

Foundations

The New Has Come! (Part 8)

AS NEW CREATIONS IN CHRIST, WE HAVE A NEW _____—OUR OWN _____!

Daniel 12:2-3; 1 Corinthians 2:9; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:17; Colossians 1:27

Hebrews 11:6 *And without faith it is impossible to please [God], for the one who comes to God must believe that ἔστιν [HE IS, i.e., Yahweh, not simply “he exists”] and a rewarder of those who seek him.*

Psalm 9:10 *And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Yahweh, have not forsaken those who seek you.*

Psalm 62:11-12; Jeremiah 17:10; Matthew 10:41-42; Ephesians 6:8; Revelation 22:12-13 Yahweh promises to reward richly those who trust and obey (seek) him faithfully, and the rewards he promises aren't mere tokens of appreciation. He won't hand out plaques or a bouquet of flowers on that day. Jesus referred to our heavenly rewards as a **great treasure**. (**Matthew 5:11-12, 19; 24:45-47; 6:19-21; Mark 10:37-44** – “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven”, “be called great in the kingdom” Jesus encouraged self-interest when it comes to kingdom glory, but it requires personal humility and sacrificial love.

IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES ABOUT HEAVENLY REWARDS FOR BELIEVERS IN CHRIST

1. Lost or gained, rewards do not affect our _____ in Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

According to **verse 11**, the one foundation on which everyone stands in the kingdom of God is the person and work of Jesus Christ. However, upon that foundation we are to build a life of good works, and much depends on how we build.

2 Corinthians 5:10 *Every believer must give an account to Christ for what they did in their bodies—whether good or bad. Paul does not use the usual word for bad (*kakos* or *pornea*), either of which would signify ethical or moral evil. Instead he uses the word, *phaulos*, meaning good-for-nothing or worthless. The judgment believers will face will determine what was done in our bodies that proved beneficial or worthless in terms of serving and advancing God's kingdom in people's lives.*

Believers will never face condemnation, but as believers, we will be judged by Christ. (cf. **Romans 8:1; John 5:24; Hebrews 10:17**)

OUR NEW _____: SALVATION—PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Salvation Past: Our Justification & Regeneration (Romans 8:1-10)

This is a **gift of grace** through faith in Christ, giving us **full acceptance** before God. We are pronounced forgiven of all sins and given eternal life as a part of God's new creation. We are counted righteous in Christ, fulfilling all the demands of God's holy law, based entirely on the merit of Christ's sinless life. We are permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit, imparted with God's righteousness through a new heart he creates in us fashioned after his own holy heart. We receive the first installment of our adoption as God's children through Christ's redemption and set free from the authority of our former father of lies, the devil.

Salvation Present: Our Sanctification (Romans 8:11-17)

This is a **partnership of grace** with the Holy Spirit. We add to our faith in Christ great effort to put off our old self and put on our new self (the deepest longings of our new heart) in concert with the encouragement and empowerment of God's indwelling Spirit. In an ongoing process of transformation we grow to become more like Christ in our personal righteousness.

Salvation Future: Our Glorification (Romans 8:18-25)

This is the complete **appropriation of grace** in our redemption through Christ to our entire being, including our physical bodies. We receive the final installment of our adoption as God's sons and daughters. We are perfected in Christ. We also stand before Christ in judgment, giving an account of what we did in our bodies in this creation. Based on **his approval**, we will receive or lose reward, which will determine the capacity with which we will serve/reign in Christ's kingdom forever.

We live a storybook life! Because of the certainties anchored in our past, present, and future salvation in Christ (**Romans 8:29-39**), we can know that *God works all things together for good for his children (Romans 8:26-28)!*

The judgment of believers will not deal with what has been forever established on the foundation of Christ—God's acceptance. Our judgment will reveal how we built on that foundation, and here there can be a loss for the believer; we may not receive God's approval. **Our sanctification will affect our glorification.**

2. There will be some big _____. (Matthew 19:30)

(cf. **Matthew 6:1-4**)

3. God's reward system is not based on _____. (Matthew 25:14-30; 20:1-16)

(cf. **Romans 12:3-6; 1 Peter 4:10; Luke 12:48; 1 John 2:28; Matthew 20:1-16; John 21:20-22**)

4. The amount of one's reward will be _____ to his/her productivity. (Luke 19:11-27)

This parable is different from the one in **Matthew 25** in several ways. Here each servant is entrusted with the same amount of money, and each servant is rewarded in direct proportion to what he produced with what was initially entrusted to him.

