

## Rewards of God III Blessings of the First Resurrection

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We have covered:

- rewards are for good
- rewards are for evil
- rewards in this life
- rewards that are going to come when Jesus returns

Those are all very important in understanding what the rewards really are, and what they amount to. Heb. 11 shows how these rewards are based; *they are based upon faith, and also based upon the contradiction of life as a Christian in the world*, or the contradiction of living life the way God wants you to live in the world vs the way that it is in the world. There is a conflict!

If you're not having any conflict with the world then there's something maybe not adding up quite right for you.

Hebrews 11:2: "For by this *kind of faith* the elders **obtained a good report.**"

Verse 13: "All these died in faith..."

Verse 24: By faith Moses, after becoming a great *leader*, refused to be called *the* son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy *the* temporary pleasure of sin" (vs 24-25).

*There is going to be many different kinds of suffering!* There is going to be some suffering that you're going to go through, undoubtedly:

- there may be *physical suffering* because someone comes at you physically
- there may be *job suffering* because of keeping the Sabbath
- there may be *persecution* because you want to do what is right

*Also, Satan is running this world*, and sooner or later he's going to start chasing you down.

Whenever there is sin, there is always a benefit held out. There's always a seeming profit for you that is held out.

Remember when Jesus was tempted? *Satan said, 'If you will bow down and worship me, I will give you all the kingdom's of the world, for they are mine to give!'*

*A seeming benefit!* It's the same way with gambling. Get something for nothing. You'll win

millions and millions of dollars. Sure enough, you see people winning millions and million of dollars. *A seeming benefit!*

Verse 26: "For he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt **because he was looking intently to the reward.**"

Rev. 3—we'll talk a little bit about the Laodiceans, since we are probably living in the Laodicean age. The riches of this world, especially the way it is today with all the wealth that is around us, *the seeming wealth, the apparent wealth!* How long this is going to last and how long things are going to go, we don't know.

I read an article about a man who says that in the year 2000 Christ is going to return. I also read a book that says it's going to be 1997. We have read books where it was 1975, 1988 and all along. We really don't know when it's going to be, but somewhere along the line this *seeming wealth* of the Babylonian system is going to come to an end. It's only going to come to an end when God knows that it has 'come to the full'!

Revelation 3:15: "I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot..."

When you have lot of physical goods around you, it's awfully difficult to jeopardize those to be a zealot for what is true, because you can lose them.

After all, now that you have them, you don't want to lose them. But you don't want to give up on God either, so you are not cold; *you're lukewarm!*

"...I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth" (vs 15-16).

Rev. 18—here we have something very important for us to just contemplate and think about. Revelation 18:3: "Because **all nations** have drunk of the wine of the fury of her fornication..." *Wherever the Church of God is it's still going to be affected by this great Babylon!* It has to be, because it says, "...all nations..."

"...and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the power of her luxury" (v 3).

What does is say about wealth and economics and prosperity at the end time. We have

wealth, economic prosperity, famine, droughts and earthquakes at the same time. Isn't that true? ***It's all going at the same time!***

Verse 4: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, ***'Come out of her, My people... [God's people] ...so that you do not take part in her sins, and that you do not receive of her plagues.'***"

- Is it because of the world's system that the Laodicean Church is lukewarm because of all of the abundance of the material goods that are available?
- How many have more than one car? *Almost everyone of us!*

I could say a lot of things about the things that we have, so we need to be careful that we don't let these physical things come between us and God, and that we become lukewarm. It's very easy to become lukewarm, because the physical things in and of themselves are not necessarily wrong. It is how that you use them is the thing and the point of character.

Are we cutting back on our love and zealous attitude toward God because of the things that we have around us?

I would have to say that the temptation is awfully easy and great, especially when you realize that God is not going to instantly lambaste you because you're not as zealous as you ought to be. It's really quite a situation that you're looking at. When you start thinking and analyzing all those things! We put the three of these together:

1. the pleasures of sin
2. living in the society of Babylon
3. the Laodicean Church

***And I think we have a good explanation as to why the Laodicean Church is lukewarm!***

There are so many things around, and it is so convenient and easy, and you don't have to dig your own garden, plant your own seeds, harvest your own crop, weave your own cloth, sew your own clothes, make your own shoes, *all these things you don't have to do!* You can buy them! You cannot one pair of shoes, but two, three or four.

In some cases I could go into the closets of some women—I don't know what it is about women—and you can find dozens of pairs of shoes. Imelda Marcus had 3,000 pair of shoes and she didn't have enough! And dresses, suits and clothes; it's absolutely amazing! Stop and think of those who have families, how much harder it would have been if we would have had to *made* all of those clothes, and how much more difficult it would be when they reach a growing spurt and go all the way through them.

