

Preparing Our Hearts for the Return of Jesus

12b- Understanding Eternal Rewards Part 2

I. REVIEW

A. Why believers should desire eternal rewards?

- 1. Love:** Rewards are about Jesus expressing how He feels about how we loved Him on earth.
- 2. Partnership:** Rewards are about working in close proximity to Jesus as He rules the earth.
- 3. Righteousness:** Rewards are about the Lord celebrating our choices for righteousness.
- 4. Truth:** Rewards are about the truth concerning our loving obedience being openly manifested.
- 5. Not a secular paradigm:** Rewards are not about gaining status or superiority over others.

B. Principles mentioned in our last session:

- 1. Principle #1:** Eternal rewards are expressions of grace.
- 2. Principle #2:** Eternal rewards are given according to works.
- 3. Principle #3:** All of our works are written in God's books.
 - We must be careful not to reduce Jesus' rewards to something that we can easily imagine.
 - *"Blood-washed believers will be spotless in God's sight, but not all have the same service record. Salvation gets us to heaven, but works determine what we do after we get there."* (C. S. Lovett)
 - We must believe that God is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). Jesus called us to seek to gain treasure and to be rich in heaven (Mt. 5:12; 6:4, 6, 18, 20; 10:41-42; 16:27; 9:21; Mk. 9:41; 10:21; Lk. 6:23, 35; 12:21, 33; 16:11; 18:22; Rev. 2:9; 3:18; 22:12).

⁶He who comes to God must believe...He is a rewarder of those who...seek Him. (Heb. 11:6)

²⁰Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. (Mt. 6:20)

-Paul exhorted us to seek those things which are above—this includes eternal rewards (Col. 3:1-2)

PRINCIPLE #4: THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF ETERNAL REWARDS

- In Revelation 2-3, Jesus highlighted 18 different rewards. I put these 18 promises in 8 categories:
 - receiving heavenly garments (Rev. 3:5, 18),
 - reigning with authority (Rev. 2:26; 3:12, 21), receiving
 - a crown, or jewels, to honor one's obedience (Rev. 2:10, 17),
 - the story of one's loving devotion to Jesus being made known (Rev. 2:17; 3:5),
 - receiving heavenly treasure (Rev. 2:11; 3:18), receiving a
 - spirit of revelation to encounter God with greater capacity (Rev. 2:28; 3:12, 18, 20),
 - dining with Jesus (Rev. 2:7, 17),
 - being vindicated before one's enemies (Rev. 3:9).

*** Eternal rewards in Revelation are diverse, deeply personal, and reflect both relational intimacy with Jesus and recognition of faithful obedience. This suggests that eternal rewards are meant to reflect the believer's unique journey and partnership with Christ, both now and forever.

- In the same way that there is a great variety of gifts, ministries, and activities in the Body of Christ in this age, so there will be great diversity in the age to come
- ⁴There are diversities of gifts... ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities... ¹¹The same Spirit...distributing to each one individually... ¹⁸God has set the members, each one of them, in the body as He pleased. (1 Cor. 12:4-18)***

PRINCIPLE #5: ETERNAL REWARDS ARE GLORIOUS

- Paul gave us a grid for understanding eternal rewards (1 Cor. 2:9). They are spectacular and far more glorious than anyone imagines—exceedingly abundantly beyond what we think (Eph. 3:20).

⁹*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”* ¹⁰*But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.* (1 Cor. 2:9-10)

²⁰*To Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think... (Eph. 3:20)*

¹⁷*...affliction...is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Cor. 4:17)*

- God is the architect of the New Jerusalem, an example of His spectacular creativity. Since He never changes, we can assume that eternal rewards will be spectacular, commensurate with the glory of the New Jerusalem and our resurrected body that is conformed to Jesus’ body (Phil. 3:21). We must not reduce our understanding of His heavenly rewards to something we can easily imagine.

²*His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. (Mt. 17:2)*

⁴³*The righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (Mt. 13:43)*

***Many of us downplay or unconsciously reject the glory God has prepared for us—not because we lack imagination, but because we cannot see it. And since it is unseen, we assume it isn't real and dismiss it as merely symbolic."

PRINCIPLE #6: COMPARING SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE TO GAIN INSIGHT

- We compare Scripture with Scripture to gain deeper insight into the possible implications of the glorious nature of eternal rewards. Jesus offered simple descriptions of each reward, knowing that further understanding would come through exploring parallel passages throughout the Bible.
- The Scripture tells us that the rich man in Hades had a meaningful conversation with Abraham and that he remembered his family members on earth, etc. (Lk. 16:23-28).

²³*And being in torments in Hades, he [the rich man]...saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom...* ²⁵*Abraham said, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things...”*

²⁷*Then he said, “I beg...that you would send him to my father’s house, ²⁸for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.” (Lk. 16:23-28)*

- What conclusion can we arrive to based off of **Luke 16:23-28**

Conscious Awareness After Death: The rich man was fully conscious in Hades—he could think, speak, and feel pain. This suggests that there is awareness and memory in the afterlife.

