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Our Inheritance

Has anyone ever left you an inheritance? If you are in Christ, born again, you are set to get an inheritance.

1 Peter 1:3 – 5

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

First, who Peter is writing to?

1 Peter 1:1 – 2: *To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood.*

Notice the work of the Triune God:

- God the Father chose those believers before time began.
- God the Spirit sanctified those believers—made them holy—once they believed on Jesus.
- God the Son—Jesus Christ—shed his blood so their sins could be forgiven.

The same is true for those of us who are believers today.

- God the Father chose (insert your name) before time began.
- God the Spirit sanctified (insert your name)—made her holy—once she believed on Jesus.
- God the Son, Jesus Christ, shed his blood and rose from the grave so that (insert your name) sins could be forgiven.

Then, as we have been born again because he has given us *new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*, **we have an inheritance!**

1 Peter 5:4: *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

Romans 8:16 – 17: *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

What is that inheritance?

- It is the complete, final salvation, which includes being joint heirs with Christ, reigning with him, and receiving a crown of glory.
- It will never perish: It cannot be destroyed, ruined, or corrupted by decay.
- It will never spoil: It is holy, pure, and uncontaminated by sin.
- It will never fade: Its glory and beauty will never diminish over time.

Where is that inheritance?

- It is kept in heaven for us. It is "reserved" or "guarded" by God in heaven, ensuring it cannot be lost or stolen.

When will we get that inheritance?

- We will receive it at the *coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

This inheritance is not earned but is a gift of grace through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, received by being born again.

And then Peter adds this glorious truth:

1 Peter 1:6 – 9

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

We Will Reign with Jesus

“The New Earth isn’t a blissful realm that we’ll merely visit, as vacationers go to a theme park. Rather it’s a realm we’ll joyfully rule with Jesus, exercising dominion as God’s image-bearers.” (*Heaven* by Randy Alcorn, p. 225)

“This reigning, expanding, culture-enriching purpose of God for mankind on Earth was never revoked or abandoned. It has only been interrupted and twisted by the Fall. But neither Satan nor sin is able to thwart God’s purposes. Christ’s redemptive work will ultimately restore, enhance, and expand God’s original plan.” (*Heaven* by Randy Alcorn, p. 227)

Daniel 7:27: *Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.’*

This prophecy tells us that all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the saints—that’s you and me—who dwell on the New Earth. That is our inheritance.

Here is Randy Alcorn’s understanding of this passage:

“Consider the marvels of this revelation. God’s children who suffered under ungodly earthly kings *will forever take their place as earthly kings.* The great cultural accomplishments of ungodly nations will be handed over to God’s people to manage and (I assume) develop and expand.” (*Heaven* by Randy Alcorn, p. 231)

The day is coming when Christ will hand over to us, his people, the Kingdom.

Luke 12:32: *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”*

On the New Earth, service to God will be a reward not a punishment

Matthew 25:23: *“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”*

Will everyone be given the opportunity to rule on the New Earth?

2 Timothy 4:8: *Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*

Ephesians 6:7 - 8: *Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.*

Who will be chosen for positions of leadership? The Beatitudes give us a sneak peek:

Matthew 5:3, 5, 10

³ *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

⁵ *“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”*

¹⁰ *“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

1 Peter 5:5b – 6: *All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*

Unanswered Questions

What will we remember in Heaven?

There may be a difference in what we remember in the present Heaven and what our memories will retain once we have our resurrected bodies—when Christ returns to establish his Millennial kingdom on this earth.

Isaiah 65:17 - 25

See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

“Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands. They will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the Lord.

Isaiah is prophesying about the Millennial Reign of Christ on this earth. That thousand-year period is a transitional period for believers before the New Earth, the New Jerusalem and the New Heaven.

“During the time Isaiah describes, death will still occur. Lifespans during the Millennium will be much longer. . . Regardless of the time period Isaiah has in mind, he is using hyperbole. . . In the future we’ll not literally forget the past, but our new state of mind—the amazing awareness and insight we gain. . . will put everything into its proper perspective.” (*The Promise of Heaven*, David Jeremiah, p. 197)

In *Heaven and the Afterlife*, Erwin Lutzer wrote, “One minute after we die, our minds will be clearer than ever before. . . Death does not change what we know; our personalities will just go on with the same information we have stored in our minds today.” (p. 223)

What happens to children who die?

Matthew 19:13 – 15: *Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.*

Jesus loved and welcomed children here on earth. There's no way he wouldn't feel the same way in Heaven.

Scripture gives us reason to believe that infants and young children are not lost forever when they die.

Matthew 19:14: *Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

Matthew 18:1 – 5: At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child to him and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

"In all of the Bible references to infants and young children, not once is there so much as a hint that they will ever be eternally lost and separated from God if they die before they have had an opportunity to respond to the gospel." (*Heaven* by Randy Alcorn, p. 206)

Will children lost through miscarriages or abortions be in Heaven?

Psalms 139:13 – 16: For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

This passage from Psalm 139 makes it absolutely clear that unborn babies were and are created by God.

Will there be marriage in Heaven?

Mark 12:18 – 23

Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"

Will there be sexual activity in Heaven?

Jesus said we will be like the angels. We will never die and the eternal population of eternity will be established. So, there will be no new births and therefore, no sexual activity.

Remember:

Deuteronomy 29:29: *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.*

We don't have all these answers here and we won't. However, this we know:

Psalms 16:11: *You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

We will have pleasures in Heaven like nothing we've known on this earth.

1 Corinthians 2:9: *However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"— the things God has prepared for those who love him...*

We will know people in Heaven, so if you've been married, you'll know your mate in Heaven and you will have fellowship!

Will there be animals in Heaven? Will I see my pet again in Heaven?

We know from Genesis that God created animals of all kinds, so they were a part of this earth from the very beginning. Then he created man—people—to rule over the animals he had created—to have dominion over them (Genesis 1:26 – 28).

We believe that God will restore our relationship with the animal world to be what he originally intended:

Hosea 2:18: *In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety.*

Isaiah 11:6 – 9: The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together, and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

"If God loves animals so much that he created them with all their diverse beauty...he saved them from the flood, . . . if he cares for the sparrows and knows when even one of them falls to the ground—if he so delights in animals on this earth, don't you think there will be lots of animals. . . in the New Heaven and the New Earth?" (*The Promise of Heaven*, David Jeremiah, p. 244).

Closing

The important thing is that you know you're going to Heaven because your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Revelation 21:27: *Nothing impure will ever enter it (Heaven), nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Is your name there? Can you testify to the time you recognized you were a sinner, you could not change or save yourself, you knew you needed a savior, and you accepted Jesus as your Savior because he is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus (John 14:6).

Colossians 3:1 – 4: *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*