We look at the more difficult things in life and compare it with how easy we have it, and no wonder everything is lukewarm.

Revelation 3:17: "For you say, 'I am rich...'"

- Doesn't God say He will bless the righteous? Isn't that true?
- Haven't people in the Church been judged because they don't have enough and they haven't been right with God?
- *'If they would have been right with God, or tithed surely they would have been blessed!'*

Why are you rich? *Because you're living in Babylon!* God has determined that prosperity would come. What are we going to do spiritually?

"...and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing..." (v 17)—*increased with goods!*

If we want something to eat, walk into the kitchen and open a refrigerator and you have grapes from Chili, wonderful! You have all the tropical fruits. You're so busy and you open the freezer and pop out a microwave dinner. I've done that.

- What if I had to grow all this?
- What if I had to raise all our beef?
- What if I had to kill it and cut it?
- What if I had to take care of all of it?
- What should I do?
- Should I just throw all of it away? *Maybe, I don't know!*
- Is that what God requires of me? *I don't know!*

*I don't think so!* Not at this point, but maybe there will come a point when it would be! But Christ gives a solution here:

"...and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked... [referring to a spiritual condition] ...**I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire... [tie in with 1-Cor. 3] ...so that you may be rich; and white garments so that you may be clothed... [white is a type of righteousness] ...and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see.** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. **Therefore, be zealous and repent!**" (vs 17-19).

Let's compare that with some of the things that were done in Heb. 11. quite a different thing. Our greatest chore in getting to church is plowing through the traffic. Sometimes it's bad, and sometimes it's not so bad.

Hebrews 11:26: “For he [Moses] esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt because he was looking intently to the reward”—*but he didn’t know what it was!*

What was Moses’ first reward in following God? *He had to stand up and he had to resist an Egyptian from beating one of the Israelites, and Moses killed him!*

So, he fled across the desert and he spent 40 years in the desert. How’s that for a reward? *Shepherding goats. And being chased by the seven daughters of Jethro!* There’s a practical side to it, and I think that was well-done in the movie *The Ten Commandments*. I imagine that Moses sat out there for 40 years staring off into space of Sinai and watching these goats. It was nice and quiet, but can you imagine some of the memories that he had of Egypt?

His first reward was to spend 40 years in the desert on Sinai. Then he finally went back to Egypt.

Verse 27: “By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered, as if he were seeing the *One Who is invisible*. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not slay them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as through a dry *land* in which the Egyptians, while making the attempt, were swallowed up by the *waters*. By faith the walls of Jericho fell...” (vs 27-30).

He missed a whole 40 years wandering in the wilderness. Moses second reward was leading the children of Israel through the wilderness. That was tough; *for 40 years!* It got so bad that they wanted to kill him several times! *That was his reward!*

But just think of the rewards that Moses is going to have when the Kingdom of God is on earth! Can anyone remember what the Mount of Transfiguration showed? *Jesus Christ as He would be in the Kingdom talking with Moses and Elijah!*

Once you get into that realm of it, what worth is all of Egypt? What hardship was all of Sinai? *Though it be for 80 years!* That’s a long time; 80 years just in Sinai! That’s a long time! An awful long time!

Today the modern person wouldn’t stay out there five minutes! So, what kind of reward does Moses have, that Christ is going to bring with Him when He comes with His Kingdom? *Fantastic reward!*

Verse 31: By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish with those who disobeyed *because* she had

received the spies peaceably. Now, what more can I say? For time would fail me to relate *the accounts* of Gideon, Barak also, and Samson and Jephthah, David also, and Samuel, and the prophets; Who by faith were victorious over kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, shut *the* mouths of lions, quenched *the* fury of fire, escaped *the* edge of the sword, were strengthened from weakness, became mighty in war, *and* turned back the armies of foreigners. Women received their dead restored to life; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, **that they might obtain a superior resurrection**” (vs 31-35). *It is a better resurrection!*

Verse 36: “And others endured *the* trial of *cruel* mocking and scourging; yes, and moreover, of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawed in two, they were *brutally* interrogated, *and* slaughtered by *the* sword. They went about in sheepskins *and* in goatskins, being destitute, oppressed, *and* ill-treated” (vs 36-37).

That’s quite a different picture! Now you know why God says to the Laodiceans, ‘Repent and be zealous!’

Verse 38: “Of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, *living* in caves and in holes in the earth. But these all, *though* they had received a good report through faith, did not obtain the promise, *because* God had determined in advance to provide something superior for us so that without us they would not be made perfect” (vs 38-40).

