

Rewards of God II Receive Your *Full* Reward

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- What are the rewards that God has for us as Christians?
- Why rewards anyway?
- Why don't we have something that we can absolutely measure and absolutely know for sure that we're going to have?

We'll find out why, because it has an awful lot to do with attitude, motivation and is based upon the fact that God has given free choice. That free choice must be exercised so that a person is going to show their total devotion to God, or whatever degree of it they have. God then will reward us according to those kinds of things that we do. For example: Let's see some contrasting things right here:

Matthew 10:29: "Are not two sparrows sold for a coin? And *yet* not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father *taking account of it*. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore, do not be afraid; you are better than many sparrows. Now then, **whoever shall confess Me before men**, that one will I also confess before My Father Who *is* in heaven" (vs 29-32). **What kind of confession is it?**

Example: The return odyssey from cancer surgery of Dave Dravecky of the San Francisco Giants. I saw it on one TV station, but not on KGO, because they're owned by Jews so they don't let the name of Christ on the air, either radio or television. But when Dravecky was asked what he attributed it to, he said, 'I attribute it to my faith in Jesus Christ,' and he said it four or five times in a very short interview.

Sine he is confessing Jesus Christ, even though he may not be being called to salvation at this point, do you suppose that there is some connection here where God said, 'All right, I'll heal him.' *That's possible!* I'm not saying that it's absolutely for sure, but I'm not going to deny it, because I don't know exactly how God works in every instance in everybody's life. He works at different levels with different people.

Verse 34: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies *shall be those of his own household*" (vs 34-36).

Many times that's exactly true, especially in

a Jewish family, especially at the time of Christ when they were believing in Christ. Some of those Jewish families would be so absolutely divided asunder. Of course, it would be just like the Middle East today, *there's no peace at all!*

Verse 37: "The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it" (vs 37-39). *There are quite a few very extreme things here. It's either/or, one or the other!*

Verse 40: "The one who receives you receives Me, and the one who receives Me receives Him Who sent Me. The one who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive the reward of a prophet..." (vs 40-41). *Prophet here is not just necessarily someone foretelling the future; this is one who is preaching.*

"...and the one who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive the reward of a righteous man" (v 41).

What is a 'preacher's reward' (KJV). *I don't know!* Nowhere does it say that 'this is a prophet's reward' or 'a preacher's reward' or 'a righteous man's reward.' God gives us generalities in it, because God is going to give 'according to our attitude and works.'

Verse 42: "And *if* anyone shall in the name of a disciple give to one of these little ones to drink a cup of cold water only, truly I say to you, **he shall in no way lose his reward.**" *He's showing just a small act of kindness!*

It has something to do with *not* losing your reward. It shows that God has great latitude, yet, very stern judgment in some cases. But very great latitude in the acts of kindness that people do one to another. We're going to see that this reward is in heaven. We will see some inkling of what the reward is in general terms. It will also show why the first resurrection is a better resurrection.

1-Peter 1:2: "*Who have been chosen* according to the predetermined knowledge of God the Father, by sanctification through the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a living hope through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead; unto **an inheritance incorruptible**... [part of the reward] ...and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us” (vs 2-4).

Revelation 22:12: “And behold, I am coming quickly; and **My reward is with Me, to render to each one according as his work shall be.**”

Again, the analogies drawn give us an understanding of it, but it doesn't tell us specifically. In 1-Cor. 3 it's going to tell us that you shall receive a reward, and you can lose your reward even though you may be saved.

1-Corinthians 3:11: “For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or stubble” (vs 11-12). *The first three are materials that are improved with trials, or trials by fire!*

Gold—you can make gold more pure by refining it, reheating it and firing it and letting the impurities come to the top and clean that off, then you get fine gold. Remember what David said about fine gold: That he held the Word of God higher than fine gold. But here's it's likened unto character.

Silver—it talks about silver refined seven times in the furnace. That's supposed to be strong, brilliant and fantastic.

Precious Stones—I never knew until some time ago that they took precious stones and semi-precious stones that to make them brighter they put them in a furnace and fire them, especially some of the sapphires. They put them in the fire and burn them and they become much more brilliant.

