

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

BIBLICAL USE OF REWARDS AS A MOTIVATION
FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

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By

Bill Fredric Korver

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ABSTRACT

THE BIBLICAL USE OF REWARDS AS A MOTIVATION FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Bill F. Korver

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Mentor: Dr. Charles Davidson

A review of current cultural trends and Christian literature reveals very little writing and preaching about a motivation for personal obedience in general and vocational ministry in particular. The purpose of this project will be to demonstrate how one's motivation for service to Christ will be greatly enhanced when considering the possibility of gaining, or losing, rewards from Jesus Christ both in this life and more specifically at the future judgment seat of Christ. It will be the intent of this project to demonstrate conclusively that not only is this a scripturally sound motivation, but also that it is a chief motivation employed by the New Testament writers.

Abstract length: 104 words

DEDICATION

It has been said, "If you see a turtle on a fence post, you can be sure it had help getting there!" I am not a turtle, but I most definitely had help to get to this point of my life. In my formal education, three professors at Southeastern Bible College (Birmingham, AL) had the most profound impact, Doctors Gannett, Raiford and Talley respectively taught me how to walk in the Spirit, how to rightly interpret the scriptures and how to clearly communicate God's Word. During those days I met Rick Oglesby, who later recommended a resource that sparked an interest in the topic of rewards and loss.

A special thanks to the believers at First Bible Church (Decatur, AL), Christ Community Church (Pinehurst, NC) and the Carolina Bible College (Fayetteville, NC) family who have encouraged and supported me through years of study and patiently allowed me to grow as a teacher of God's Word and leader of His people.

Finally, my family deserves the greatest thanks. My parents, Bill and Fran Korver, introduced me to the Savior and have consistently lived for the King. My five siblings each have had a profound influence on my life. Last, but certainly not least, my wife, Marcia, and three children, Elizabeth, Jared and Allegra, have always been faithful encouragers and my biggest cheerleaders. For all these people and many others I have known, I cannot wait to see the rewards the King bestows upon them!

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INTRODUCTION

The church in America, and perhaps around the world, faces great challenges. Among them are these, how does she get the uninvolved involved? Studies show that 8 in 10 church members are not. Another major challenge is, how does the church encourage the 20%, or so, of those who are actively involved to remain involved in ministry? Stating the problems another way, believers in the United States do not live lives that are demonstrably different than those who are not believers. Why is this and how can and should the church respond?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What the church has been doing has not been working, thus it should be clearly evident that something else needs to be done. This work will attempt to demonstrate what has been done to address the problem by two major systems of theology and then will give what the writer believes is a far more biblical response, one that can be traced from the earliest pages of the Old Testament to the last page of the New Testament. It is the writer's contention that the entire Bible, but especially the New Testament's primary means to motivate believers to obedience, to sanctification, is the promise of rewards and/or the threat of loss of them.

STATEMENT OF LIMITATIONS

This work will not consider other biblical motivators such as a love for Christ, a desire to help others and an avoidance of discipline in this life. Another limitation of this study is that it will not consider exhaustively every passage that addresses rewards as a

motivator, only a representative number.

THEORETICAL BASIS FOR THE PROJECT

The subject of rewards as a motivator to obedience, a life of Christian service, touches on many facets of the Christian life. Theologically it addresses the subject of soteriology. Theology has long recognized that salvation is a three phase issue, justification, sanctification and glorification. Unfortunately works of obedience are often linked to justification when they are a sanctification issue. Further as one is, through good works and other means, sanctified, his glorification will be forever affected. The more one pursues after holiness in this life, the more glory he receives and can reflect upon Christ.

STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY

It will be the writer's intention to demonstrate in greater detail the problem the church faces (chapter 1). Further it will be demonstrated how the two major theological systems address the problem (chapter 2). The writer will turn to the Old Testament to consider the use of rewards in the Old Testament (chapter 3). The subject is not as fully revealed in the Old Testament, but a foundation is laid. Turning to the New Testament, four key figures will be considered to determine what each said or wrote about rewards. The four are, Jesus, Peter, Paul and John (chapter 4). If rewards are as significant as the writer contends, what rewards are there to be won or lost? Will they really motivate? These questions are raised and answered in chapter 5. The last chapter (6) will look at church history. If rewards are truly a motivator, it would appear in the nineteen centuries since the close of the canon there would be a record of lives motivated by rewards. The final chapter considers the martyrs of the church and the music of the church.

