

Heaven

#4 Ruling, Reigning and Rewards

I. Remember, our salvation and our eternal destiny is determined by our faith (not our works).

Eph. 2:8-9 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Titus 3:5 “he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,”

II. However, there is judgment of works (works: our behavior on earth) that directly impacts our activities in heaven.

A. Consider the dot and line concept (Adapted from *A Life God Rewards*, Bruce Wilkinson)

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The dot represents our whole life on earth (maybe 75 years or so). The line represents our life after death in eternity (forever and ever).

B. The Judgment Seat of Christ – The “Bema” Seat

1. Paul before the Bema in Corinth – Acts 18:12-16
2. Three years later Paul writes the Church in Corinth and refers to this seat of authority in 2 Cor. 5:10. See also 1 Cor. 3:9-15
3. Two years later, Paul again references this judgment in a letter to the Romans (Rom. 14:10-15)
4. “Give account” – show, display your behavior on earth.
5. “Revealed by fire” – be tested and shown to endure
6. “Suffer loss” – lose the reward for the activity (or lack thereof) (2 John 1:8)

“The Bible treats this judgment with great sobriety. It is not meaningless formality, but a monumental event in which things of eternal significance are brought to light and things of eternal consequence are put into effect.”
(website: Eternal Perspective Ministries www.epm.org)

Martin Luther captured this focus when he said, “There are two days on my calendar – ‘Today’ and ‘That Day’”

III. Rewards

Luke 6:23 “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.”

“Reward” (misthos) – could be translated wages (as in Matt 20:8 and 1 Tim. 5:18)

Luke 14:14 “and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

“Repaid/Reward” (apodidomai) – could be translated to repay, to give back in return (as in Luke 10:35 and Mark 9:41)

A. There is a recompense for our behavior. (Matt 16:27)

Rev. 11:18 “The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

B. God doesn’t “owe” us anything, it’s in His generous, gracious nature that offers us these rewards. Look at the parable in Matt. 20:1-16.

Vs. 15 “Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?”

C. God Himself is the rewarder

Heb. 11:6 “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

“Rewarder” – the “misthos-apodidomai” “the rewarder who pays back your wages in return” (*A Life God Rewards*, p. 42)

D. God rewards us for a variety of godly behavior

- For seeking him (Matt. 6:6, Heb. 11:6)
- For being a faithful servant (Matt. 24:45-47, Col. 3:22-24)
- For suffering in His name (Luke 6:22-23)
- For giving generously (Matt. 6:3-4, 1 Tim. 6:18-19)
- For caring for others in need (Mark 9:41)

E. He not only records our actions but God also discerns our motives

1 Cor. 4:5 “Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.”

IV. The reward of ruling and reigning

2 Tim. 2:12 “If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;”

Rev. 3:21 “To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.”

- A. Notice that ruling and reigning has conditions (“If we...”) Rev. 2:26-28
- B. Greater service on earth yields greater responsibility in heaven. Consider two stories Jesus told to illustrate the truth:
 1. Look at the Parable of the Ten Minas in Luke 19:11-27.

Historical context: Archelaus (son of Herod the Great) had visited Rome to get permission to reign as a “client king” over Judea, Samaria and Idumea, a territory of Rome.

“Ten Minas:” about four months wages (\$280 or so)

Notice that in this story the servants all started out with the same resources.

2. Look at the Parable of the Talents in Matt. 25:14-28.

“Talent:” equals about 60 minas. It’s a huge sum of money. It equals 6000 denarii and a denarius was the usual days’ wage for a worker (*Net Bible*, p. 1720)

Notice that in this story the master entrusted his property to his servants “according to their ability.”

Bottom line: faithfulness yields great reward. See Matt. 13:12, Mark 4:27 and Luke 8:18

C. Faithful Christians will rule:

1. Over the earth:

Rev. 20:6 “Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”

2. Over the nations of the earth.

Rev. 2:26-28 “To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery’— just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star.”

3. Over angels

1 Cor. 6:3 “Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!”

V. Caution: we can lose our rewards

1 Cor. 3:15 “If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.”

- A. We can become disqualified for rewards because of our unfaithfulness (Matt. 25:28-29)
- B. We can become disqualified for rewards because of our moral and spiritual compromise (1 Cor. 9:27)
- C. We can become disqualified for rewards because we lead an unproductive life (1 Cor. 3:10-15)

- D. We can become disqualified for rewards because we pursue our reward from men and not God (Matt. 6:5-6 and John 5:44)

VI. So let's get motivated....

1 Cor. 9:24-25 "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

Luke 6:35 "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked."

Gal. 6:9-10 "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

Suggested Reading:

A Life God Rewards, Bruce Wilkinson, Multnomah Publisher

The Law of Rewards, Randy Alcorn, Tyndale House Publishers