There are times that we go through trials, and they're not easy to go through. But if we maintain that love of God and do the things that we need to be doing—constantly through it—then that is going to increase the value of the character and attitude as far as God is concerned. *Then we find the next three: wood, hay and stubble!*

Wood—you can have some very nice precious wood. You can have some very fine furniture, solid whatever. Today you get mostly pressboard. Some have a photographic top on the pressboard. So, you can make wood look really nice, ***but wood burns!***

Hay—I never will forget that as you're coming into Hollister, you have fields of crops of alfalfa. He got it all cut, dried and baled and stacked

it up right close to the fence along the highway. Some 'nice' smart aleck came along and threw three molotov cocktails on it. By the time the fire department got out there, his entire hay crop was gone! They couldn't do a thing about it except just stand there and watch it.

I drove by it the next day and instead of having this huge great big long stacks—stacked about ten bales high and six bales wide—of hay to feed his cattle, here was this big mound of ashes! I thought that is really illustrative of what happens when hay burns.

Stubble—this is almost worthless! This is different than hay. Stubble is the refuse leftover from hay, or from harvesting grain. It is also the separation of the grain and the chaff. That can even spontaneously burst into flame. That's why every once in a while have some of these fires that take place at the grain silos. They have the stubble there and just the right electrical thing and the right amount of natural gas given off, and you can have an explosion! Stubble is the lowest quality of all six of these! Isn't it interesting that there are three and three=six, the number of man!

Verse 13: “The work of each one shall be manifested... [revealed] ...for the day of trial will declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one's is.”

Example: I have in my office a secretary who is on a state training program. She is the second one that I've had that way, and there was a woman who knew the broker whom I bought the franchise from. She used to manage apartments for the other broker. I would see her come in from time to time, and thought she was just there to see the other broker. So, I never thought anything of it.

I came in the office and here's my secretary and she's got five stacks of copies about two inches high that she just made. I knew I didn't ask her to make any copies, so I looked at it and it said, 'New Age Channeling.' I said, 'What is this?' *This is for Lenora*, 'How come you made these copies for her?' Now we have solved the mysteries as to why we have had so many copies. It was a book she was writing on New Age Channeling.

So, I took the copies and later that day Lenora left the second manuscript for my secretary to start doing the second book. She's doing it on my time with my equipment in my computer and typewriter, whom I am paying the salary for. Then this begins unwinding a little more and the secretary before her was given a \$650 bed for doing part of the book.

I thought, I tell you, it's something! This New Age stuff is creeping in all over. So, I left a message on Lenora's message phone, and said, 'Please do not come into the office anymore! You're not welcome! You have used things that are unauthorized to use, and you can't come in.'

I kept the five copies, plus the original manuscript. So, she called before I left and said she would like to pick up 'my things.' I said, 'You're not picking them up until I determine how much you have cost me.'

She called the police because I have 'her stuff.' I got a little angry with the policeman on the phone, and I told him. He said, 'I don't know if that's necessarily against the law.' *Well, it is against the law!*

So, anyway, that was my little trial last week. Of all things! She was about ready to go down and press charges that I had stolen 'her stuff.' Furthermore, this was copied on *my machine without authorization!*

There is just a little example of some little trial that comes along. We can take other trials that we create for ourselves, which are not necessarily those kinds of things that is going to be based upon whether we receive a reward or not.

It says in 1-Peter 4 not to think it 'strange concerning the fiery trial that comes upon you, but rejoice if you suffer as a Christian. But let none of you suffer as an evildoer or as something is wrong.' You're not suffering for Christ, you're suffering for yourself.

That happened to me when I made a U-turn in a wrong place. I got a ticket and it cost me \$95. God had nothing to do with it. There was no trial from God, it was my own stupidity! I suffered as an evildoer. I was very angry with myself. I told the officer that I was out of town and misread the sign. It didn't make any difference, he wrote up the ticket.

There are differences in trials. Here in 1-Cor. 3 we are talking about trials by fire; here we have *work and reward*.

Verse 14: "If the work that anyone has built endures... [referring to the foundation of Christ] ... **he shall receive a reward**. If the work of anyone is burned up, **he shall suffer loss**; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet, as through fire" (vs 14-15).

The long and short of it is that salvation—even though it is still a gift—is a gift of eternal life that comes from God. But there is a reward in addition to that salvation, which is determined by **our** works and attitude, and by what **we** do. We can even get so vain and become like stubble—get lifted

up in **our** vanity in some gargantuan thing that we're going to earn or get from God—and just completely just cut ourselves off the other way.