All this will be done by means of consulting commentaries, theologies, theological

journals, on-line articles, hymnals and books specifically addressing the topic of rewards and the judgment seat of Christ. Additionally, several dozen believers in Christ will be polled to discern their opinions regarding motivation and rewards (see Appendix C, MOTIVATION SURVEY).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following is a representative list of the resources that will be consulted in the research and writing of this paper.

The Judgment Seat of Christ: An Incentive and Warning by L. Sale-Harrison. This older volume was published in 1938. Of particular interest to the writer is not only the title but also the fact that Sale-Harrison observed the connection between the Judgment Seat of Christ and a believer's incentive for living well.

Your Eternal Reward by Erwin Lutzer. Lutzer, long time pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, writes clearly and insightfully about the Judgment Seat. His chapter titles include, "What Can We Gain?" (chapter 3), "What Can We Lose?" (chapter 4), "What Christ Will Be Looking For" (chapter 5) and "Reigning With Christ Forever" (chapter 9).

The Reign of the Servant Kings by Joseph Dillow. Dillow's book, in this writer's estimation, is the best he has ever read on the topic of rewards and is a work by which all others should be evaluated. It is more than 600 pages in length and from Genesis to Revelation covers nearly every conceivable issue related to obedience, rewards and motivation.

The Account Which We Must Give by Carl G. Johnson. Johnson, a veteran pastor and theologian, writes about the Bema in a manner similar to many other works to be used, however his chapter 5, Loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ, is a look into the often neglected aspect of this future evaluation.

The Road to Reward by Robert N. Wilkin. Wilkin is a Ph.D. graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and founder of the Grace Evangelical Society. His work is well done and includes five very readable sections. Of particular interest are section 2, "Who Receives a Reward?", section 3, "What are Rewards?" and section 4, "How Should This Impact My Life Now?"

Facing Your Final Job Review by Woodrow Michael Kroll. Kroll's volume is very practical and readable. A fairly recent volume, 2008, it reflects the wisdom and maturity of an evangelical leader who has been writing, preaching and teaching for many years.

Setting the Stage for Eternity by Harlan Betz. Betz, another seasoned pastor, writes very clearly regarding the Judgment Seat. Unlike many other volumes, Betz writes at length (pages 215-249) on the overcomer rewards in Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

Martyr's Mirror by Theileman J. van Braught. A Dutchman, van Braught originally wrote this volume in 1660. His work was translated into English in 1886 and is now in reprint. It covers the first fifteen centuries of the church. It predates *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* and comments on the motivation of many who died for their faith in Christ.

The Grace New Testament Commentary edited by Robert N. Wilkin. The writer knows several of the contributors to this two volume set, all of whom have an interest and passion in the theology of rewards. This volume will be often referred to in the section regarding Jesus', Peter's, Paul's and John's theology on motivation and rewards.

The following is a short, representative list of the scripture passages to be considered and commented on in this paper.

Isaiah 40:10 , "Behold the Lord GOD will come with might, with His arm ruling with Him. Behold, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him."

1 Samuel 2:30, "Therefore the LORD God of Israel declares, 'I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever'; but now the LORD declares, 'Far be it from Me—for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.'"

Ruth 2:12, "May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."

Matthew 5:19, "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 6:1, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven."

1 Peter 5:1-4, "Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to you charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

1 Corinthians 4:2-5, "In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted, but the one who examines me is the Lord. Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes

who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motive of men's hearts, and then each man's praise will come from God."

