

## A Brief Outline of Things to Come

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### Chapter Seven -

#### REWARDS - Norman H. Camp

**"Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour"** (1 Corinthians 3:8).

**"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be"** (Revelation 22:12).

REWARDS ARE GIVEN for faithful service. Parents reward their children, teachers reward their scholars, and masters reward their servants to encourage and stimulate them in their labors and to express appreciation of the work done. Sometimes rewards are promised in advance, and sometimes they are given as a surprise; but they are based upon the services rendered or the sacrifices made. The character of a reward generally depends upon the generosity and the ability of the one who bestows it.

Rewards differ from gifts. A gift is an expression of love and can never be claimed. A reward is bestowed because of labor performed and can always be claimed, if promised.

Salvation is a gift; it can never be merited. It is bestowed by grace upon those who confess themselves to be unworthy sinners and receive the Son of GOD as their personal Saviour. Salvation is not a reward for good works, as some seem to think. **"For by grace [unmerited favor] are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"** (Ephesians 2:8). But rewards are promised by GOD to those who are saved by grace, and they are given according to the Christians' works after they are saved. We are not saved by good works, but we are saved unto good works, **"which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"** (Ephesians 2:10).

Good works are an evidence of saving faith and the fruit of saving faith, just as the fruit of an apple tree is evidence that there is life in the tree. The apples do not produce the life of the tree, but the life of the tree produces the apples.

Rewards are not gifts. A gift may be given or bestowed, but a reward must be merited in some way. It may be a prophet's reward for receiving a prophet, or a righteous man's reward for receiving a righteous man, or a reward for giving a cup of cold water to some little one, or a great reward for suffering persecution for JESUS' sake, or a full reward for walking in the truth to the end. (See Matthew 5:12; 10:41, 42; II John 8).

Rewards are similar to wages and, therefore, are received as a result of the work done or the

deeds performed. The difference between rewards and wages is that wages are the direct result of the deeds done and are usually received in this life, while rewards are generally bestowed in the future in recognition of the work done.

For example, we read that "**the wages of sin is death**" (Romans 6:23), and "**he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption**" (Galatians 6:8). These are some of the wages received in this life. On the other hand, the Christian is told to do all things heartily as unto the Lord, "**Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance**" (Colossians 3:24).

In I Peter 1:4 we are told that this inheritance is "**incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God.**"

There are rewards for evil works as well as for good works. Everyone reaps what he sows.

This is clearly revealed in experience and is taught in the Bible. It is written of the wicked: "**Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him**" (Isaiah 3:11). "**As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head**" (Obadiah 15). "**Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap**" (Galatians 6:7). The ungodly "**shall receive the reward of unrighteousness**" (II Peter 2:13). This is a fixed rule in both the natural and the spiritual life.

On the other hand, the righteous receive their reward. As it is written: "**Verily there is a reward for the righteous**" (Psalm 58:11). "**To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward**" (Proverbs 11:18). The reward of "**humility and the fear of the Lord [is] riches, and honour, and life**" (Proverbs 22:4). Of the LORD JESUS CHRIST it is written: "**Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows**" (Hebrews 1:9). This was His reward.

Some rewards are received during this life, and some will be received in the life to come. JESUS spoke of those who give their alms to be seen of men and who pray long prayers in public to be heard of men. Then He added, "**Verily I say unto you, They have their reward**" (Matthew 6:2).

The reward which they receive now is the praise of men. There are those who love the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:43) and, therefore, will not confess JESUS CHRIST as Saviour and Lord. On the other hand, those who give and pray in secret are seen by GOD and will later be rewarded openly by Him. (Read Matthew 6:1-21.)

Although some rewards are received in this life, most of them are bestowed by GOD in the future. This is necessarily so, because the entire life and the whole work performed must be taken into account in the bestowal of the reward. There are many factors which enter into the nature of the reward. Many things must be considered.

The motives for doing the work, as well as the work done, must be taken into account. GOD alone is able to weigh all of the factors involved and render a fair decision. This decision must be fair not only from GOD's but also from man's viewpoint; therefore, the one making the decision must be both GOD and man. There is only One who can meet this requirement, and He is

CHRIST JESUS - the God-Man - GOD manifested in the flesh. He is the One who will judge the world and will reward every man according to his works (Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 23; Matthew 16:27). This is promised in the Old Testament and confirmed in the New Testament.

In Isaiah 40:10 we read, "**Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.**" Since the "JEHOVAH" of the Old Testament is the "JESUS" of the New Testament, it was perfectly proper for JESUS to say: "**For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works**" (Matthew 16:27). "**Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be**" (Revelation 22:12). At that time "**every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour**" (I Corinthians 3:8).

