

Basic Discipleship

A Course On New Testament Discipleship

Topic #8

V. The Purpose of Our Eternal Rewards

We have learned thus far that the Bible is *clear* that someday at “*the judgment seat of Christ*” (2 Corinthians 5:10), that if we know the Lord, we will give an account of our *lives* in Heaven (Romans 14:12 cf. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15) where we will be rewarded. We have seen that rewards are something the believer should seek, for the simple reason we are commanded to do so (Matthew 6:19-21). And as with all the commands of Scripture, we are to obey because of God’s unconditional *love* for us (1 John 4:9-10; 5:4). We have stressed throughout this entire handout that whenever we discuss eternal rewards, we must emphasize that our salvation is never called a ‘*reward*’ in Scripture. Our salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone in *Jesus* alone such that it can never be merited in *part* or in whole, by our any human deeds (Romans 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7). Yet, once God has saved us by His “*grace*” we are commanded to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Peter 3:18). In order to “*grow in grace*” we *must* make choices to renew our minds with Scripture (Romans 12:1-2) and to allow the Holy Spirit who indwells us to *fill* us (Ephesians 5:18). As we do this, only then are we able to carry out the “*good works which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them*” (Eph. 2:10). The wonder of it all is that at the judgment of the *saved*, Jesus will reward us for those works *He* has done through us. So what will be the purpose of these rewards that Christ will someday give to faithful believers? That will be the focus of this final section.

A. Believers will use their rewards to glorify God.

1. While there is much silence—on all the implications—of our future rewards, we do know — that eternal rewards glorify God — as will be shown by *our* heavenly worship & by the glory Jesus receives from His Bride the Church.
2. The events of Revelation chapter four take place after the Church is “*caught up*” or raptured—and what is revealed in that chapter are the “*twenty-four elders*” who are seen “*sitting*” on “*thrones*” — reigning — just as *Jesus* promised.

4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

3. The Church is being represented by these “*elders*” who are found worshipping at God’s throne — having gone through an “*open door*” via the *Rapture* (Rev. 4:1).

1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”

4. Earlier in chapters 2 & 3—the Apostle John had focused our attention on Christ speaking to the “*seven churches*” & really all churches on *earth*.

5. The scene here—shifts from the Church on earth—to the Church in heaven, with the Church praising God at His throne—which is why the true church is not mentioned or seen again—until she comes back with Jesus (19:4-14).
6. In Jesus' messages to the seven churches, He has promised not to pour His wrath out upon His Church (Rev. 3:10) — **“for God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ”** (1 Thessalonians 5:9).
7. This does not mean—that we cannot encounter God in His discipline (He. 12:5-6), or that we might not face **“the wrath of man”** (Jam. 1:20; Ps. 76:10; Jn. 15:18-20), but the promise of Scripture is that we will never face **“the wrath”** of God.
8. For instance, just before God poured out His cataclysmic **“wrath”** of the Flood, God took out Noah and his family & placed them safely in the ark (Genesis 7).

15 So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life. 16 Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the Lord closed it behind him (Genesis 7:15–16).

9. And just before God rained fire and brimstone from Heaven destroying both Sodom & Gomorrah, God delivered Lot & his two daughters (Genesis 19).
10. And before God destroyed Jericho, He delivered Rahab & her family (Josh. 7).
11. The testimony of Scripture is that God has a way of removing His people before He pours out his **“wrath”** & so He opens heaven's **“door”** to let His Church in.
12. And so, knowing that God has rescued & brought the Church through heaven's **“open door”** to save them from His tribulational wrath, that is just a taste of His coming eternal wrath, these **“elders”** are bowed down in worship before God.

10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne (Rev. 4:10).

13. Certainly, these **“elders”** are not exalting themselves—but like all believers in heaven—they seek to glorify the One—who gifted them with eternal life.
14. Sadly, there are some Christian expositors who view Revelation chapters 4-18, not as futuristic — but as historical — having all taken place by 70 AD.
15. They are forced to allegorize & spiritualize their interpretation, with the exception of the Second Coming in chapter 19 — to explain the fulfillment of these events.
16. When they come to this scene — they will tell you that these **“elders”** are not humans worshipping Jesus with their rewards, but these persons are angels.

