



The Timing and Nature of the Christian's Reward, Part 2

Selected Scriptures

“But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way. For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.”

—Hebrews 6:9–10

I. The Timing of the Reward (review)

1. Christians will receive their rewards at a specific event.

2. Christians will receive their rewards together with the church.

3. Christians will receive their rewards in their glorified bodies.

4. Christians will receive their rewards before the reign of Christ.

5. Christians will receive their rewards imminently.

II. The Nature of the Reward

A. Christians will hear *the commendation of Christ*.

- The reward that every believer longs to receive are the words from his Lord, “Well done.”

“Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God”

—1 Corinthians 4:5

- “Praise” – the expression of “admiration or approval,” “honor or recognition”; it will be expressed individually, to “each man.”

“The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.’ His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’ His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’” —**Matthew 25:20–23**



**“Well
done.”**



**“Well
done.”**

B. Christians will taste *the fruit of their labors*.

- God has infused creation with the logic of *cause → effect, sowing → reaping, labor → reward*.

“God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.” —**Genesis 1:31–2:3**

“Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

—2 Corinthians 9:6

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

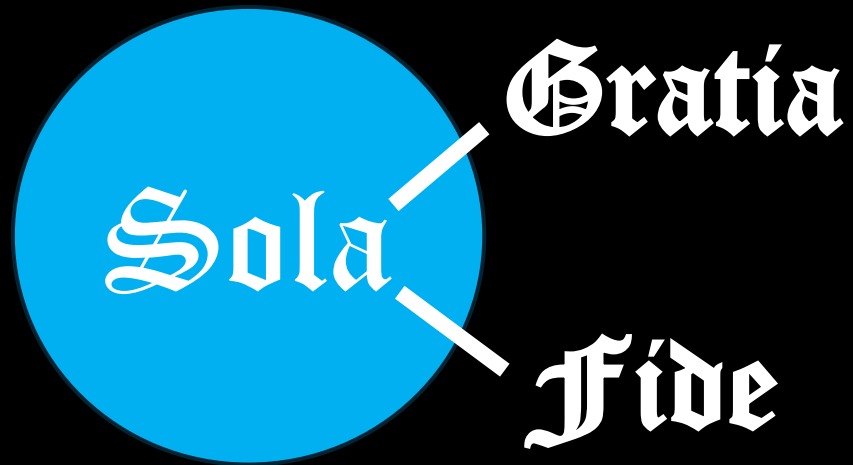
—Galatians 6:7

“The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.”

—2 Timothy 2:6



- The striking exception to this rule is *salvation*.



“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” —**Ephesians 2:8–9**

- But what about the works that flow from this salvation in Christ—works done *by faith* and *for His pleasure*?

“For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.” —**Hebrews 6:10**

“One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed.” —**Proverbs 19:17**

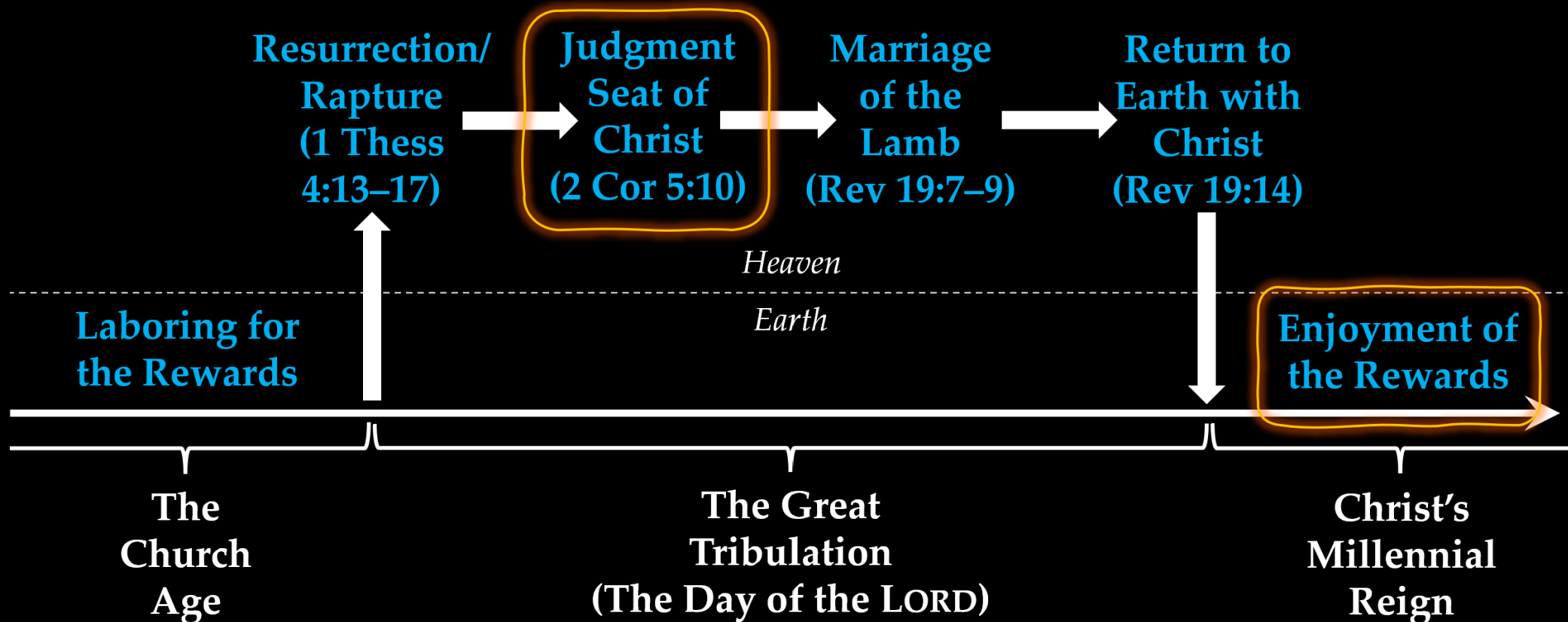
“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.” —**1 Corinthians 15:58**