In other words, they were not to be perfected before the time of the completion of God’s plan, which included us.

Let’s see some things that we have concerning what we are to do, and how it is to be done. We have our responsibility in it. A lot of what we’re going to receive in reward is going to depend on how we conduct our lives. Yes, we have grace that we will be saved. Yes, we have works, but are they going to be gold, silver and precious stone, or wood, hay and stubble?

A lot of them thought that the Kingdom of God should appear immediately; Luke 19:12: “Therefore, He said, ‘A certain nobleman set out to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and to return.’”

Obviously, a parable about Christ returning to God the Father, to have authority to bring the Kingdom and return!

Verse 13: “And after calling ten of his servants, he gave to them ten pounds, and said to them, ‘Trade until I come *back*.’ But his citizens hated him and sent an ambassador after him, saying,

‘We are not willing to have this man reign over us.’” (vs 13-14).

Isn't that the first thing that happens? People do not want the Word of God telling them what to do. So, they figure out a nice way around it so that they can do it the way *they want to!*

Verse 15: “And it came to pass that when he returned after receiving the kingdom, he directed that those servants to whom he had given the money be called to him, in order that he might know what each one had gained by trading”—*working, producing, making, doing the things that need to be done!*

Verse 16: “And the first one came up, saying, ‘Lord, your pound has produced ten pounds.’ Then he said to him, ‘Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities’” (vs 16-17). *He didn't know that he was going to receive the ten cities. But it was given to him!*

Verse 18: “And the second one came, saying, ‘Lord, your pound has made five pounds.’ Then he also said to this one, ‘And you be over five cities.’ But another came, saying, ‘Lord, behold your pound, which I kept laid up in a handkerchief. For I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man. You take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow’” (vs 18-21).

In other words, it was his responsibility to do it. What was he doing? *He was immediately blaming God!* This sounds an awful lot like the Garden of Eden: It was the woman! No, it was the serpent! ‘Well, God, if you hadn't put the woman and serpent here we wouldn't be in this mess.’ That's pretty much what it's saying here. ‘You're not sowing this, Lord, why should I reap it?’

- it was his job to do it
- it was his job to make it happen
- it was his job to carry our his responsibilities

This is a good example of how we are to be responsible. How are we to be responsible? *Without supervision!* That's the hardest thing in the world! Try some people on the job. Sometimes I offend people because I expect them to do things that I should not have to tell them to do. They get all bent out of shape!

We are to exercise our own initiative, and be responsible in taking care of it in a proper and right way! This one didn't, so he was judged out of his own mouth:

Verse 22: “Then he said to him, ‘Out of your *own* mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant! You knew that I am a harsh man, taking up what I

did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow. Then **why didn't you deposit my money in the bank, so that at my coming I might have received it with interest?**’ And he said to those who were standing by, ‘Take the pound from him, and give it to the one who has ten pounds.’ (And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten pounds.’)” (vs 22-25).

Isn't that always human reasoning? This would not go down well in San Francisco, believe me! Absolutely not!

Verse 26: “For I tell you that to everyone who has, *more* shall be given; but the one who does not have, even what he has shall be taken from him. Moreover, bring my enemies, those who were not willing *for* me to reign over them, and slay *them* here before me” (vs 26-27).

- there it shows our responsibility
- there it shows the reward of the righteous
- there it shows the reward of the wicked

Let's follow through on how the Kingdom of God is going to come.

Matthew 24:36: “But **concerning that day, and the hour, no one knows,** not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”

I read a book where someone said that Christ was returning in 1997, and I received another study paper where someone says that it's going to happen in the year 2000, and we don't have long to wait, because in the beginning of 1990 something was supposed to happen; I forget what it was. But here it clearly says that of ‘that day and hour knows no man.’

Verse 37: “Now, as *it was in* the days of Noah, so shall *it* also be *at* the coming of the Son of man. Someone always challenges and says, ‘Can't we know the year?’ *I said that it's possible to know the year, but I still haven't seen anyone hit it right, yet!*

Verse 38: “For as in the days that *were* before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark.” *Everything is going to go along until all of a sudden the mathematics of chaos hit!* Then it's all going to go in disarray, *everything!*

Verse 39: “And they were not aware until the Flood came and took *them* all away; so shall *it* also be *at* the coming of the Son of man. Then two shall be in the field; one shall be taken, and one shall be left; two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; one shall be taken, and one shall be left. Watch, therefore, because **you do not know in what hour your Lord is coming**” (vs 39-42).

