

**Subject: *Christians Have a Future Inheritance***

**Scripture: *1 Peter 1:1-5***

The writer is Peter, an apostle (1:1) and an elder (pastor) in the church (5:1). Peter wasn't always an apostle and pastor. Before his conversion he was a commercial fisherman, and like all of us, a lost sinner in need of a Savior. In the Lord's plan and purpose he was saved and called to be one of Christ's apostles. It was all by God's grace and for His glory.

Peter's calling and ministry included writing two letters that are in Bible (1 and 2 Peter). In this first letter he wrote to believers who had been persecuted and forced to leave their homes. Peter referred to them as "strangers" (aliens) who were "scattered." These believers were suffering for Christ's sake, so Peter is writing to encourage them and remind them about what is most important: their present blessings and their future inheritance. He wanted them to know just how precious the Lord is and He reminded them that the best is yet to come.

### **1. The believer's present blessings (vs. 2)**

A. Believers are elect (chosen) and foreknown by God the Father

B. Believers are sanctified (set apart) by the Holy Spirit

This sanctification or setting apart is a work of the Holy Spirit that begins at conversion and continues throughout a believer's life until he gets to heaven. In sanctification believers are set apart from sin and the world and become a part of the church (called out body of Christ). Sanctification takes place over time in three ways: First, there is positional sanctification. When we first commit our lives to Christ for salvation, we are set apart for His purpose and plan. We belong to Him and live for His glory. Second, there is progressive sanctification as the Holy Spirit makes us more like Christ and sets us apart to serve Christ, know Him better, and bear spiritual fruit. Third, there is perfect sanctification when God sets us apart from this world forever, makes us like Christ, and takes us to be with Christ in heaven. This final stage of sanctification is also known as glorification.

C. Believers are redeemed by the blood of Christ

When we obey the gospel Christ by faith and repentance, the saving and redeeming power of His blood is applied to us. The reference to sprinkling brings to mind the way God sealed the covenant relationship with His people. Peter will come back to this truth again (1:18-19). The Christian life is marked by obedience from the beginning from the beginning to the end of our earthly life. Obedience is mentioned in 1:14, and 1:22. We are saved to obey Christ.

Before we move on to the next verses, I want to remind you that all these blessings are freely given to all believers in Christ. Did you notice as we combed through these verses...there is not one word about what believers have done for God the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, but only what the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have done for believers. We don't work for these blessings or deserve them or earn them. No, it's all about what God has done through His abundant mercy.

## **2. The believer's future inheritance (vs. 3-5)**

Peter begins this section with a great doxology of praise to God for His mercy to believers. The theme of this section is the inheritance that awaits every Christian at the end of his earthly journey. This is the final chapter and the ultimate goal of salvation. I want us to consider three things about our inheritance: the hope of our inheritance; the nature of our inheritance; and the certainty of our inheritance.

### **A. The hope of our inheritance (vs. 3)**

Christians have real hope. Peter calls it a living hope. How does a believer receive this hope? It is based on God's abundant mercy and not anything we do or deserve, and it comes by means of Christ's resurrection from the dead and God's work of new birth. No wonder Peter calls it a "living hope." It comes from our living Lord and God's work of new life in our soul. Peter will have more to say about the new birth in verse 23. Look at it now. By God's mercy we have been born again, and so we have new life. If you are born again you have eternal life in you. You will die physically, but you will never die spiritually. And you have a living Lord who said this:

***John 11:25-26*** <sup>25</sup> *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: <sup>26</sup> And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*

### **B. The nature of our inheritance (vs. 4)**

The future inheritance refers to believer's full and final salvation in heaven, to our inheritance in God's eternal kingdom. Our inheritance is described in three ways.

First, it is incorruptible (does not wear out, corrode, crack, decay, or deteriorate as an earthly inheritance does. This is what Christ meant when He said:

***Matthew 6:19-20*** <sup>19</sup> *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: <sup>20</sup> But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*

Second, it is undefiled (it remains in perfect condition, it is unstained, untarnished). This inheritance never has been or never will be tarnished or defiled by sin.

Third, it is unfading (it will never fade, wither; it can never suffer any change in value, glory, or beauty). Notice that the glories of heaven are described with negative words (incorruptible, undefiled, unfading). The blessings of our future inheritance are so wonderful we can't fully understand what they are; only what they are not. Someone summed it up like this: our inheritance is death-proof, sin-proof, and time-proof.

### C. The certainty of our inheritance (vs. 4-5)

There is a two-fold certainty. The inheritance is preserved for the heirs and the heirs are preserved for the inheritance. Look at it. Our inheritance is reserved (kept) in heaven for us. It is guarded by God, so it is sure to be there when we arrive in heaven.

Believers are kept for their inheritance. There is a divine element of preservation (by the power of God). And there is a human element of preservation (through faith).

We are kept by the power of God through faith. But how can we be sure that our faith will not fail before we get to heaven? This same man named Peter can give us the answer to that question.

*Luke 22:29-32* <sup>29</sup> And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; <sup>30</sup> That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>31</sup> And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: <sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.