James 1:12, "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

1 John 2:28, "And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."

Revelation 3:21, "He who overcomes, I will grant to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

Revelation 22:12, "Behold I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

CHAPTER ONE

A MOTIVATIONAL PROBLEM

Why write about motivation and rewards? There is an endless number of subjects that could have been chosen (Eccl 12:12), why this one? Amazon, the online retailer, lists more than 2.5 million different volumes for sale! To answer that question, a bit of personal history is in order. The year was 1996 and the writer was pastoring a church he had helped plant in 1989. He was preparing for an upcoming sermon series that was to cover eschatology, specifically some selected future events that are prophesied in the Bible that have yet to be fulfilled. One of the planned sermons was to be on the judgment seat of Christ, or the Bema as it is often called by writers of past generations. The topic was one he had heard a few lectures and sermons on but had never personally studied nor preached. The writer called a trusted friend and asked him for recommendations of any books that might supplement the author's exegesis of the scriptures. A particular resource was recommended, purchased and read within a matter of days. The resulting study for that particular sermon was so meaningful that the writer enthusiastically started an exciting journey of a more careful exegesis of the Word of God and the reading of many fine resources. The results of this study have been nothing short of transformational to the author.

The writer was saved as a six year old boy, grew up in a Christ-centered home, attended a great Bible-exposition church, went to an outstanding Bible College and three fine evangelical graduate schools and seminaries. In all that time he heard little about the topic of rewards as a motivation for service. Until 1999, after eighteen years in vocational ministry, he had never heard one sermon on the negative aspects that might result from a lack of motivation or faithfulness in serving Jesus Christ, yet the writer finds it curious that he has heard dozens of sermons on marriage, finances, spiritual warfare, spiritual gifts and such. Why this omission or oversight? The writer cannot pretend to know the hearts or motivations of others but believes whether an oversight or a deliberate decision, the omission has greatly harmed the body of Christ.

It seems to the writer that the problem of a proper, biblical motivation for service should be apparent to anyone honest enough to consider the facts. For years we who are evangelicals have been informed of what has been called the 80/20 principle. Technically, the principle is called the Pareto Principle. Named after an Italian economist, Vilfredo Pareto, who observed that 80 percent of all Italy's land was owned by 20 percent of Italians. He wrote on this in 1906 and since that time the principle has been observed in most other arenas as well (for example in sales, 20% of the sales force will create 80% of sales; in technology, solving 20% of the "bugs" in an operating system actually solves 80% of the crashes and shutdowns; in criminology, 20% of all criminals commit 80% of all crimes; in health care 20% of all patients consume 80% of all health care resources)¹. It has been observed that in the church, the Pareto Principle holds true

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pareto_principle; Internet; accessed 9 April, 2011

as well. In the church 20% of the people volunteer for 80% of the ministries and contribute 80% of the budget to the church. Conversely 80% of the church body does only 20% of the ministry and only 20% of the giving. While this principle is not reality in every church, it is very common.

Using Pareto's numbers, this writer will assume that in most churches 80% of those who attend are under motivated. Even if a particular church is far better than average at least 50% of the members would be under motivated. The writer will further assume that he is writing to believers in Christ, knowing full well that, depending on the church, many who attend have not been regenerated. In this work, when the writer refers to the church, he is using the term as the New Testament does, referring to saints, not attendees, and to people, never the building.

It seems to the writer that the motivation problems can be summarized by the following three points: 1) Those with no/little motivation, 2) those with improper motivation and 3) those with questioning/declining motivation.

LACK OF MOTIVATION

Put quite simply, millions of believers in Christ are lacking any, or at least a proper, motivation to obey Jesus Christ. The next chapter of this work will deal with the charge that any or all who lack motivation are not truly regenerated. Perhaps that is the case in the lives of some people, but to say that 80% of those under the banner of evangelicalism are not saved is not true and does not square with scripture. Millions lack a motivation to

obey the commands of scripture, or heed the prohibitions of their Savior, Jesus Christ is commonplace.