It has to be based on what you're doing with God's Holy Spirit. We can all look back and see that we've come short of this, that, and we've sinned here and there, and just done stupid things. The only way you can reclaim those is get right back with God and build the right kind works and character.

Let's see who you can lose your reward. We've covered a couple of those referring to doing 'religious works' in public so that you can be seen of men. You have your reward, because you've been seen by them!

But if you do the things referred to in Matt. 6 concerning prayer, helping people, the things that we do in remaining in contact with God. That has a lot to do with it. How is our contact with God? That is a very important thing concerning what it is that we're going to receive as a reward. It has to be a reward that is in general terms, because God Himself, I am sure, does not know exactly what He is going to give us until we reach the point that the Apostle Paul did.

We don't know what it's going to be, but somewhere down the line we have a little inkling of what it may be.

2-Timothy 4:6: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. From this time forward, **a crown of righteousness is laid up for me**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day—and not to me only, but also to all who love His appearing" (vs 6-8).

Even though we read that, it still doesn't tell us what kind of crown. We'll get some inkling a little later in Rev. 2 & 3. Let's see how it is that person can lose part of his reward, or lose his reward entirely.

Colossians 2:18: "Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize..."—*reward! **Something that God is going to give***, but you don't know what it is, or the value of it.

You could be deceived out of receiving your reward, so therefore, your works become *wood, hay or stubble!* You could lose your reward, but maybe you haven't given up on God altogether, so therefore, you will be saved. We can look at God's mercy and say there might be an awful lot of people in that category, maybe some that you know. Maybe they've given up on men and churches, but they haven't given up on God. Maybe they quit doing the things that they ought to be doing, but maybe they

will be saved in the final analysis by a last minute repentance, realizing that all their wood, hay and stubble is gone, burned up!

Let's see how we retain that attitude toward God, and what to look to. Maybe we can get some clues on how people begin losing their reward or parts of their rewards, because they're not beholding Christ. You can take that one thing and to make sure that your reward is steadfast, you must always love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being, and you must always look to Christ.

This also tells us what we need to look for in the teachings within a church! Could there be some churches that are limiting the reward? *Yes, that is true, they can* (Rev. 2 & 3), because they are not teaching all the things that they really need to be teaching and they are not beholding the Head, Who is Christ, Head of the Church!

1-Corinthians 2:1: "Now, I want you to understand what great concern I have for you, and for those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in *the* flesh; that their hearts may be encouraged, **being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding...** [that's a whale of a statement] **...unto the knowledge of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ**" (vs 1-2). *Paul is really saying a lot with that.* This is what you need to be focusing in on, *God the Father and Christ:*

Verse 3: "In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

I saw a minister out of Tennessee who does a lot of exposés on Catholics and atheists. He really does good regarding that fundamental knowledge. He was interviewing a Mason. He said that most in Masonry do not know that what they're doing is pagan. They do not know that this 'enlightenment in wisdom' that they are getting is just a different offshoot and branch of the old Babylonian mystery system.

The leaders of Masonry are told that it is perfectly all right to deceive the members at a lower level so that they may grow in the knowledge and understanding at a later date. That's why it says:

Verse 3: "**In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**" *You don't need these secret organizations with secret rights and mysterious things to do to have the knowledge of God!* That's just another old Babylonian mystery thing, which is coming out in a lot of the New Age stuff today.

Verse 4: Now, this I say so that no one may **deceive you by persuasive speech.** For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet, I am with you in

spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and **the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.** Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be **walking in Him**" (vs 4-6).

Notice the emphasis, ***stay in Christ, walk with Christ!*** That should tell us an awful lot about the message that should be being taught, and that should be being heard by the congregation. If the minister is not teaching that, is he limiting some of the knowledge that he is responsible to teach the people? Isn't it a shame that sometimes a church can be so bad in its leadership and teachings that people have to leave the congregation to find Christ? *Yes!* Sometimes that happens. We've seen that many times it has occurred.

