

Chapter Six

ETERNAL LIFE IS A GIFT, REWARDS ARE EARNED

Some foundational truths will be established before we discuss the great rewards which are given in the next chapter.

WHY DOES GOD OFFER REWARDS?

One may ask, “Why would God offer rewards after all that he has already done for the child of God?”

God is a giver. There are two types of people in the world, takers and givers. God is a giver and his nature is most fulfilled when he gives. He gives all mankind life, air, strength, and ability

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to move and enjoy living. He has given each of his children eternal life. He has designed a life that is good, acceptable, and perfect for each of his children if they will only submit to his leading. **His nature is to give.**

God is a sharer. Every parent will confess that the greatest fulfillment and

happiness they receive is when they share their love and substance with their loved ones (especially with their children). We received that nature from our Heavenly Father, who also receives his greatest gratification in sharing.

It will help one to understand the doctrine of salvation and rewards when he sees that there are **three great differences between** the two doctrines.

First, salvation is a free gift (Romans 6:23), while a reward must be earned (I Corinthians 3:8).

Second, a child of God has eternal life now (I John 5:11-13), while rewards must be earned and will be passed out at the Judgment Seat of Christ (I Corinthians 3:14).

Third, the personal salvation of the sinner is always referred to in the past tense, “SAVED” (Romans 10:13), while the giving of rewards is in the future at His coming (Revelation 22:12).

In order for a person to have a clear understanding of the difference between eternal life and rewards, please consider the following.

ETERNAL LIFE

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In order for the Bible to be perfect and eternal, it must have only one author, God, The Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the only author of the sixty-six inspired library of books, we call the Holy Bible. He used about forty different authors to pen the Bible, which he hovered over and directed. Sometimes He literally dictated the very words they penned.

THE LAW OF THE FIRST MENTION

When the Holy Spirit introduced a new term or practice in His Holy Word, he stopped and defined the term or practice. He

was always consistent with that definition while using that term or practice in other books of the Bible.

The holy, eternal God made Adam out of the elements of the earth. Adam was created and **God breathed life into him.**

A lost sinner is dead in trespasses and sin. Just as God quickened Adam, the Bible teaches that our eternal God quickens the dead sinner and **gives** him the gift of eternal life when the sinner responds to the Holy Spirit and receives Jesus as his Saviour. He is born again in the spirit and has the same type of life that our eternal God, his Father, has.

REWARDS

The gift of God is eternal life. The Holy Spirit could not make that truth any clearer. He that receives Jesus Christ **hath eternal life.** The sinner is born of holy seed (divine nature) in the inward, spiritual part of man. That part of man is the holy seed of God and cannot sin. (I John 3:9)

Rewards have nothing to do with eternal life. The sinner received eternal

life when he was born of God in receiving Jesus into his life and heart.

GOD OFFERS TO PAY HIS CHILDREN FOR WORKING FOR HIM

In addition to the gift of God, which makes a person a child of God with eternal life, God pays a saved person to work for Him. Many may say “I’ve never heard of such a thing.” What many in the religious world have heard is if a child of God doesn’t live right and work for God then he is in danger of going to hell.

That doctrinal position makes salvation contingent on what the one saved does and not on what God promises to do for those who receive his Son as their Saviour. Any honest person would call what one does in order to stay saved, **GOOD WORKS.**

He made that plain – **you are saved by grace.** Then, as the Holy Spirit often does, He attempts to make this absolutely clear, that salvation of a lost sinner from hell is **by grace and grace alone.** He adds, “**Not of works**”.

They say this in spite of the plain statement that the sinner is saved by God’s grace. The

Biblical definition of grace states that grace stops being grace when works are attempted to be added to God's grace. Paul emphasizes this truth in Romans 11:6 which states, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

This verse states that salvation of the sinner is not a combination of grace and works.

The plain statement of the Holy Spirit, not what a preacher or a renowned theologian says, is "By grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: **not of works...**" Ephesians 2:8-9

He made that plain – **you are saved by grace**. Then, as the Holy Spirit often does, He attempts to make absolutely clear that salvation of a lost sinner from hell is **by grace and grace alone**. He adds, "**Not of works.**" One is not saved by works of any kind.

The Holy Spirit gives the reason that one is not saved by any of his "good works" by adding, "...**lest any man should boast.**"

Jesus died as the sinner's substitute and endured the condemnation of God's

wrath on sin by suffering man's pain of hell. God offers salvation as a free gift to any person, by his grace and goodness, providing the sinner acknowledges and turns from his sin to accept Christ as his personal Saviour by faith. The sinner pleads to God, **"...accept the death of Jesus as full payment for my sins and save me a bankrupt, worthless sinner."**

The Holy Spirit is saying, **"After Jesus did that for you – after he suffered your judgment and paid for your sins; you are not going to take away any of his glory by strutting around heaven boasting about your good works."** The person would be saying **"I made it to heaven when a lot of other weaker, less devoted Christians didn't make it."**

No, Sir, all of us sinners when we get to heaven will sing the same sweet story, **"Saved by His sweet grace."**

SAVED UNTO GOOD WORKS

So, if we are not saved by works, then where does works come in? One is saved by grace **"...unto good works** which God has foreordained that we should walk in them."
(Ephesians 2:10)

When a person is truly saved, God has good works for him to do to show that there has been a change in his life.