17. To interpret these “**twenty-four elders**” as angels is impossible for _____ reasons.
18. First, you will never find angels in the Bible sitting on **thrones** or wearing **crowns**, because only God’s redeemed people — are promised to _____ with Jesus Christ.
19. Angels in the Bible—are never described as reigning with Jesus—but only as serving the redeemed — believers in the Lord — and so we _____:

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14)?

20. These “**twenty-four elders**” are representative of the redeemed Church purchased by Christ, which is why they are wearing “**white garments**” & “**crowns**” showing that they are righteous by His grace — while being rewarded for their _____.
21. These men “**cast their crowns**” to express their worship for God’s _____ salvation:

9 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created” (Revelation 4:10-11).

22. **Heaven** will be a place — filled with the praises of the angelic hosts as seen by the these “**four living creatures**” (4:8) representing all the angels — along with these “**elders**” representing the Church—having been raptured & carried to _____.
23. If you love being in a full worship service where there are thousands & thousands of people praising **God**—then you can imagine the praise from countless voices of both saved humans & unfallen angels—who will together—glorify & exalt _____.
24. “**When the living creatures**” begin to praise the **Lord**, the saints of **God**, as seen by “**the twenty-four elders**” — will rise from their thrones (4:4) and “**will fall down**” and bow before Jesus as they “**cast their crowns**” at His _____ (cf. Rev. 4:11-14).
25. We will praise God with the angelic hosts as we remove our “**golden crowns**” _____ from our heads saying — “**Worthy is the Lamb that was slain**” (Revelation 4:12).
26. The reason we like “**the elders**” will remove our “**crowns**” & give them back to the Lord Jesus casting them “before the throne” is because they only reason they have them to begin with is because He extended His grace to _____ them.
27. In heaven, in our glorified bodies, every selfish motive *will have vanished forever* & all that will matter is praising **Jesus**—who made our salvation & service _____.

28. The “**crowns**” we hope to receive in **heaven**—will not be given to exalt us—but to exalt **Christ**—as none will wear “**crowns**” like—badges in the military—or like medals as in the Olympics—because all praise & glory will go to Jesus _____.

11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

29. God is the **One** who _____ us for victory & by His **Spirit**—Jesus ministers in and through us—such that He deserves all the “**honor and glory and blessing**” (5:12).
30. When we yield ourselves—to the plan of service God has for us—He will use us for His glory—and then in **Heaven**, He will reward us for what He equipped us to ___!

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:12–13).

31. Just like these “**twenty-four elders**” illustrate—we will take the rewards He gives us and we will offer them back to Him—so that Jesus can be glorified for the very attitudes & actions that He accomplished in and through ____.
32. What is clear from this passage in Revelation 4, is that our ability to praise God in heaven is partially indexed—to the manner in which we serve Him here on _____.
33. This very concept of rewards that display God’s honor and glory—is found as far back to the time when Daniel writes of the resurrection of Old Testament saints and those _____ martyred during the coming tribulation period (*cf.* Rev. 20:4):

1 “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. 3 “Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever (Daniel 12:1-3).

34. The Prophet Daniel in this context is addressing believers—who are rewarded for their faithfulness during the Tribulation for displaying ___ major characteristics.
35. We know this is the time frame — because verse one begins — “**now at that time**” referring to the events of chapter 11 with the coming Antichrist, which Jesus also places during this _____ when He in on the Mount of Olives (Mt. 24:15; 24:21).

15 “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),

21 “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

36. There is coming a time of unprecedented distress such that _____ can say, **“And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved”** (Matthew 24:22).
37. At the end of the tribulation, Old Testament saints and martyrs from **“the time of Jacob’s trouble”** (Jer. 30:7) will be resurrected & rewarded ___ their faithfulness.
38. Both Old Testament & the tribulation saints, who are raised to **“everlasting life,”** will be rewarded — just like God chooses to reward — His Church _____:

3 “Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever (Daniel 12:3).

39. When the Prophet Daniel mentions, **“Those who have insight will shine brightly,”** we know from his of this phrase (11:33; 11:35; 12:3; 12:10) that he is referring to those who have spiritual **insight** in that they know & they teach the ___ of God.
40. For instance, in Daniel 11:33 he wrote that **“Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many”** which not only applies to the Old Testament & tribulation saints in view—but to believers _____.
41. Your life is to display a message of **“insight”** based on the word of God by the way you live — the things you say — the values you embrace — and by the teaching of God’s truth—in the everyday circumstances of ____.
42. Certainly, God gifts some believers to teach the Bible in a formal way within the Body of Christ — but all Christians — share in the **“teaching”** aspect of God’s word as a _____ responsibility (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 5:12).