Verse 7: "Being rooted and built up in Him [Christ], and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. **Be on guard...** [tie in Matt. 24—Beware! For many will come in My name saying, 'I am the Christ.')] **...so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ.** For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and **you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power** in Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (vs 7-11). *All the things that Paul is layering this. It starts out:*

- God the Father
- Jesus Christ
- knowledge
- teaching
- baptism
- forgiveness of sin
- watch that you're not spoiled

I looked that this New Age thing that this woman was writing and it says that the way you accept Christ is virtually all on your works. In other words, you choose Christ and you're going to do this good thing for God. That's one of the things to ***beware, lest any man spoil you through vain deceit!***

Verse 18: "**Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize by doing his will in self-abasement and the worship of angels...**"—*that's what New Age channeling is all about!*

- Can a person lose their reward if they don't worship God correctly? *Yes!*
- Could they lose salvation if they go so far as to rejecting God? *Yes, they could lose reward and salvation, everything!*

If people are drawn into angel-worship, are those angels of God? or Are they angels of the devil? It says in Rev. 12 that Michael and the angel fought 'the dragon and his angels.' What would a true angel of God tell anyone who attempted to worship the them?

Revelation 22:8: "Now I, John, *was* the one who saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who *was* showing me these things. But he said to me, '**See that you do not do this!** For I am a fellow servant of yours, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. **Worship God**'" (vs 8-9). *A true angel of God would never have anyone worship them!*

In voluntary worshipping of angels, we are obviously talking about *demon worship, demon spiritually and demon involvement*. Obviously, having nothing to do with the angels of God.

Colossians 2:18: "...intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind."

I want you to think about how many movies today are based upon demonism, apparitions and all this sort of thing. It is so rife, so much in this society. Look at some of the goody-goody things that Walt Disney puts out. It always gets into it one way or the other. What does this do? *It sets up the psychology of the mind, and the education of the individual, that this is an alright thing to do!* But it isn't!

Verse 19: "And not holding fast to the Head, from Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, is increasing *with* the increase of God. Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements of the world, why are you subjecting yourselves to *the decrees of men* as if you were living in *the world*?" (vs 19-20).

Obviously, they were living in the world. They were alive and on earth. This means that you are living in the world *as the world is living, in the way that they do things!* One of these days I know that someone is going to approach me and ask me to join the Elks Club. It's going to be all I can do to restrain myself to be civil. I'll just tell them kindly, 'No thanks!' and go on.

- Could I lose part of my reward?
- Could I lose my Christianity?
- If I said it was nothing?
- If I said an idol is nothing and tempt God?
- If I go sit with the Elks where they have 'the most worshipful master'?
- The exalted leader?
- Is that vanity?

Puffed up in the vanity of their fleshly minds, by intruding into things that they don't understand! If you ask some of those in the Elks Club, Masons or some of those things, 'Do you really understand?' *No!* In this case it is:

"...why are you subjecting yourselves to *the decrees of men* as if you were living in *the world*? *They say*, 'You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!'" (vs 10-21).

There are many, many different things both Gentile and Jewish. Read the book: *Code of Jewish Law* and see all the dos and don'ts that they Jews have. What about all the dos and don'ts that the Gentiles have? *Sure they did!* Read the book: *The Golden Bough!*

Verse 22: "The use of all such things leads to corruption, according to the commandments and doctrines of men, which indeed have an outward appearance of wisdom in **voluntary worship of angels, and self-abasement...**" (vs 22-23)—*will worship!*

I heard a minister say once that 'we have to set our will to be in the Kingdom of God.' Yes, that's true statement, we do! However, if we're not looking to Christ, all the setting of our will is ***our own will-worship!***

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"...and unsparing treatment of *the body*, not in any respect to the satisfying of *the needs* of the flesh" (v 23).

This covers a whole multitude of things. All of the dos and don'ts of touch this and not touching that, eating this and not eating that is not going to keep people from sinning. It's not going to do away with 'the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.' Those things are only handled ***through conversion and the Holy Spirit, and the power of Jesus Christ within us!***

The key thing is that this shows us ***a way*** in which people can lose their reward, by getting into things and false doctrines that they shouldn't be getting into.

2-John tells us something very important on how we can receive the full reward rather than losing part of it.

2-John 1: "The elder to *the chosen lady* and her children, whom I love in Truth, and not I alone, but also all those who have known the Truth; for *the sake* of the Truth that is dwelling in us, and shall be with us forever: Grace, mercy, *and* peace shall be with us from God *the Father*, and from *the Lord Jesus Christ*, the Son of the Father, in truth and love"

(vs 1-3).