What are we to watch? *We're to watch our spiritual condition more than the world conditions!* Too many people are watching the world conditions so they can escape, or as the Protestants have it: being caught up in the rapture.

Verse 43: "But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have been watching, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore, you also be ready. For the Son of man is coming at a time that you do not think" (vs 43-44).

What is it that they say? *For when they shall say 'peace and prosperity' or 'peace and safety,' then sudden destruction comes!* (1-Thess. 5:3<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub>).

Verse 45: "Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom his lord has set over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes **shall find so doing**" (vs 45-46).

- Doing what? *Doing what he's supposed to be doing!*
- How is doing it?
  - ✓ out of love for God
  - ✓ out of following the commandments of God
  - ✓ out of doing the things that God says

Verse 47: "Truly I say to you, he will set him over all his property. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, 'My lord delays his coming'... [tie in with Luke 21:34-36<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub>] ...and shall begin to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken" (vs 47-49)—*tie that in with Rev. 18:3, made drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornication!*

Verse 50: "The lord of that servant will come in a day that he does not expect, and in an hour that he does not know. And he shall cut him asunder and shall appoint his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (vs 50-51).

I believe that Jesus means what He says. I really do! It's going to happen! Most of us are here as the result of the fact that there some evil servants who were 'beating and smiting' the fellow servants. *We're all servants of God!* We're not all ministers but we're all servants of God. That's exactly what was happening.

Matt. 25—talking about the Kingdom of God and the we have the Parable of the Ten Virgins and there are some very important things that we are to learn out of this.

Matthew 25:1: "Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be compared to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish" (vs 1-2).

*Compare that with 1-Cor. 3 where we have 3+3=6, and here we have 5+5=10, but what is the ratio that we see? 50%, half!*

Verse 3: "The ones who were foolish took their lamps, but they did not take oil with them."

Today it's like going off in the boonies and you get out there where it's dark and you forgot the matches! Or if you took the matches, you didn't bring batteries for the flashlight. Or you left the food back at base camp instead of carrying it up in a pack because it was too hard to carry. You could draw a lot of different parallels with this.

Sidebar: My mother was down last week and she gave us—which my wife hung in the hall—an old Russian oil lamp. If you're going to have lantern that you're going to take with you, and you have oil in this little basin, how far are you going to go with that light burning with just that oil? *As long as it burns, that's all!* You have to take extra oil with you.

Verse 4: "But the wise took oil in their vessels along with their lamps. Now, when the bridegroom was gone a long time... [longer than they expected] ...they all became drowsy and slept. But in the middle of the night there was a cry..." (vs 4-6).

There is a light that is called the 'light of darkness': *if the light that be in you is darkness, then great indeed is the darkness!* So, to the world when it looks like everything is just about ready to be solved, the light of great, wonderful, marvelous and loving, kind human nature comes to the fore, that's midnight to God! Just at the time when it looks the brightest for the world, it's the darkest spiritually!

Verse 7: "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.... [they were setting them to get the right kind of light] ...And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out'" (vs 7-8). *They're not yet out! There is still some light!*

Verse 9: "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there not be enough for us and for you. But instead, go to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'" *Again, getting to the individual responsibility!*

Why does there have to be individual responsibility in it? Here's why God puts it on an individual basis:

1. because of choice and free will
2. salvation is independent and is between God and the individual

*Not between God and the Church and the individual.*

The Church is only a collection of individuals who have been called of God! The Church can help everyone, that is true. We gain strength every week when we come together on the Sabbath. I do. When we come together on the Sabbath, by being together we gain strength that way.

But I can't walk home and say that today I took a little bit of Martha Anderson's righteousness with me, and I've got it made for the next week. It isn't going to happen!

3. each person is responsible
4. God has to know what you are going to do

God knows what He's going to do, but He has to know what you're going to do!

5. you can't legislate righteousness or character; impossible!

That's why when you look at this parable, it seems a little brutal! It seems awfully definite and brutal!

Verse 9: "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest *there* not *be* enough for us and *for* you. But instead, go to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'"

Someone could look at that and say that they were good Christians. What does the Bible say? *If you see your brother in need, give it to him!* So, we're not talking about physical goods. We're talking about the oil of God's Spirit, the Light that produces in our body. We're talking about the Light of God's Word all combined with the responsibility of growing and overcoming, and taking care of the things we need to.

Verse 10: "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut. And afterwards the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But He answered *and* said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you'" (vs 10-12). *This is really a brutal, brutal parable! This is pretty tough!*

Verse 13: "Watch, therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of man is coming."