One reason for this is what the scriptures call carnality (1 Cor 3:1-5). The writer believes carnality, as defined by 1 Corinthians 3:1-5, occurs when a believer in Christ, (in verse 1 they are called "babes in Christ" [NASB]), live in the flesh rather than in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Put another way, a believer lives by his natural, fleshly, old nature and appetites rather than with an eternal perspective and Holy Spirit led and empowered life. The church at Corinth, perhaps the worst church in the New Testament, was noted for this. It occurs frequently in our day too. These under motivated believers live lives not unlike the world.

When Christian pollster, George Barna, surveys the landscape of evangelicalism in America, those who identify themselves as evangelicals have as high a divorce rate as does the general populace. Christian teenage girls get pregnant outside of marriage and obtain abortions as frequently as do non-Christian girls. One writer, Christine Wicker, in her book, *The Fall of the Evangelical Nation*, writes the following:

Popular evangelical speaker Josh McDowell says evangelical kids are only 10 percent less likely to engage in premarital sex, and some scholars say that's too high a number. Of the more than 2.5 million young people who signed the Southern Baptist abstinence pledge, True Love Waits, surveys showed that only 12 percent kept their promise by their own admission. Another study showed that some of those who were claiming virginity had gone on record the year before their pledge as having lost that attribute. The number of evangelicals who've had sex outside marriage is so large that some evangelicals now talk about ways to reclaim your virginity through repentance, a good spiritual idea but physically unlikely. Mark Regnerus, a professor at the University of Texas, found that evangelical teens lose their virginity slightly younger (16.3 years of age) than mainline Protestant and Catholic teens (16.7 years of age) and

are much more likely (13.7 percent) to have three or more sexual partners by age seventeen than mainline teens (8.9 percent)².

On another subject, but equally disturbing, Wicker critiques Christian's moral behavior, specifically, about how evangelical men treat their wives, she writes:

When pollster George Barna looked at seventy moral behaviors, he didn't find any difference between the actions of those who were born again Christians and those who weren't. His studies and other indicators show that divorce among born-again is as common as, or more common than, among other groups. A study by another group showed evangelical men no more or less likely to beat their wives than other men, while another showed that wives in traditional, male dominated marriages were 300 percent more likely to be beaten than wives in egalitarian marriages.³

Nearly everyone would agree that abortion is a heated topic in the culture and in politics. Right or wrong, for many it is the litmus test for whether a candidate is electable or not. The following is yet another sobering reality that a vast number of evangelicals are under motivated in obeying God's moral standards:

At Dallas's oldest abortion clinic, Routh Street Women's Clinic, a longtime manager estimates that evangelicals make up more of their clients than anyone else. Why? Dallas has more evangelicals than anything else. When *New York Times* reporter John Leland went to a Little Rock clinic to talk with women getting abortions, he found evangelical Christians were plentiful. Some were coming in for their second or third abortion.⁴

Clearly these statistics should be unacceptable to a Christ follower. If they are unacceptable, why are they apparently so normal? It is due to the reality that so many believers are under motivated. It is true inside the walls of the church building too.

Using Pareto's numbers, 8 in 10 are doing nothing in their local church. They do not use

² Christine Wicker, *The Fall of the Evangelical Nation* (New York: Harper, 2008) 80f

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 81

their gifts which burdens others to do multiple ministries. When it comes to giving, they rarely do so and when they do it is from excess, neither from the heart nor generously. Only eternity will reveal how this behavior hindered the body of Christ in reaching the world with the gospel of Christ.

THE IMPROPERLY MOTIVATED

This group, unlike the previous group, has some motivation, the problem lies in what it is that motivates them. The matter of improper motivation is not new, Jesus warned against it in Matthew 6:1, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men *to be noticed by them*;^[italics mine] otherwise you have no reward with your Father in heaven". Two more times in Matthew 6:2 and 6:5 Jesus cautioned similarly to not do things to be honored or seen by men. The implication is clear, people can do things to be seen or noticed by men. In the context of the story, the people who had improper motives (called hypocrites here, Mt 6:2) were doing good things such as giving alms to the poor, praying and giving. Jesus was not faulting the actions of the hypocrites, only the motivation. Improper motives have been a part of human nature throughout human history since the fall. Today it may not be fasting, giving to benevolence or praying for all the wrong reasons. It might be taking a position of leadership in a local church so one can wield power. It might be leading a Bible study so as to get the applause and praise of others. It can be giving generously only to have a building named after the giver. Improper motives are not a malady that merely affects volunteers, it often affects professional clergy as well. Very few are the people who have been in ministry for any length who have not known of a minister or pastor whose sole desire, apparently, is to be in control. The author has known more than one person who changed ministry for the stated reason of the salary being considerably higher than in his former ministry even though the

new church did not line up with his theological position.