Those may sound like flowery words, but the more that I see this end-time Babylonianism taking over through the New Age this and that and the other things, I realize how important that the name of Jesus Christ is. I still keep hearkening back to the series that I did on the New Age Catholic Church and how Malachi Martin wrote one chapter: *the Abolishment of Christ in the World*. It's happening just exactly as he said, though he was a Catholic.

If a Catholic can see it and know it, how bad has it got to be? He said that it came through these ancient things that were in the past. That is exactly what is happening, and they are expunging the name of Jesus Christ. Notice that it is “...**from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.**”

- there are many people *using* the name of Jesus
- there are many people *using* the name of ‘Father’

But there are not many people who will say that Jesus is Lord! That's a whole lot more. When we were young and growing up there were more people who believed in Jesus, so we didn't think that this was any phenomenal thing. Now I can see how important this is.

Verse 4: “I rejoiced exceedingly that I have found among your children those who are walking in Truth, exactly as we received commandment from the Father. And now I beseech you, lady, not as though I am writing a new commandment to you, but that which we have *observed* from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is the love of God: that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, exactly as you heard from *the beginning*, that you might walk in it, **because many deceivers...** [see the contrast again] **...have entered into the world; those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh....**” (vs 4-7).

We find that more and more, not only just in these Eastern Oriental type of religions, but even within Christianity.

“...This is *the spirit of the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out for yourselves in order that we may not lose the things we have accomplished, but that we may receive a full reward*” (vs 7-8)—*a full reward, not part of it!*

I'm sure that there are some who would build with wood, and maybe not all of the wood will be burned up in a trial. With the *hay* there might be a little bit of hay on the fringes of, so there might be a

little bit of reward left. I don't know too much about stubble, because stubble is pretty well consumed real quickly. The key I want to hit here is that ***we receive a full reward!***

Verse 9: “Anyone who transgresses and does not continue in the doctrine of Christ does not have God....”

- it doesn't matter how spiritual sound
 - it doesn't matter how eloquent they may be
- They don't have God!***
- Does Satan—Lucifer—have God? ***NO!***
 - Can he be eloquent? ***Yes!***

Sometimes we just need to ask the most basic question that we can!

“...*But* the one who continues in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into *your house*, and do not say to him, ‘Welcome!’ For anyone who says, ‘Welcome!’ to him is partaking in his evil works. I have many things to write, but I do not wish to *convey these things to you* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face in order that our joy may be *completely* full. The children of your chosen sister salute you. Amen” (vs 9-13).

This is where different groups have to go forward, and we have to go forward the best that we can. It's one thing to say, ‘Okay, I have an open mind and I'm willing to learn.’ *That's fine!* But there can be people who have open minds and willing to learn, but except error and false things, too. That's not the only thing.

On the other hand, you can't go to the other extreme and say that you know everything, and there's nothing new that you can learn and nobody else can teach you anything.

Those are the two extremes, and that's why it's so important. What did John emphasize here? What did he say? ***He who is abiding in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son!*** Under those circumstances:

- What is the promise of Christ concerning things we need to know? *The Holy Spirit will reveal all things to you!*
- How is the Holy Spirit going to do it?
- Because we're smart? ***No!***

Because of the power of God's Holy Spirit in us! That's how it's done!

- Does it mean that we just sit and wait and have it come as a funnel? ***No!***
 - ✓ God wants us to study
 - ✓ God wants us to think *correctly*

So that we can come to an understanding!

I think that some of things that we have suffered through, God has blessed us with grace, understand and knowledge. That's not saying that we're better than anybody else, because that isn't true. That's just where we may happen to be at any particular time, and does not necessarily equate to where anyone else may happen to be at any particular time, too. Not only do we want to attain to the resurrection, but we also want the reward.

- Why should you be willing to settle for wood, hay and stubble?
- Why not shoot for the gold, the silver and the precious stone?
- Why not?
- Is there anything wrong with that? *No!*

Because you're desiring the things—as Paul said—*that are more excellent!* That's what we need to strive toward.

Heb. 5 is talking about Jesus Christ and all the things that He went through. He's at the right hand of God and is our High Priest (Heb. 4) and we can come to Him at any time. He understands, and **boy does He understand** because He had to bear *the law of sin and death* within Him. He was perfectly righteous.

- Don't you think He understands every temptation?
- Don't you think He understands every pull of the flesh?
- How could He be our Savior if He didn't have that? *He could not be!*

Hebrews 5:11: "Concerning Whom we *have* much to say and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing."