The bridegroom comes and what takes place? *Obviously, the marriage takes place!* The basis of this parable is that the fiancé stays in her father's house and waits while the young man goes

off to build the house for them to live in. He makes a contract of marriage, a betrothal. Then he has to prove that He's going to take care of her, so it takes about a year, and he builds a house for his wife and himself. When he gets that built, then he comes back to the father's house and he gets the bride.

Generally, it would be setup so that he would come at midnight. The bride would be sitting there at midnight waiting for him to come. Then he would whisk her off and take her to his house and the marriage would begin.

That's what we have here in this particular parable. There's a little bit more to this: The custom was that the father of the bridegroom would tell the son when to go get the bride. Not even the bridegroom knew the hour when the father was to tell the son when to go get the bride. The bride didn't know and the bride's father didn't know, but he would show up and take her away. That's part of what this is all about.

We know that our reward also has to do with a marriage covenant between Christ and the Church. When people first get married, you never know what you're going to end up with. What does the marriage covenant say? *For better or for worse, rich or poor!* Not like today's world: if we like it we'll stay, if we don't we'll leave. Then it was for better or worse, and the ones who didn't want to be loyal or faithful took it to mean that *you're stuck!* That's not exactly the way that God means it to be at all.

Too many people take a presumptuous decision and run off and get married and it's not like they figured it would be.

2-Corinthians 11:2—Paul says: "For I am jealous over you with *the* jealousy of God because I have espoused you to one husband..."

Now we're getting into the reward aspect, the blessing's aspect. Also, I am sure that the father of the bridegroom helped the bridegroom build the house. Let's see how this follows through exactly with John 14. Let's tie this all together and see that there is something that God is doing above and beyond what we expect.

(go to the next track)

John 14:1: "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places..." (vs 1-2).

Some people say, 'How can one man marry so many people?' That's not the point. The point is that it is a marriage covenant, the likeness of the covenant is what it is important. It is not trying to compare it to the physical analogy of one man having many wives. It's the kind of relationship that

is important. Notice that it is in *His Father's house!* Father is the One Who is preparing; Christ the One Who is preparing. *They're both doing it!*

- How is God going to do it?
- How is God going to handle it?
- What is that place?
- Does God have a place that He lives? *Yes!*
- Though He owns the whole universe? *Yes!*

In Rev. 4 & 5 we can see a little bit of what that is like. But God has a place for us, being built for us. Isn't it interesting that when Jesus came to the earth he was a carpenter? *Now He's building the spiritual things in heaven above for us!*

"...if it were otherwise, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you.... [as the bridegroom does with the bride] ...And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; so that where I am, you may be also" (vs 2-3).

2-Corinthians 11:2: "...I have espoused you to one husband, so that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." *So, there's going to be that marriage relationship!*

Nowhere in all of the Bible does it show that those who come into the Kingdom of God—starting with the Millennium after Christ is here—are in the same relationship as Christ and the Church. That is part of the reward. You will have a different relationship with God forever! That's something to really consider.

Just like there's only one Son—Christ—He has a relationship with God the Father. We will have a relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father—all of those in the first resurrection—that none of the rest who are saved will have. Lest anyone misunderstand that we're just talking about one small group here or there.

We will see that this brought out in the same way in Eph. 5 concerning the marriage covenant. It shows in the marriage covenant—husbands and wives—what Christ is doing for us.

Ephesians 5:22: "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord; for the husband is *the* head of the wife, even as Christ is *the* Head of the Church; and He is *the* Savior of the Body" (vs 22-23).

I submit that we can say how much better society be if it were that there were father/mother, no divorce, everything properly taken care of. That you have a society where women wouldn't have to work. Wouldn't that be nice so they can take care of the children?

In this society, when kids go to school, and you can work it out and go to work when they're in school. That's perfectly fine, you don't neglect your children. But how many people don't even care for their kids at all. They get up at five in the morning, slam the kids to the babysitter's at six in the morning as the commute to work, and pick them up at six in the evening and slam them in front of the TV and throw in a microwave dinner and sit down and eat, shout and yet at each other, and go to bed and when you get up in the morning and that's the existence of their life until summer time. Then all hell breaks loose and no one knows what to do with any of the kids. It's one of the reasons why we have so many gangs in different areas of the country.

But the NOW organization could not have it that women would have a rightful place, or that men would have a rightful place. That's not to put down women anymore than to put down men.

Verse 24: "For even as the Church is subject to Christ, in the same way also *let* wives be *subject* to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, **and gave Himself for it**" (vs 24-25).

How much does Christ want the Bride? *So much so that He gave Himself for it!* That's a lot!

