

An Inheritance

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In the midst of all the trials facing these Christians, Peter praises God because He has given us the hope of an inheritance that will excel the greatest things earth can offer. This "living hope" comes to the Christian "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3). The resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone of the Christians' faith. Peter speaks of our hope of life as "an inheritance" (1 Pet. 1:4).

INCORRUPTIBLE

Corruption is a change from better to worse. You can say that of every earthly inheritance. Heaven will be without such a change. Paul tells us of an incorruptible crown (1 Cor. 9:25). The Lord Himself spoke of a treasure in heaven "where neither moth nor rust doth consume" (Mt. 6:20). Heaven will be like its Master, the incorruptible God (Rom. 1:23). We shall be changed to fit it. As for the dead, they shall be raised incorruptible, and as for the living, they shall be changed (1 Cor. 15:52, 53). Israel's inheritance in their land was invaded and ravaged by many enemies, but no one or no thing can ever invade heaven, or in any wise destroy it.

"UNDEFILED"

Here is something else that refreshes. The inheritance is like the One Who made it possible, our undefiled High Priest (Heb. 7:26). Sin and misery are two great defilements that will not be there. It is unpolluted and fresh. It will never spoil or decay. Israel's inheritance of the land was polluted (Lev. 18:27). They added to the pollution by their own sins. In the mountains of western New Jersey there is a famous pond that can only be reached by hiking trails. When we arrived at Sunfish Pond, the waters were still as clear as ever, but at the bottom lay the discarded cans of thoughtless hikers. Heaven will never be polluted. Its inhabitants will not pollute it either physically or spiritually. Our inheritance was not obtained by corrupt

actions. How many earthly inheritances are defiled because they were obtained by injustice and oppression? How many are foul because they smell of blood? Heaven was not stolen or gained at the expense of another.

"FADETH NOT AWAY"

It always retains its vigor and beauty, ever pleasing the saints who possess it without the least distaste. We live in a passing world, but we have a promise of something better. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). In Milan, Italy, men spent thousands of dollars to restore the fading colors of Leonardo's masterpiece, The Last Supper. Even the greatest of earthly masterpieces fade, but heaven will not. Heaven can't wear out. Look at all the things you have that once were new and fresh. Now they are torn, worn, dirty, frayed, etc. Heaven will not be such.

"RESERVED IN HEAVEN FOR YOU"

Heaven is the inheritance of all of God's children. If we are children, we are heirs (Rom. 8:17). It is kept safely in another realm. Nothing can happen to it. It is utterly secure because God keeps it. The "for you" refers to those who are described as "guarded." God is working both sides of the veil. He is keeping or reserving a place for us, and is keeping us in the midst of all our foes. God cannot fail. The Christians' reward is in heaven, not on earth. It cannot be earthly for "we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is" (1 Jn. 3:2). Why do so many hold out hope for an earthly reward? What is its appeal? In his earlier days Peter was enamored of earthly thrones and power, but now he speaks of heaven and "the crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:4). God lifted his eyes.

Thus God exhorts us, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven..." (Mt. 6:19, 20). "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption... Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:50, 58).