- Here is a choice by circumstance!
- Here is a choice that was exercised by these people!

Verse 12: "For truly, by this time **you ought to be teachers, but instead you need to have someone teach you again what are the beginning principles of the oracles of God...**"

- Were they letting thing slack and slide to where they weren't growing in grace and knowledge?
- What did Jesus say to the Church Era of Ephesus? *You have lost your first love!*
- What should our first love be? *The love of God!*

If you lose your first love, the love of God, you better repent or, as Christ said, 'I'm going to come and remove your candlestick.'

If you've lost that, would you become someone who should have been a teacher, but now had the very basic need to start with milk again? *Yes! We have it right here!*

"...and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food" (v 12).

It is true! People can go along and if they don't study and pray... Let's just analyze a couple of things. We came out of a church where we were ordered to study and hour a day and pray an hour a day. If you couldn't do it, set the alarm, a clock, and do it by the clock.

We can see the fallacy in that, because you can't legislate attitude and righteousness. But if a person did that, is he better off before God than someone who didn't pray and didn't study? *Yes, he's better off!* But what about the person who is motivated by putting God the Father and Christ first, who love God, who willingly pray every day **from the heart**, and who willingly study every day **from the heart**, not by an alarm? Is his attitude going to be more receptive for learning and growing in grace and knowledge? *Obviously, yes!* It's a whole different attitude and frame of mind, so we have the three:

- the sluggards
- the disciplinarians
- the volunteers

What is it that God wants? *A willing heart, a willing mind!*

Verse 13: "For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in *the* Word of Righteousness because he is an infant. But solid food is for those who are fully grown, **who through repeated practice have had their senses trained to discern between good and evil**" (vs 13-14). *There you have the difference between the rewards laid out a little differently than in 1-Cor. 3!*

- What is the most important thing that God is looking to?
- What is that God wants most of all?

The Jews have it that God wants law upon law upon law, ad infinitum, to control your breathing, your sneezing, your snoring, your waking, your sitting, your standing, all of your time! **NO! That is not what God wants!** The most important thing that God wants is right here:

1-Chronicles 28:9: "And you, Solomon my son... [when he was being given the charge to build

the temple, when he was coronated as king] ...**acknowledge the God of your father** ...” *How do we know Him?*

1-John 2:3: “And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. The one who says, ‘I know Him’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him” (vs 3-4).

- Did Solomon end up that way? *Yes, he did!*
- What was the indictment that God gave to Solomon? *That his heart was turned from God!*

1-Chronicles 28:9: “...**acknowledge the God of your father and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind**...”

That is the only way that you’re going to be able to have rewards of gold, silver and precious stones. God doesn’t want someone whom He has to make do something. God can command it. He can make people do it. But does He have pleasure in it? *No, God doesn’t have pleasure in it!*

It’s just like with our children, we can make our children do certain things, but oh how much nicer it is when they willingly do it. Same way with God. How do you feel toward your children when they willingly do something? You want to reward them with something they don’t know or expect is coming.

It’s not that they earn it and expect so much, because they’ve done so much. It is because they have a willing attitude and a willing mind, so therefore, that creates joy for them and joy for you, and you want to give them something.

This is what David was telling Solomon. Did David know? *Yes, David learned, as we covered about the reward of the wicked and what happened to David when he was rewarded for his situation with Bathsheba!* He knew!

“...for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts....” (v 9). *Tie in Gen. 6:5; 8:21 about the imagination of the heart is evil continually!* This is what the reward that we’re going to see is going to be based upon:

- How is your heart before God?
- How is your heart set before God?
- Who sets it? *You do, by your own choice!*

“...If you seek Him, He will be found by you. But if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.... [loss of reward] ...Take heed now... [there’s always this challenge to inspire you to seek the highest and the best and to do what God wants, then God’s Word always with a warning] ...for the

LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and do it” (vs 9-10).

Let’s see some of the things that we’re going to find concerning choice, works and the things that are done with what we are given.

Matthew 13:13: “For this *reason* I speak to them in parables, because **seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand**.... [it’s partly by their own choice. It’s partly by whom they serve] ...And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, ‘In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand; and *in* seeing you shall see, and in no way perceive; for the heart of this people has grown fat...’” (vs 13-15).