Verse 26: "So that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it* with the washing of the water by *the* Word." *That's how we are purified and made white and clean!*

Verse 27: "That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame. In the same way, husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself; for no man has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord *does* the Church. For we are members of His body—of His flesh... [through the crucifixion] ...and of His bones" (vs 27-30).

In other words, the closeness! We are not of His physical bones or spiritual bones, but this is an analogy showing just like Eve was created from a rib of Adam, so are we created out of the innermost being of God. That is the spiritual creation as the sons of God. This is a really very deep analogy.

Verse 31: "For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I am speaking in respect to Christ and the Church" (vs 31-32).

Let's unravel that mystery just a little bit more, and see exactly what it is that God is showing

that He is going to do for us. We know several things:

- when Christ returns we will see Him as He is; that's what we're promised (1-John 3)
- what He looks like in power, splendor and glory (Rev. 1)

Let's see a little bit more the part of the reward that we are going to have. I may have touched on this briefly at one time, but I'm going to make a statement, which I'll back up a little later on. That is *search the Bible from cover to cover where it say that those who are given salvation—beginning with the Millennium, forward—are going to enter into the same relationship as we do with God! They don't!* Nor, we're going to find out, do they have the same inheritance. They're going to have an inheritance, *but it won't be like ours!*

Romans 8:16: "The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying that we are the children of God.*"

There's going to be another *Family of God!* Did you know that? *That's going to be all of those who are saved through the everlasting covenant of Christ and the Church!*

- we know that there is God the Father.
- we know there is Jesus Christ the Son

Isa. 9—Here's an acknowledged prophecy of Jesus Christ. There is one interesting statement in here that talks about Christ in a way that most people can't figure out, because they haven't carried out the step far enough to understand it.

Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, **The Everlasting Father...**"—*How can that be?*

If God the Father is God the Father, how can the Son be the "...Everlasting Father..."? *Because the children brought into the Kingdom through the marriage of Christ and the Church are going to be the children of that marriage!* Jesus will then be a Father! *Think on that!* It's the only way it can be explained.

"...The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and over His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this" (vs 6-7).

Let's think of this as husband and wife in that relationship; Romans 8:16: "The Spirit itself

bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now, if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..." (vs 16-17).

- What is Christ going to inherit?
- What has He already inherited?
- *The universe! And we are joint heirs!*

When you're an heir, you're an owner. When you receive something through an inheritance, did you earn it? *No, it was bequeathed to you!* That means given by gift. You're "...joint heirs with Christ..."!

"...if indeed we suffer together with Him, **so that we may also be glorified together with Him.** For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time... [that we read in Heb. 11] **...are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us**" (vs 17-18).

There are going to be times when you're going to go through some suffering and some things that are going to make life really miserable. Some people will get to the point of Job's wife, remember what she said when Job was going through all his trials.

- Did Job deserve it? *No!*
- What did he lose? *Everything!*
- What did his 'encouraging' wife say? *Curse God and get it over! You've had it, give up!*
- What did His 'friends' say? *Job, we know you're evil and wrong!*

Job said, 'No, I'm not evil in wrong!'

- What was the final message? *Job, you don't understand God!*

When he finally understood God he was blessed with twice as much as he had. So, you don't look at the suffering at the present time and get discouraged and blame God. *Don't blame God for things that are not His fault!* Even if they are, it's for a purpose!

Too many times, people take the position that if God is on your side, then surely He ought to perform a miracle for you. That sounds a little bit like the people standing at the foot of the cross and looking at Christ and saying:

***If*** You be the Son of God, get Yourself down off there. Since You haven't gotten Yourself down off there, You aren't the Son of God.

Don't look at the suffering of the present time, because they "...are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (v 18). *Then it goes on showing that the whole creation is waiting for the expectation of the return of God and of the saints!*



Heb. 1 will tell us a little bit more about the inheritance of Christ and what He is doing, and what we are going to inherit. The disciples must have understood a little bit more about the inheritance. Even the mother of James and John must have understood a little bit about it, because even she asked that James sit on one side and John on the other side of Christ. Jesus told her, 'Woman, you don't know what you're asking!' It's the Father Who is going to give all of it. They must have understood that there's something fantastic and great that is going to happen.

Hebrews 1:1: "God Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His Son*, Whom He has appointed heir of all things..." (vs 1-2).

If we are joint heirs with Christ, what are we going to inherit? *All things!* That means the universe! Think about it! Is there any trouble, suffering, difficulty, pain or trial in this life that's worthy to be compared to jointly owning and sharing the universe? *Not a thing!* It will be just like some little speck out in space, that's about all it's worth. Yet, look at how many billions of dollars that people are spending now to try and go into space. It's amazing!