To those with improper motivation, does the Word of God have any counsel? Indeed it does! Jesus did not say to those who did good things for the wrong reasons would not be rewarded, He said they received the reward they were looking for, the approval of men. They should not expect any reward from Him (Mt 6:1).

Clearly the improperly motivated are, in some sense, better than the unmotivated. At least the improperly motivated are doing good things, albeit for all the wrong reasons, which is better than doing nothing. Yet the bottom line is they are motivated for the wrong reason. When God's people are improperly motivated, they are also improperly energized. Carnality is living in the power of the flesh rather than availing one's self of the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom 8:6-8; 1 Cor 3:1-5). There is no way of knowing how many of God's people are represented in the improperly motivated group, but when coupled with the under motivated it would represent a great majority of evangelicals. If Vilfredo Pareto's principle is applicable here, 80% of the body of Christ fits one of these two descriptions.

QUESTIONING MOTIVATION

Within the body of Christ, there is yet a third group of people, those who serve God with honorable intentions. These are the dear saints who often serve in multiple roles in their local church. In many cases this group gives 80% of the entire church budget. They live within their means and give sacrificially when a legitimate need is presented. When it comes to service, they volunteer. They will fill multiple roles at church and will pitch in to help wherever needed, even if it is not in the realm of their giftedness.

This group, however, often has a battle going on internally. They wonder, does all that they are doing really matter? In the big scheme of things, will it ultimately matter

that they are doing all the things they are? Will it really matter that they have lived sacrificially and given generously? Does volunteering in children's church really matter? Does, helping with AWANA or mentoring a youth group student matter? The pastor of a smaller church who serves faithfully year after year with little visible results, while another pastor comes up with gimmicks that draw a crowd, wonders if his faithfulness will really matter? The missionary who serves in a very difficult field, where seeing any harvest may take fifteen years or more, can find himself wondering, has his life made any real difference for Christ and eternity? Why keep plugging away when it seems so futile and difficult?

This group often, as they serve longer and get older, begins to question their motivation. Perhaps struggles with motivation would be a better term. The reason they often struggle is that it seems, in this life, that those who are unmotivated and those who are improperly motivated seem to do well and not be under the wrath of God. Further, based upon the sermons they have heard at church and various funerals, no matter how one lived life, unmotivated, under motivated, highly motivated and yet beginning to question their motivation, when a believer stands before Jesus at the end of life, everyone gets a "well done, good and faithful servant" and a hearty pat on the back from Jesus. While these two conclusions about this life and the next are contrary to what the word of God teaches, many of God's people struggle with these thoughts. It seems to the writer, that those who are unmotivated, the improperly motivated and the highly motivated all need to be taught a similar truth. There is in this life, and in the life to come, a connection between one's obedience to Christ and the rich enjoyment of life now and in eternity, the rewards God has promised to those who will serve faithfully should spur on the unmotivated and under-motivated to get active in their service and

obedience to Christ. This same truth should encourage the highly motivated who are struggling to maintain their motivation, God will reward all they have done for Him. The rewards often come in part in this life, and most certainly will be a reality in the life to come.

Survey results in appendix C reveal that the majority of the respondents recognized a problem (54%) but their responses also reveal a lack of consensus on how to address the problem. Nearly one in three (32%) said that no matter what a believer's "service record" was in this life, all would be equal in eternity. Most responded that the consequences that might be suffered for disobedience would only occur in this life and the life of the church (74%). The majority of those surveyed had been believers for more than twenty years, came from solid, Bible teaching churches, yet were quite confused regarding rewards and motivation.