These rewards are for GOD's born-again people who are faithful in service, steadfast in faith, and victorious in life over the world, the flesh, and the Devil. There are some Christians who will not receive a reward, because their works will not stand the acid test. Their works will be like wood, hay, and stubble, to be burned up; and these Christians will be saved "**so as by fire**" (I Corinthians 3:10-15).

There are other Christians who will lose part of their reward because they have not been watchful (II John 8). But there are those Christians who will receive a full reward, consisting of one or more crowns, and will have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of CHRIST (II Peter 1:10, 11).

### **THE CHRISTIAN'S CROWNS**

There are five crowns mentioned in Scripture which are promised to GOD's children upon certain conditions. They may be won or they may be lost (Revelation 3:11). They are spoken of as prizes (1 Corinthians 9:24; Philippians 3:13, 14). They are described as crowns of gold (Revelation 4:4).

1. "The Incorruptible Crown" (I Corinthians 9:25). This crown is given to those who are temperate in all things and who are not indulging the appetites of the body, in order that they may faithfully preach the Gospel to all men, whether Jew or Gentile, whereby at least some shall be saved (vv. 16-27).

2. "The Crown of Rejoicing" (I Thessalonians 2:19). This crown is given to those who win souls for CHRIST, whether by personal work, by preaching the Gospel, or by distributing the Gospel in print. Solomon declared, "**He that winneth souls is wise**" (Proverbs 11:30), and Daniel said that "**they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever**" (Daniel 12:3). Every soul saved through the prayers and efforts of the servant of CHRIST will be a part of his crown of rejoicing when he stands before the Judgment Seat of CHRIST and is rewarded according to his labors.

3. "The Crown of Glory" (I Peter 5:4). This is the crown which is given to faithful pastors who have willingly cared for the flock of GOD as overseers - not as lords and not for the sake of financial gain, but as a shepherd who cares for us sheep. Such pastors practice what they preach

and are examples to others. They feed the flock with the Word of GOD - "**rightly dividing the word of truth**," so that they will grow in grace and become fruitful in their lives and labors. They warn the flock against false teachers and the irrelevant errors of the day, encouraging them to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3, 4). All such pastors and teachers will receive a crown of glory which will not tarnish or fade away.

4. The Crown of Righteousness" (II Timothy 4:8). This crown is given to all those who love the appearing of CHRIST. They not only are trusting CHRIST for salvation and loving Him because He loved them, but they are also looking forward to the personal coming of CHRIST in glory and power, when they will be caught up with other Christians in the clouds to meet Him in the air (I Thessalonians 4:14 7). Because of this blessed hope, they endure afflictions, fight the good fight of faith, and speak the truth in love.

They are loyal and faithful to CHRIST at all times, for they now not when He may appear for His own. All such are to receive a special crown.

5. The Crown of Life" (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10). This crown is given to all who endure trials and temptations even unto death for JESUS' sake. "**They loved not their lives unto the death**" (Revelation 12:11). Many of those who receive this crown, such as Stephen, James, John, Peter, Paul, Huss, Tyndale, Latimer, Cranmer, and many others, the martyrs for the sake of CHRIST (Read Foxe's Book of Martyrs.)

The crown of life is to be distinguished from the gift of life, which is mentioned in John 4:10; John 5:24; Romans 6:23; and Ephesians 2:8. Eternal life is a free gift from GOD to all who believe on His Son. "**He that hath the Son hath life**" (I John 5:11, 12). But those who receive eternal life through faith in CHRIST may also receive the crown of life in addition, if so be that they suffer for Him even unto death.

Those of recent years who will receive the crown of life are the Christians in China who were massacred for their faith during the Boxer's uprising in 1900 and the Armenian Christians who were massacred by the Turks during World War 1. During the coming Great Tribulation many will receive the crown of life because they will be slain for the Word of GOD and for the testimony which they hold (Revelation 6:9-11).

## OTHER REWARDS

In addition to these crowns there are certain rewards promised to overcoming Christians, as is recorded in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation. Some will be given a white stone with a new name written thereon; some will be given authority over the nations and will rule them with a rod of iron; others will be arrayed in white raiment; and still others will be granted the right to sit with CHRIST on His throne. All of these rewards will far surpass anything that man can imagine.

Christians are admonished by the apostle John, who had a glimpse of the coming glory and kingdom of GOD, "**Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward**" (II John 8); and also by the risen CHRIST, "**Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown**" (Revelation 3:11).

This is the divine order if a Christian is to receive a reward:

- (1) Make sure of your own personal salvation (II Corinthians 13:5; II Peter 1:10).
- (2) "**Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you**" (Philippians 2:12, 13; II Peter 1:5-8). (3) Reach forward to the things which are before (it is better farther on) and "**press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus**" (Philippians 3:13,14; I Corinthians 9:24).
- (4) Use the talents which GOD has given you, whether they be many or few, and do not be weary in well-doing (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-26; Galatians 6:9).

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