He has inherited all things, "...by Whom also He made the ages.... [of time] ...Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high; having been made so much greater than *any of* the angels, inasmuch as He has inherited a name exceedingly superior to them" (vs 2-4).

- Are we going to have a new name? *Yes!*
- Are we going to have a new existence? *Yes!*
- Are we going to have a new relationship? *Yes!*
- Are we going to have a new place to live in? *Yes!*

***We're going to see where that's going to be!*** This is very important to keep this in mind as far as a reward goes. Rev. 21 ties in directly with Heb. 1:1-4.

Revelation 21:7: "The one who overcomes shall inherit all things..."—***co-heirs with Christ!*** Christ has inherited all things; we are going to inherit all things!

"...and I will be his God, and he shall be My son" (v 7). *There is not going to be a change in relationship through all eternity!*

That is going to be so fantastic and important to keep in mind. That's why it's worth going through what we go through. Of course, when we look back and see what others have gone through, we haven't even started, yet. We haven't even gotten into the 'sandbox' let alone out of it! No one has locked me up for keeping the Sabbath. No one has chased me... I have said a few things to people to make them mad at me, but... I've been persecuted for some things within the Church, but that's a different story.

Now then, we come to the colossal thing of New Jerusalem. That's where we're going to live. We're going to live in New Jerusalem! That's enough to really blow your mind when you sit down and think about it.

During the Feast of Tabernacles I will try to more graphically portray what it's going to be like in New Jerusalem. Talk about a beautiful setting, made by the very hands of God. Christ has prepared a place for you! It has your name on it, and your address also includes ...

Today we have addresses. We have city, state and zip code, three things. We could eliminate the zip code and say *country*.

Revelation 3:12: "The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God... [forever] ...and the name of the city of My God... [where we are going] ...the New Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him My new name*"—***because we will be the Bride of Christ!***

That's really something! I don't know what it's going to be like to be in New Jerusalem, which is going to be 1500 miles square! I don't know where our niche is going to be, but any place in there is going to be wonderful.

The thing that's going to be important is that God the Father and Christ will live in New Jerusalem, and we will live there.

Revelation 21:24: And the nations that are saved... [I take this to be the nations beginning with the time of the Millennium] ...shall walk in its light... [containing God the Father, Jesus Christ and the saints—Old and New Testaments] ...and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor into it."

It doesn't say that they live there. They come into the city, but they don't live there, because the rest of earth is not going to be a barren desolation. It's going to be part of their inheritance, so they will live in different cities as it were, but

only the saints—Old and New Testaments—with God the Father and Jesus Christ are going to live in New Jerusalem. *That's a tremendous reward!*

There's also an indication—which I won't get into now—that perhaps their form of eternal life is not exactly the same as ours will be in the first resurrection. There is also that indication. I say *indication* because there's nothing you can say absolutely dogmatic about it.

Let's see a couple of other things that are important in relationship to the firstfruits, or those who are in the first resurrection.

1-Chron. 5 is a very important section concerning birthright. There's another thing that you have being in the first resurrection. There is a birthright, or a right of birth that none of the other children have. It's a matter of inheritance.

1-Chronicles 5:1: And the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel—for he *was* the firstborn; **but since he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel...** *Very clear!*

No denial of Gen. 48 & 49, but a conformation! Why was the birthright given to Joseph and his sons? *Because Joseph was the firstborn of the second wife!*

“...and the genealogy is not to be reckoned according to the birthright; for Judah prevailed among his brothers, and from him *came* the chief ruler... [the king line] ...but **the birthright was Joseph's**” (vs 1-2).

Let's see how Abraham handled the birthright. It was taken away from Reuben because he committed adultery with one of the concubines that belonged to Jacob, the kind of incest that should not be. Here's another way to solve the problem of wills. You take care of the inheritance before you die, that way no one can fight over it, as it is today.

Genesis 25: 1: “Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bore him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah” (vs 1-2). *Then it shows the different ones that were begotten by them!*

Verse 5: “And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.” **Do we have jealousy to this very day?** *Yes, we have jealousy to this very day!* That's why nothing in the Middle East is ever going to be solved. It runs so deep and so historical and so filled with hatred, it's incredible! Anything that anybody has is better than anybody else. They either go slaughter them, take them or they're hated, whatever. It's just impossible!

Verse 6: “But to the sons of the concubines,

which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts. And he sent them away from Isaac his son while he still lived, eastward to the east country.” *He made sure that it was done right!* It was a good thing that he did, because all they would have been doing is fighting and warring over what was given to Isaac. Isaac received an awful lot. You go back and read how much that Abraham had.

