. *The certainty that we possess* – “we are the children of God.”

“Now are we the sons of God.” (I John 3:2) “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:26) Our present relationship in Christ assures us of the inheritance of which Peter speaks.

C. *The consequence that proves we are heirs* – “if children, then heirs; heirs of God.”

Birth determines beneficiary.; relationship determines our heirship! I am a child of God through faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. As God's child I am an heir! That is confirmation enough for me, what about you?

D. *The connection that postures us as heirs – “and joint-heirs with Christ.”*

Think about the words “joint-heirs with Christ.” Jesus Christ is the Son of God in a very unique sense. We are sons of God but not in the sense that Jesus Christ is the one and only Son of God. “All things were created by him and for him” (Col. 1:16) Eph. 3:16 speaks of “the riches of His glory.” Jesus has the key to the Treasure House of glory and we are co-heirs, joint-heirs with Him! If the devil wants to rob us of our inheritance he must first defeat our co-heir, Jesus Christ! And that he cannot do!

Therefore, let us be “Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.” (Col. 1:12)

CONCLUSION

“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.”

We have heard the expression, “Possession is 9/10ths of the law.” When it comes to our spiritual inheritance, possession is 100% of grace! Our inheritance is not something that we are owed, it is not interest on any investment that we have made, it is not a reward for service. It is the free gift of God’s marvelous grace.

Let us never forget from what we have been redeemed; by what - the precious blood of Christ; and to what – “to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for YOU.” I am looking forward to getting all that God has promised, aren’t you?

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