Ongoing Personal Identity: The rich man still recognized Abraham and remembered his family, indicating that individual identity and relationships persist beyond death.

Emotional Capacity in the Afterlife: He showed concern for his family, demonstrating that emotions like regret, concern, and compassion continue after death.

Existence of Communication in the Afterlife: The rich man held a dialogue with Abraham, implying that some form of communication is possible between the dead—at least in this narrative.

Moral and Spiritual Implications: The account warns of the consequences of earthly choices and the reality of divine justice after death.

- We gain insight into eternal rewards by examining what Scripture reveals about God's leadership over the angelic realm, where angels possess different roles, capacities, and varying degrees of glory reflected even in their garments.

¹*I saw another angel...having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. (Rev. 18:1)*

⁶*...clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. (Rev. 15:6)*

PRINCIPLE #7: GAINING INSIGHT FROM THE NATURAL REALM

- We gain insight into the glorious nature of eternal rewards by observing aspects of our natural life that God declared 'very good' (Gen. 1:31) and that corresponds to our spiritual life (1 Cor. 15:46). In His resurrection, Jesus' body, clothing, speech, ability to eat, and modes of travel all bore resemblance to earthly life. Likewise, in our resurrection, our five senses will function similarly to how they do now—but will be enhanced by the power of the Spirit.

²⁶***God said, "Let Us make man in Our image...let them have dominion over...all the earth..."***

³¹***God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. (Gen. 1:26-31)***

⁴⁶***However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. (1 Cor. 15:46)***

- For example, I believe we will continue to learn, remember, teach, establish new relationships, sing, play musical instruments, etc. In this age there are garments for different occasions, so I assume there will also be many different garments for different occasions in the age to come. We get a glimpse of God's glory in the vastness, beauty, and diversity of creation (Ps. 19:1).

¹***The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. (Ps. 19:1)***

PRINCIPLE #8: REWARDS BEFITTING GOD'S ROYAL FAMILY

- Rewards are glorious, as befits God's royal family.

⁹***But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you...into His marvelous light. (1 Pet. 2:9)***

- The glory of the royal daughter in Psalm 45 symbolically points to the glory of the Bride of Christ.

¹³***The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; her clothing is woven with gold. (Ps. 45:13)***

- The redeemed are as a crown of glory and a royal diadem in God's hand (Isa. 62:3).

³***You shall also be a crown of glory...and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. (Isa. 62:3)***

¹⁷***...the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him*** ¹⁸***...that you may know...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,***

¹⁹***and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe. (Eph. 1:17-19)***

- Solomon's wisdom was manifested in the way he established the royal household (1 Kgs. 10). Jesus, the greater Solomon, will manifest His wisdom, glory, and power in His royal household. Angels are the servants of the Bride—they serve in the royal court, bringing splendor (Heb. 1:14)

⁴***And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built,***
⁵***the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.*** ⁶***Then she said...*** ⁷***"Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard***
⁹***...because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and***

righteousness”...¹³ Now King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, besides what Solomon had given her according to the royal generosity. (1 Kgs. 10:4-13)

***The exclusivity we admire in historical films—those grand British or French dramas—and the awe we feel when reading epics or watching scenes of royalty and splendor all point back to the true source: God's own majesty. These glimpses of beauty and honor originate from Him and reflect how He desires to lavish us with His glory. The problem is that, throughout history, when humans have pursued such splendor, it has often come at the expense of others. But in this case, it will come at the expense of our Abba Father—who gives freely, and whose resources are limitless.

PRINCIPLE #9: REWARDS ARE ETERNAL AND NEVER DIMINISH

- Heavenly rewards are eternal and imperishable—they will never diminish (Dan. 12:3; Mt. 6:20; Lk. 12:33; 1 Cor. 9:5; 2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Pet. 5:4).

³³***Provide yourselves...treasure in the heavens that does not fail. (Lk. 12:33)***

- Our resurrected bodies will shine like stars forever. Their brightness will never diminish.

²***And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life...³Those who are wise shall shine...like the stars forever and ever. (Dan. 12:2-3)***

- The crowns of the saints are described as imperishable—not fading away (1 Cor. 9:25; 1 Pet. 5:4).

²⁵***...to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. (1 Cor. 9:25)***

- Treasure in heaven can never be destroyed or stolen (Mt. 6:20).

²⁰***Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (Mt. 6:20)***

***Heavenly rewards are eternal, imperishable, and untouched by time—they will never fade, rust, or be stolen. Scripture promises that the faithful will shine like stars forever, crowned with glory that will never diminish (Dan. 12:3; 1 Pet. 5:4). Unlike earthly treasures, these rewards are secured by God Himself and reflect His everlasting generosity and justice.