CHAPTER 2

SEARCHING FOR MOTIVATION

As was demonstrated in chapter one, a great number of people are unmotivated or improperly motivated. Those two groups need to gain a sense of motivation that is biblical. The properly motivated need truth to cling to that will bolster and anchor their motivation so that it will not drift when the currents of uncertainty threaten to cause their motivation to drift to doubt or disobedience. In this chapter the question, how do many attempt to motivate others, will be answered.

The secular world often answers the question of motivation with money or perks in order to get people to work. The general idea is that if a person is paid enough, he will be motivated to do good work and stay at it. While this may work for awhile with some people, it is short-lived. One need only look at professional athletes to see that this motivation method is fraught with problems. The athlete is typically motivated for a while, but then, when making millions of dollars, usually at the height of his career, will hold out for more money and threaten to boycott the team. It is not uncommon for the player in question to state that he feels underappreciated. Money may work for a while but not indefinitely. The fact that business struggles to answer the question of motivation can be seen in the following admission: "In spite of enormous research,

basic as well as applied, the subject of motivation is not clearly understood and more often than not *poorly practiced*. To understand motivation one must understand human nature itself. And there lies the problem."¹ One author admits that motivation can only happen consistently and successfully if one understands human nature, and he does not. A bit later in the same article he writes: "There is an old saying, 'you can take a horse to water but you cannot force it to drink'; it will drink only if it's thirsty, so with people. They will do what they want to do or are otherwise motivated to do. Whether it is to excel on the workshop floor or in the 'ivory tower' they must be motivated or driven to it either by themselves or through external stimulus."² The problem is discovering what the stimulus might be. What works for one will not work for another. What works today will not necessarily work tomorrow. "You may be a distinguished mind reader, and you may have picked the perfect reward last time. Next time, however, why don't you ask them what they would like as an incentive or reward? You can't predict what will light a fire for them."³

Even if the secular world did not struggle, the church could not and should not follow its pattern. In the working world, most people are motivated, to some extent, by their

¹ Employee Motivation: Theory and Practice <http://www.accel.team.com>

² Ibid. 2

³ <http://Harvey.robbins.com.2008/05/58/leadership-skill-what-motivates-people>

salaries. The church is largely a volunteer organization that cannot compete with business when it comes to remuneration. Christians have concluded they have problems motivating others too, Os Guinness, in his fine work, *The Call*, writes of the problem of motivation, "The trouble is that, as modern people, we have much to live with and too little to live for. Some feel they have time but not enough money; others feel they have money but not enough time. But for most of us, in the midst of material plenty, we have spiritual poverty."⁴ Guinness wisely observes that in the midst of our lack of motivation, many are motivated by more money, others are motivated to do things that will free up their precious time but ultimately, many have very little to live for and thus experience a general malaise concerning obedience to God's truth. Ray Stedman, a pastor of nearly fifty years, summarizes the problem of motivation as follows:

But the real problem of the Christian life is not how to discover the will of God. That we have known, in one degree or another, all our lives. The real problem is to want to do it! It is the problem of motivation. That problem remains, even after we have discovered what it really is that God wants. I can know a great deal about the Christian life; I can know that the true purpose for my life is to please God; I can even know just what it is that will please him (faith); and I can remember in times past the pleasure it gave me to please God and the blessings which followed, and yet, confronted by the lure of the flesh, the pleasure of sin, and the ease with which it could all be justified (a veil), I can deliberately choose to disobey God. I have done it many times, and so have you! When the soul swings in the balance between truth and error, good and evil, what will tip the scale in the right direction? That is the real problem, it is the issue of motivation.⁵

Christians also struggle with proper motivation, not only for themselves, but also in

⁴ Os Guinness, *The Call* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 2

⁵ Ray Stedman, *Authentic Christianity* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1975), 147f

how to motivate others. There are some common methods used to motivate people that are directly linked to two major theological systems, namely, Arminianism and Calvinism. It is not the purpose of this project to either defend or critique these systems as a whole, only to observe how they have attempted to motivate those who follow in their footsteps and those who might be persuaded to do the same.