When one is saved, God has a good, acceptable, and perfect plan all outlined for him to follow.

If he humbles himself and follows God's will

and pattern for his life then he will receive a "full reward." "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." II John 1:8

When a person is truly saved, God has good works for him to do to show that there has been a change in his life.

The rewards will be displayed in the future position one has in THE COMING MILLENNIAL REIGN.

SOME WHO FAILED THE TEST

Esau, as the first born son of Jacob, was offered a full reward and miserably failed the test by selling his birthright to his younger brother. It is doubtful if Esau was ever saved.

Solomon who may have been one of the **greatest young preachers** ever to lead God's people, although warned on several occasions; blew his life, destroyed his family and **lost his future place of greatness.**

Rueben, the first born son of Israel, also disqualified himself and lost his full reward and probably all rewards.

Solomon, who may have been one of the **greatest young preachers** ever to lead God's people, although warned on several occasions; blew his life, destroyed his family, and **lost his future place of greatness.**

There are more who could be given as examples of those who were offered a "full reward," but were not as wise as Moses who choose to suffer afflictions with God's people rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. **The name of Moses** shines as brightly as any name in the Old Testament. Esau, Ruben, and Solomon could have shined equally bright, but they got involved in their environment and forfeited their eternal glory. God had a good, acceptable life plan for each of them, but **they refused it and will suffer because of their self centered lives.**

What one does in **this dispensation,** will dictate WHERE he will live in the coming MILLENNIAL DISPENSATION.

God offers each child a full reward to be enjoyed (especially in the Millennium), if he lives as a faithful steward over what God

places in his hands. This is taught vividly in the story of **the three servants** in *Matthew 25:14-30*.

He gave each servant according to that servant's ability. All three servants called him **Lord**.

The servant who received five talents **worked faithfully** and gained another five talents.

His Lord, Jesus, rewarded him by saying, "Well done thou good and faithful servant. **Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things;** enter into the joy of the Lord."

The servant who received two talents **worked faithfully** and gained another two talents.

His Lord, Jesus, rewarded him for his faithful service by saying, "**Well done thou good and faithful servant**, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter into the joy of the Lord."

The third servant, who received only one talent, called the man "**Lord**" in verse twenty-four. He continues speaking in verse twenty-five that he had no faith (was afraid) and had disobeyed **his Lord's** orders. He hid **his Lord's** money in the earth, which is a

picture of the world, and returned the one talent to **His Lord**.

THE ABSOLUTE WRATH OF HIS LORD WAS UNLEASHED UPON HIM

Verse twenty-six confirms that this man **was a servant (child of God)**. HIS LORD answered and said unto him, “Thou wicked and slothful [lazy] servant.” After his Lord had severely rebuked him, he stripped him of his possession and gave it to the other servant who had worked faithfully.

The Lord then reaffirmed the principle that has been stated previously in other verses. That principle is, God will take from those who do not work and give it to his faithful workers (verse twenty-nine).

The Lord then banishes the unfaithful and lazy servant from his fellowship for 1000 years.

Light represents fellowship, while darkness represents separation. In I John 1:7, it gives the definition of light as fellowship when it states, “...if we walk in **the light**, as he is in

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the light, we have **fellowship** one with another....”

Ephesians 5:11, admonishes the believer to have no **fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness.

This ungodly servant was not sent to hell, but the people he hindered from being saved **are in hell**. The Lord used the word hell in verse forty-one and forty-six, and if he had sent this servant to hell he would have used the word, hell, in verse thirty.

This wicked servant will suffer for 1000 years with the stinging words of his Lord ringing in his ears as he works with the sinners and hypocrites in some place of labor. He will be aware of those that stumbled over his rebellious and self-center life as they suffer in the eternal fires of hell. His sentence is only 1000 years,

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which will include witnessing the casting of the lost into the Lake of Fire. It is only after God makes a new Heaven and a new earth that God will graciously **wipe the tears from his unfaithful and wicked children’s eyes**. It is recorded in Revelation 21:4,

“...God shall wipe away the tears from their eyes...neither shall there be any more pain; FOR THE FORMER THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY.”

With these principles in mind, please consider the tremendous positions of honor that God offers his children who triumph by his grace.

Keep this question in mind as you review the rewards God offers to his children.

“Where will I live across the river?”

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