I think we’re living in the same age today, and the epitome of it is reflected in the attitude toward AIDS. You’re not going to eliminate it altogether, but you can keep it down to a very low proportion of the society to teach all people, as they’re growing up that there should be no sexual activity outside of marriage—*period!* We know that’s a hard standard for a lot of people to try and keep. However, a greater majority of them would be doing that if it were taught.

But no, they want to do everything else other than teach that. Give them all kinds of birth control things, perfect the medicine, give condoms to everybody, find a cure for AIDS, but let us never stop our sexual activity. What does this do? ***This closes the ears, closes the eyes so they have no understanding!***

“...and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes **they** have closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and should hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (v 15). *There it’s talking about a spiritual healing!*

That’s why it’s not *the only* day of salvation today. If it were, God is losing hands down! But here’s part of the reward today:

Verse 16: “But **blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear**. For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see what you see, and have not seen; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard” (vs 16-17). *This a tremendous reward and blessing for us right here, right now, today!*

Let’s look at some of the parables and see what it is that happens. Most of the times these things take place because of our effort. Sometimes because of our weaknesses we are not able to do certain things.

Verse 18: “Therefore, hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom and does not understand *it*, the wicked one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart....” (vs 18-19).

- Satan is right there
- Satan hates Christ
- Satan hates God

Satan is going to do everything he can to keep people from receiving it. *God is allowing that for the time being!*

“...This is the one who was sown by the way. Now, the one who was sown upon the rocky places is the one who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy; but *because* he has no root in himself, *he* does not endure; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, **he is quickly offended**” (vs 19-21). *It doesn't say that he's lost, but he's lost his reward!*

Verse 22: “And the one who was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the Word, but the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful.... [we're to bring forth fruit] ...But the one who was sown on good ground, this is the one who hears the Word and understands, who indeed brings forth fruit and produces—one a hundredfold, another sixtyfold *and* another thirtyfold” (vs 22-23).

There are some choices and determinations that we have to make. I think we're living in an age now where it's more like the thorns. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke it out. When it's all easy going it's easy to go ahead and let those things happen.

Let's close with one thing concerning that, which really happened to strike home in my mind. I was reading something, and he was saying it rightly, where he was saying to the Protestants that a lot of *these so-called good* Protestants are expecting the rapture so they're not going to have to go through the evil.

It sounds a little bit like those who are going to a place of safety, so they won't have to go through the evil and contend with it because they're know they're going to go there. This person said, ‘They have their eye on the wrong thing!’ I got to thinking about this:

Luke 21:34: “Watch **yourselves** lest your hearts be preoccupied **with high living and drinking and the cares of this life**, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare it shall come upon all those who dwell on the face of the earth. **Watch, therefore, and pray at all times that**

you may be accounted worthy...to stand before the Son of man” (vs 34-36).

I left out something! We have been told and there's even a magazine that's called *Watch* put out by a Church of God. They are to watch *world events!* True, you're to look at world events, but what is the most important thing to watch? ***Your own spiritual condition!*** World events aren't going to save you, or lose you. ***You own conduct before God, your own spirituality, your own spiritual life is going to make it or break it for you!***

Verse 36—the whole verse: “Watch, therefore, *and* pray at all times **that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass**, and to stand before the Son of man.”

Do you think that you can watch world events and really understand them so you can escape them, and will know when to go to a place of safety? ***NO! Because God is going to make the selection, so you have to watch yourself! Take heed to yourselves that that day not come upon you unawares!***

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

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 19:29-42
- 2) 1 Peter 1:2-4
- 3) Revelation 22:12
- 4) 1 Corinthians 3:11-15
- 5) 2 Timothy 4:6-8
- 6) Colossians 2:18, 1-11, 18
- 7) Revelation 22:8-9
- 8) Colossians 2:18-23
- 9) 2 John 1-13
- 10) Hebrews 5:11-14
- 11) 1 Chronicles 28:9
- 12) 1 John 2:3-4
- 13) 1 Chronicles 28:9-10
- 14) Matthew 13:13-23
- 15) Luke 21:24-36

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Peter 4
- Revelation 2; 3
- Matthew 24
- Revelation 12
- Hebrews 4
- Genesis 6:5; 8:21

Also referenced: Books:

- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin

- *The Golden Bough* by Sir James Frazer

FRC:bo
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