

What is the inheritance? What is the reward? How do you get them?

To begin, let's look closely at the words "inheritance" and "reward" and see what Scripture teaches us—

Colossians 3:23-25

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

The inheritance is a *reward* that is to be given to the Christian who does their "work" heartily for the Lord. (The letters in the New Testament were all written to the church [distinguished only by their location], and the "church" is the body of Christ, **redeemed** individuals.)

The reward [of the inheritance] is a literal future reward—

Revelation 22:12

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

The reward is future (the Book of Revelation is depicting the future "day of the Lord" when Jesus returns), and concerns the just recompense that Jesus will dole out to every man "according to what he has done."

This is exactly the same thing we see in 2 Corinthians 5:10—

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

(See #7 of the 10 Basic Questions for Christians on the page of the same name to learn more about the Judgment Seat of Christ.)

Peter mentions the "inheritance" in his letter to the church—

1 Peter 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you...

The inheritance is in heaven, reserved for us (the Christian).

What exactly is the inheritance, which is a reward?

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

The inheritance, which is a reward based on works, which will be given when Jesus comes back, is the kingdom of God (you need to know exactly what the “kingdom of God” is; see Question #5 of the 10 Basic Questions for Christians on the page of the same name).

But *specifically* the inheritance is not the kingdom itself *per se* (though that is one facet of it, as “inheritance” = “land,” as seen in ‘type’ in the Old Testament, Lev. 20:24), but in particular –

Ephesians 5:5

For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

The inheritance is in the kingdom – specifically *positions* within that kingdom. (This now relies on you knowing what man’s created purpose is, again refer to Question #5 as above.)

Revelation 3:21

“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

Overcoming and producing “works” all earn the Christian a reward. The reward is an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ when He returns. Specifically, positions of rulership in that kingdom.

One thing to know and/or remember when understanding the term “inheritance”: Inheritance is a **family term**. One must be in the family to be eligible to receive an inheritance. From the Old Testament we can clearly see that the inheritance to be given to God’s people concerned a literal land, and positions within a kingdom in that literal land.

The kingdom of heaven, which we will inherit/have an inheritance in is a literal place – a literal land.

Let’s take a look at another facet of “the inheritance” –

Matthew 19:29

"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life. Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25, 18:18)

Mark 10:17

Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

Luke 10:25

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

"Eternal life" is also talked about as being *inherited*. This is NOT a *separate* inheritance, but rather *another way to describe our inheritance, which is a reward*.

Understanding the word "eternal" [as translated in the Scriptures] is the key!

The word that is translated as the adjective "eternal" in the English translations of the New Testament is the Greek word, 'aionios.' The first thing that we need to understand about this word is that it is an adjective form of the Greek noun, 'aion,' translated as "age." In order to understand the Scriptural definition of "eternal" we need to first define the noun form of this word. An example of why this is an effective way to understand an adjective which has been made from a noun can be seen in the words rock (noun) and rocky (adjective). We can understand what rocky means by defining what a rock is. So as we go from the noun form of the word to the adjective form, we can see that the definition of the word does not change; only its grammatical usage does.

An "age" in Scripture is always a period of time *with a beginning and an end*. The word "age" does not contain within itself any indication of *how much* time, just that it is a period of time. For example, this "age" we are currently in is called an "evil" age (singular), because it encompasses mankind in his sinful state—which had a beginning (Gen. 1:2) and will have an end (Rev. 22:12), and will last 6,000 years (for details on that please read "The Word of the Kingdom Bible study, Part X pages 73-81). Scripture also presents the coming kingdom as another *age* that comes after this current age, and it specifically tells us it will last 1,000 years in Rev. 20:1-10 (with a beginning, Rev. 12:10, and an end, 1 Cor. 15:24-26, Rev. 21:1-8).

Therefore, when using the noun "age" as an adjective relative to the noun "life," the correct translation of "*aionios life*" is "**age-lasting life,**" or "**life for the age,**" NOT the misleading English phrase "eternal life."

(I highly suggest you read the Bible study titled "The Word of the Kingdom" on our Bible Studies page. It goes into great detail, using many Scripture verses, to explain this. In particular, Part XI pages 82-89.

Take notice of this next verse –

Luke 18:29-30

And He said to them, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, so who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age [‘aion’] to come, eternal [‘aionios’] life.”

Knowing what the “age to come” is crucial here, for once you know *that* (the “age to come” is the kingdom, See Question #5), you'll see that the overcomer (Luke 18:29-30) gets “eternal”/“aionios” life **FOR THAT AGE**. Most significantly, it is the one who is already redeemed who inherits “aionios” life in that age to come. “Eternal [age-lasting] life” is a reward for the Christian, based on works.

The phrase “eternal life” is not referencing initial salvation; it is a reward, based on works.