“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.” —**Galatians 6:9**

“For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.” —**1 Thessalonians 2:19–20**

C. Christians will obtain *millennial kingdom privileges*.

- Based on the promises given to OT saints and to church-age believers, there is good reason to believe that many of the rewards relate to *co-regency in Christ's future kingdom*.



“But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come. . . . Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.”

—**Daniel 7:18, 27**

“Behold, a king will reign righteously and princes will rule justly.”

—**Isaiah 32:1**

“‘I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing,’ declares the LORD.”

—**Jeremiah 23:4**

“Then Peter said to Him, ‘Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.” —**Matthew 19:27–29**

“And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.’”
—**Revelation 5:9–10**

“Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. . . . They will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.” —**Revelation 20:4, 6**

“Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?” —**1 Corinthians 6:3**

“If we endure, we will also reign with Him.” —**2 Timothy 2:12a**

- From these and other texts, it appears that these privileges (“rewards”) will include spiritual, judicial, and administrative responsibilities in Christ’s millennial kingdom.

“The fact that Christ promised His disciples that they would rule over the tribes of Israel and promised to faithful members of the body of Christ a similar position of honor of reigning with Him, constitutes a confirmation of the premillennial concept that there will be an earthly kingdom between His second advent and the inauguration of the eternal state. These predictions imply a mediatorial kingdom in which Christ is the ruler and in which His followers will share responsibility.”

—John Walvoord, *The Church in Prophecy*, 155



D. Christians will enjoy *the treasures of heaven*.

- The Bible does not provide many details about the nature of these rewards, but it does guarantee them to the faithful.

“But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret **will reward you.** . . . But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret **will reward you.**” —**Matthew 6:3–4, 6**

“But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

—Matthew 6:17–21

“And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.” —Matthew 10:42

“Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day and leap *for joy*, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.” —**Luke 6:22–23**

“With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.” —**Ephesians 6:7–8**

“Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.” —**1 Timothy 6:18–19**

E. What about *crowns of honor*?

- Some theologians contend that the Bible's references to the "crowns" that Christians will receive refer to symbolic expressions of special honors given for extraordinary obedience and service.
- Four "crowns" are identified:
 1. The crown of *righteousness* (see 2 Tim 4:7–8).
 2. The crown of *glory* (see 1 Pet 5:1–4).
 3. The crown of *life* (see James 1:12; Rev 2:10).
 4. The crown of *joy* (see Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19–20).



- Ultimately, there are not enough details given to suggest these “crowns” refer to particular rewards given to Christians for exceptional obedience or service.
- It is best to see them as symbolic descriptions of the benefits of salvation all Christians will receive.

F. What about the *loss of reward*?

“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. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, **he will suffer loss** but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” —**1 Corinthians 3:13–15**

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise **you have no reward** with your Father who is in heaven.” —**Matthew 6:1**

A future topic!

II. THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN'S REWARD

Christians will hear the commendation of Christ.

Christians will taste the fruit of their labors.

Christians will obtain millennial kingdom privileges.

Christians will enjoy the treasures of heaven.

Implications

- 1) **Be encouraged:** “God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints” (Heb 6:10).
- 2) **Be motivated:** “He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully” (2 Cor 9:6).
- 3) **Be wise:** “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” (1 Cor 3:13).



“Believers do not face condemnation at Christ’s tribunal (see Rom 5:16, 18; 8:1) but rather evaluation with the view to the Master’s commendation given or withheld (see 1 Cor 3:10–15; 4:5). . . . The teaching about the judgment seat before which all believers must come reminds us that we have been saved, not for a life of aimlessness or indifference, but to live as to the Lord.”

—Barnett, *Second Corinthians*, 274