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food (Hebrews 5:12).

43. Daniel is reminding us that those who faithfully teach the truth of God’s word, (*cf.* Daniel 5:12; 12:10) — both by word & by deed — will be rewarded which we will see that like in Revelation 4:10—they will use to bring _____ to God.
44. While these reward, will come from our faithfully using God’s word the Bible, which largely focuses on those who are saved —these rewards will also come to those who will share God’s word the Bible — with those who are _____.

**“and those who lead the many to righteousness,
like the stars forever and ever.”**

45. This part of the verse refers to those who during the Tribulation, faithfully _____ the good news of salvation to the lost at a great cost (Revelation 20:4)—even as we in this age are to spread “**the gospel**” whatever the cost may be to us (Mark 16:15).

46. It is interesting to see how both groups, comprising of those who teach the Bible & those who win people to the Lord will *someday glorify God* much like His _____:

3 “Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever (Dan. 12:3).

47. The reward that these believers in the Savior are described as having, is likened to the “**brightness of the expanse**” & “**the stars**” — because just as “**the heavens are declaring the glory of God**” even so these believers will shine when Jesus _____.

43 “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear (Matthew 13:43).

48. The Apostle Paul teaches us — that the creation above — differs in _____:

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory in (1 Corinthians 15:41).

49. Just as stars shine with an unchanging glory above, even so those faithful in sharing God’s word and in leading “**many to righteousness**” are promised a kind of glorious, eternal honor that will not fade much like the stars _____.

50. It appears—that in our glorified bodies all will glorify God—but some will have greater capacity in eternity future to burn for the Lord—just as some will _____ more “**crowns**” and rewards—to lay at Christ’s “**throne**” than other believers.

51. And just as stars vary in brightness & glory—so we will in eternity because God tells us that when we meet Jesus, He will evaluate our service done for His glory, from the day we were saved—until the day we die—or He raptures the _____.

5 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).

52. In one sense all will “**burn to their full capacity**” but some believers will potentially have more capacity to praise and worship God than _____.

53. God tells us that “**those who have insight**” — or one can translate the Hebrew, “**those who are wise**” (ESV/NET/KJV/NKJV) — because biblically speaking, someone who has “**insight**” is a “**wise**” _____ (cf. Proverbs 10:14; 28:5).

54. And the truly “**wise**” person does not hold his wisdom within—for he cannot but _____ that wisdom & so the **YLT** renders this—“**and those teaching do shine.**”
55. And of course—if we value the people of God and our families—then we will _____ to teach them the truth of God beginning with our children—and if we value those who are lost then our wisdom will be displayed in leading them “**to righteousness.**”

4 “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! 5 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 “You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up (Deuteronomy 6:4–7).

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls (Proverbs 11:30).

56. Daniel combines what Peter calls “**the crown of unfading glory**” (1 Pet. 5:4) given to pastors — and what Paul calls “**the crown of rejoicing**” (1 Thes. 2:19; Phil. 4:1) for those who faithfully share the gospel — as rewarded to _____ faithful believer.
57. Interestingly, he informs us that every believer can potentially be rewarded for the same kind of faithful service that brings ‘**the crown of unfading glory**’ to a _____.
58. And we might expect that God — who is a God of salvation — with a Book whose message is about salvation & His glory, will reward those who _____ these things.
59. If the most important decision in this life is to be saved by Christ (Mark 8:36-37), then if we want to someday worship God with our eternal rewards, then we need to ‘**have insight**’ into the Bible & we need to be ‘**wise**’ in winning people to _____.

**36 “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?
37 “For what will a man give in exchange for his soul (Mark 8:36–37)?**

60. We are living in a day of moral compromise & militant paganism where right and wrong—have been redefined & spread—with a satanic _____.
61. Jesus’ statement—should be a great challenge to His true followers who have had their eyes opened & who are to provide the world with answers from God’s _____.
62. The biggest problems that people have in this world are sin, sorrow & death, and these are all answered in the Bible, and we need to share those _____.
63. Heaven will not be the same for every believer, for even here in the Old Testament in “**kernel form**” — and with a fuller explanation — in the New Testament, there are degrees of rewards—and one aspect concerns—our future _____ of God.