5. Heavenly rewards will bear an _____ relation to the conduct they recognize. (Matthew 5:10-12)

Specific Rewards Mentioned in Scripture

- Incorruptible Crown - those who get mastery over their old nature **1 Corinthians 9:25**
- Crown of Rejoicing - soul winners **1 Thessalonians 2:19**
- Crown of Life - those enduring trials **James 1:12**
- Crown of Righteousness - those loving Christ's appearing **2 Timothy 4:8**
- Crown of Glory - for those who feed the flock of God **1 Peter 5:4**

Anthony Hoekema - "The relation between our works and our future reward ought to be understood not in a mechanical, but rather in an organic way. When one has studied music and has attained some proficiency in playing a musical instrument, his capacity for enjoying music has been greatly increased. In a similar way, our devotion to Christ and to service in his kingdom increases our capacity for enjoying the blessings of that kingdom, both now and in the life to come."

Leon Morris - "Here and now the man who gives himself wholeheartedly to the service of Christ knows more of the joy of the Lord than the half-hearted. We have no warrant from the New Testament for thinking that it will be otherwise in heaven."

6. Right now really does _____ forever. (Matthew 16:24-27)

Christ's comments about "losing one's life/soul" (*psuche*) are directed toward the disciples, not unbelievers. The loss of one's "life/soul" is the loss of one's opportunity to be a faithful disciple of Jesus and receive eternal reward for that faithful service (v. 27). Though the kingdom itself is inherited by all who believe in and receive Christ as Savior, how one experiences the kingdom differs. Differing levels of reward reflect differing capacities of service and differing degrees of satisfaction in the new creation!

An important aspect of our eternal glory (our right to reign with Christ) in the new creation is _____. **Romans 8:17**

However, in eternity, the book of **Revelation** reveals that all are worshipping and there is no sense of regret or hierarchy. How does this square with the value and significance of what Jesus taught about eternal rewards?

1. The reward is subjectively realized and appreciated. Each will have a special capacity to enjoy God's glory. (Analogy: When people attend a concert or watch a football game, everyone hears the same music or sees the same game, but each one experiences that event with a different level of appreciation depending on their capacity to know the art of music or their understanding of different formations and strategies of offense and defense on the field of play.)

2. Each will have a certain capacity to glorify God through service or glory, but each will fill that capacity to the full and will sense no loss. Each will fully glorify God, but what "full" means to each will be different. In other words, not everyone will serve heaven's glory or reflect heaven's glory to the same degree. Some will be penlights, others will be floodlights.

2 Peter 1:3-11

verses 3-4: Christ's redemptive work is the foundation. **Faith** in his finished work is essential.

verses 5-9: **Make every effort to add** to your faith a conduct of life that follows Christ's example. The phrase, "make every effort to add" comes from the Greek word *epichoregeo* (from *choregos* – a choir leader or one who supplies a choir)

verse 11: **a rich welcome** (into the eternal kingdom) = once again *epichoregeo*

In ancient times, cities held annual celebrations and business leaders took turns sponsoring the party. They would *epichoregeo* the event; that is, they supplied the entertainment (chorus). Each year the business leader would try to outdo what was done the year before. So, the word *epichoregeo* came to signify lavish behavior, "to pull out all the stops," or "to go for broke." Peter uses this cultural norm in his day to say, "If you **richly supply** Christ's virtues in your life as his fully-devoted follower, God will **richly supply** your welcome into heaven." This strongly suggests that some will not receive a rich welcome into heaven, even though they are allowed to enter based on Christ's merit.

John 13 & 14 - Throughout John's gospel, Jesus affirms again and again that the source of all that he knows and all that he does is the Father working in and through him. Then, in his final evening with the disciples before his death, Jesus taught them that they will be able to love as he loves, because they have the same resources that Jesus had as a man to do what he did—the Father's love, the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures and prayer. We have, as new creations in Christ, what it takes to grow in our ability to live, love, and lead like Jesus!

Daniel 12:2-3 - And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. **Those who are wise** will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and **those who lead many to righteousness**, like the stars for ever and ever.

WHAT WILL YOUR WATTAGE BE IN GLORY?

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