With all of that, let's go back and review what we need to do. We are going to receive and inheritance from God. We are going to be in the first resurrection and given the reward of living in New Jerusalem and being in the same level of existence as Jesus Christ. ***We shall see Him as He is, for we shall be as He is!*** That is something! That's really fantastic to keep your mind on! Exactly what is it that it's going to be, other than those broad things that I have given? *I can't tell you!*

In Mal. 3 we will show you God's thinking and how He does it; Malachi 3:13: “Your words have been all too strong against Me,” says the LORD. ‘Yet, you say, “What have we spoken *so strongly* against You?”... [He gives the answer]: ...You have said, “It is vain to serve God; and...”” (vs 13-14).

It happens so many times to so many people. *It's vain to serve God! Why? They've got their eyes on the wrong thing!* They've got their eyes on the physical things that are right here. They have endured maybe a teeny-weeny bit of suffering and really haven't gone through anything except that they had their feelings hurt. They throw God out because of that.

“...‘It is vain to serve God; and... [they look at you] ...what profit *is it...* [to you, and you can't explain that to them because they don't understand] ...that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? And now we *are* calling the arrogant blessed. Yea, they that work wickedness are built up, they even tempt God, and are delivered” (vs 14-15).

It seems as though that sometimes in society that that's the way it works. Those who are righteous get the short end of the stick all the time.

Verse 16: “Then those fearing the LORD spoke together, *each* man to his neighbor. And the LORD listened and heard. And a Book of Remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the LORD, and for those who thought upon His name. ‘And **they shall be Mine,**’ says the LORD of hosts, **‘in the day that I will make up My own special jewels.** And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him” (vs 16-17).

God is going to make up a crown. We're

told that we're going to have a crown, and God is making up that crown right now with those jewels. Exactly how it's going to be, we don't know, but it's going to be magnificent, indeed! It's going to be a wonderful thing, brethren!

What do we need to do? *Philip. 3<sub>[corrected]</sub> brings us right down to today, what we need to do today!* Here is how the Apostle Paul looked at everything:

Philippians 3:7: "Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ. But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and **count them as dung...**" (vs 7-8). *There are many other adjectives or words you can use, but it all comes out the same, rotten manure!*

"...that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is derived from law, but that *righteousness*, which is by the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God that is based on faith; that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (vs 8-10).

The Apostle Paul was really setting a high standard! He was made conformable to it; so was Peter!

Verse 11: "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected; but I am striving, so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus" (vs 11-12).

This is what we always need to understand. We can never say we have it made, because when we do, we're running out of oil. The call may come to go forward and we have no oil. *That's why we have to forget the things behind and go ahead!*

Verse 13: "Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; but *this* one thing I do— **forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize...** [the reward; the same Greek word] **...of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus**" (vs 13-14).

It's going to be a great and magnificent reward. It is so great and magnificent that God has only given us some outlines of it. But:

- Can we, in faith, trust God that it's going to be great and marvelous?
- Can we, in faith, go for the gold?

- Can we, in faith, overcome, change and put the things behind us? **Yes!**
- Can we, in faith, set aside all the physical things around as nothing but dung?

**Yes, we can!** We sure can, we can go forward! **"I press toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."**

Verse 15: "So then, let as many as *be* perfect be of this mind. And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, *in regard* to that which we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind" (vs 15-16).

That's what we need to always keep focused right in the forefront of our mind:

- What is the blessing?
- What is the reward?
- Why is it worth doing what we're doing and having to go against the world as we do?

***It's worth every bit of it, regardless of the cost!***

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 11:2, 13, 24-26
- 2) Revelation 3:15-16
- 3) Revelation 18:3-4
- 4) Revelation 3:17-19
- 5) Hebrews 11:26-40
- 6) Luke 19:12-27
- 7) Matthew 24:36-51
- 8) Matthew 25:1-13
- 9) 2 Corinthians 11:2
- 10) John 14:1-3
- 11) 2 Corinthians 11:2
- 12) Ephesians 5:22-32
- 13) Romans 8:16
- 14) Isaiah 9:6-7
- 15) Romans 8:16-18
- 16) Hebrews 1:1-4
- 17) Revelation 21:7
- 18) Revelation 3:12
- 19) Revelation 21:24
- 20) 1 Chronicles 5:1-2
- 21) Genesis 25:1-2, 5
- 22) Malachi 3:13-17
- 23) Philippians 3:7-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:3
- Luke 21:34-36
- Revelation 18:3

Rewards of God #3  
Blessings of the First Resurrection

- 1 Corinthians 3
- Revelation 4; 5
- 1 John 3
- Revelation 1
- Genesis 48; 49

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