Calvinism, the system of theology named after John Calvin, the one who codified the system and refined it during his lifetime, has changed or evolved over the years and what one Calvinist believes does not represent the entire group. The writer will attempt to describe what most in this system believe, by quoting her theologians. Calvinism as a system has five major points, the famous TULIP. The acrostic refers to "T" for Total Depravity or Total Inability. The "U" refers to Unconditional Election. The "L" refers to Limited Atonement, the "I" to Irresistible Grace and finally the "P" to the Perseverance of the Saints. It is the last of these five points that is germane to this work. As Calvinism understands this point, those who are truly saved, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, will, of necessity, do good works. One can instantly see how this affects the subject at hand, one of motivation. In this system, if one is truly saved, he will not fail to do good works. If he fails to be characterized by good works, he does not lose his salvation, for that is secure. In Calvinism, if one does not persevere, what then? He has proved that he was never saved in the first place.

Lest the reader think the writer misrepresent the system of Calvinism, note the following words by some of her leading theologians:

Robert Dabney, the well-known Reformed Presbyterian theologian who lectured at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, was equally insistent that the Reformed

doctrine of the saints' perseverance was not just a teaching that true saints will not commit apostasy but that they will persevere in a life of good works. He begins his discussion with Phil. 1:6 and observes, 'We have here the Apostle's plain expression of his belief in the perseverance of the truly regenerate, in a state of repentance, unto the end.' For Dabney, the perseverance of the saints is perseverance in holiness.⁶

Another well known theologian and writer, Louis Berkhof, wrote of perseverance,

"...that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart, is continued and brought to completion."⁷ Joseph Dillow comments on Berkhof's interpretation, "This of course closely approximates the Reformed definition of sanctification. It is not just the prevention of apostasy, but the growth in holiness Berkhof intends to convey in his doctrine of the saints perseverance."⁸

In Calvinism, when its fifth point is consistently believed and applied, every believer, every one who is elect, will of necessity persevere in good works. There is no such thing as a non-persevering saint. A problematic issue related to this view is the subject of assurance of salvation, since perseverance is a must to demonstrate genuine regeneration, only when one dies, or at least is close to death will one know if he has persevered. The writer comes from a Dutch family (both Calvin and Arminius were Dutch) and has known several within his extended family and several not in his family who, as they got older, became depressed, some to the point of nervous breakdown, over the question, had

⁶ Joseph Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Haynesville, NC: Schoettle, 1992), 18

⁷ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (London: Banner of Truth, 1941), 546

⁸ Dillow, *Reign of the Servant Kings*, 19

they done enough to demonstrate they had persevered?

The other major system of theology is Arminianism, named after Jacobus (sometimes called Jacob) Arminius. He did not agree with Calvin's views and codified his own beliefs. As with Calvinism, this system has evolved too. Again it is not the purpose of this work to critique the entire system, only to comment on what it teaches regarding motivation. Arminian theology teaches that a person can be saved/justified and yet not persevere in good works. Failure to persevere, in Arminian theology, results in a loss of salvation. One article, summarizing this theology observed the following, "Those who are incorporated into Christ by true faith have power given them through the assisting grace of the Holy Spirit, sufficient to enable them to persevere in the faith. However, it may be possible for a believer to fall from grace."⁹ In Arminianism, a believer is to be motivated due to the fear of losing one's salvation. Unlike Calvinism, where salvation can never be lost, in Arminianism it might be if one does not persevere. In this system of theology, adherents are motivated by a fear of losing one's salvation. In both systems, though they are worlds apart on many issues, fear is the motivation, either to keep one's salvation, or to prove it. Another thing both Arminianism and Calvinism have in common is that in neither, can the believer be assured of his salvation. One must fear losing it, the other is left wondering does he really possess it? The writer would contend that the Bible, unlike man made systems of theology, does not use motivation in this way. It overwhelmingly uses rewards or the loss of rewards as a motivation for believers to begin a life of obedience or continue such a life.