INHERITANCE = KINGDOM = REWARD = AGE-LASTING LIFE

Let's make sure to eradicate any confusion over this. Most Christians today believe that the phrase “eternal life” as found in Scripture means *to be with the Lord forever and ever, never to be separated*, and believing in Jesus as your Savior is all it takes to receive that. (There are different facets to this, but there's no need to go over all of that here.) When a person first believes in Jesus as their Savior and is “born again,” **YES** they receive *life* (life just means “togetherness with God,” death means “separation from God”) unto the ages, but that is NOT called “eternal life.” The ancient Greeks and Hebrews did not have a concept of *time unending*—they had a concept of age upon age upon age, or ages unto ages, but never *infinity* or *eternal* as our English/Western minds conceive of it.

Once a person believes that Jesus died for their sins, they are given spiritual life. This is LIFE relative to the spirit that can never, ever be lost or given back. But this is relative to the *ages* AFTER the coming kingdom age, because participation in the kingdom is a *reward*.

After initial salvation a person's soul remains corrupted. This is why we constantly have to deny ourselves, die to our flesh, and work out our salvation [of the soul] with fear and trembling (Philp. 2:12). The soul is *saved (or not)*, Matt. 16:24-27) at the Judgment Seat of Christ. If a person has done what is necessary they will receive life in the kingdom = “eternal”/AGE-LASTING life. If a person has not done what is necessary, they will not receive/inherit LIFE FOR THE KINGDOM AGE. They will experience separation/death FOR THAT AGE.

Let's go over this again.

- The inheritance is the reward; the reward IS the inheritance. (Col. 3:24)
- The inheritance is the kingdom. (1 Cor. 6:9)
- The inheritance is IN the kingdom. (Eph. 5:5)

- The prior two bullet points can be understood as inheriting positions of RULERSHIP within the kingdom. (Gen. 1:26, 28; Heb. 2:5-8)
- The inheritance is reserved in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-4) for those who have already been born again (specifically the kingdom of the heavens).
- The inheritance is CONDITIONAL, so the reward is also CONDITIONAL.
- Receiving the inheritance is future. (Rev. 22:12; 1 Pet. 1:3-9)

Therefore it is fair to say that one can substitute the word “reward” for “inheritance” in every instance in the New Testament and still maintain the accuracy of the verse and context.

For further Scripture references regarding the clear teaching of the Lord that those who are ALREADY REDEEMED will receive a reward (or not) for their work, we can see the following—

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Romans 14:10-12

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

- Christians will stand before the Lord and have to give account of, *and be judged on*, the works they have done in this body. And from the Lord they will receive a just recompense according to these works.

Revelation 22:12

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

- The reward is future.
- The reward is based on works.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

- Again you see that CHRISTIANS will either receive a reward for their work (built on the foundation of Jesus Christ), or they will receive a loss based on their works (built on the foundation of Jesus Christ).
- And this reward, or loss, will be determined at the coming of “the day” (referencing the day of the Lord, the Seventh Day, the end of this age).

More detail concerning this reward is given by the Lord Himself—

Luke 19:11-27

Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. 12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' 15 And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading."

16 "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 20 Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.'

25 (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') 26 For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.'"

- Since this is a parable, we must understand FIRST what parables are and why they were used by the Lord. See Matthew 13:10-13.

Matthew 13:10

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 11 And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. 12 For whoever has, to

him shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.”

- Parables are about understanding the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens; parables are for those with ears to hear.
- In the previous parable, we see a certain nobleman who leaves to get his kingdom and then return. This is Jesus, leaving the first time after His crucifixion, resurrection and 40 day ministry.
- Before the nobleman leaves, he calls his slaves in order to give them something to do business with – *produce something* – for him, which he will collect when he returns. All ten are HIS slaves. This is Jesus entrusting His servants, CHRISTIANS, with certain works to do, which He will expect a return on when He returns.
- The interchange between master and servant is regarding what they have done with what they were given. The rewards are doled out exactly recompense with what the servants produced. This is Jesus and His servants, at the Judgment Seat – when Jesus returns – recounting the works done while the Master/Jesus was away. The rewards that will be doled out to Christians will be exactly recompense with our works.
- The reward in the parable concerns positions of rulership. The rewards that await Christians concern positions of rulership.
- There is a NEGATIVE recompense to the servant who did not produce anything. What he has was taken away. This is what will happen to the Christian who shows up at the Judgment Seat without anything produced.

In another parable concerning the same scenario (Matt. 25:14-30), we see that not only does the servant who shows up with nothing receive a condemnation, he is also removed from the presence of the Lord –

Matthew 25:28-30

28 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' 29 "For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 30 "And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- The servants of the Lord can receive either rewards OR PUNISHMENT at the Judgment Seat of Christ. And the reward concerns positions of rulership with the kingdom of the heavens.
- Because of what we know concerning the kingdom of Christ – that it only lasts 1,000 years – **we know that the rewards and punishments are temporary.**