⁹ <http://www.theopedia.com/Arminianism>; Internet; accessed 25 January, 2011.

Dillow, in his fine volume regarding rewards and the final significance of man, comments on the fallacy of the perseverance doctrine in light of passages in the Bible related to rewards or loss of rewards:

If the saints must inevitably and necessarily persevere in godliness to the final hour, then the doctrine of rewards and chastisement at the judgment seat of Christ becomes murky. How can a man who has persevered in holiness be chastised? Since all who are regenerate will be rewarded anyway, perhaps many settle into spiritual dullness thinking all is well with their souls and there are no negative consequences to pay. And if the doctrine of punishment for a carnal life is vague and if the doctrine of rewards is reduced to a promise of something that everyone will get anyway, then *key motivators* [italics mine] for living the Christian life are compromised.¹⁰

Most expositors and exegetes of the scriptures would agree that the worst church in the New Testament was the church at Corinth. It was filled with problems that ranged from incest, to public law suits, to carnality at the Lord's table and bad doctrine, yet under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul called them saints and said they had all been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor 1:2, 12:13). These saints alone speak to the issue at hand. There is not indication that they lost, or were in danger of losing their salvation. Neither is there any indication that they were not believers because they were failing to persevere.

Again, the writer's purpose is not to evaluate the theological system of Arminius or Calvin as a whole, rather it is to critique their motivational methods. At the theological level, the scriptures teach that when a person believes Jesus' promise of eternal life (Jn 3:16, 6:47, 11:28-29) it is indeed everlasting life, not until a believer fails to persevere in

¹⁰ Dillow, 13

good works and has a short term, or extended foray into sin, a life of carnality.

Conversely, the scriptures also teach that when one believes the gospel he is justified because of the faithfulness of God to His promise, not the believer's faithfulness to a life of good works. Again the writer would refer his reader to the example of the church at Corinth. They were not living in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and were not persevering. Further, beyond the believers at Corinth, if all believers by necessity persevere, what is the point of all the admonitions of scripture? Additionally, what does one do with all the people of scripture who were believers yet who did not persevere? These would include Gideon, who finished life poorly having fashioned an ephod which became a snare to him and his family (Jgs 8:27), David, who lived in sin for a year while he attempted to hide his adultery and murder. Lot, who is positionally called righteous (2 Pt 2:7) though he became a leader in Sodom and committed incest with his two daughters on consecutive nights.

On a purely pragmatic level, it does not appear the two major theological systems within evangelicalism are working. If the Pareto principle applies to the church, and it appears to, eight out of ten evangelicals are not following Christ in obedience to His commands to serve with their spiritual gifts, to give generously and to avoid assimilating the morality of the world.

It is obvious that there are many good people who are believers in Christ who would not ascribe to either the Arminian theology of motivation - fear of loss of salvation, or the Calvinistic theology of motivation - fear of failure to persevere, thus proving one was never justified. There are, it appears to the writer, many who might be of any theological

persuasion who attempt to motivate others out a sense of guilt. They appeal to others on the basis of what the believer ought to do because of the great grace of God.

While the writer would agree that a believer's life should be a life of thankfulness to God for the grace He has showered upon us, he would challenge the notion that this is the greatest motivation used by God's Word to motivate the believer to a life of obedience. The remainder of this work will focus on what the Bible says about rewards that can be won in this life and in eternity as a result of obedience to Christ in this life.

The fact that the world struggles to consistently motivate others should not surprise those follow Christ, since the world does not and cannot address the spiritual component in people. Within the walls of the church, it is a bit surprising that the body of Christ has largely been ineffective at biblically motivating people. There is an old saying that goes something like this, "Insanity is to keep doing the same thing that you have been doing and expecting different results". If that is true, is it not insanity for the church to keep trying to motivate the flock with the same message it has used for hundreds of years and expect to see a change in the Pareto principle? The writer hopes this work will help ignite a flame that will spread to others and motivate many to a life of obedience to Christ.

CHAPTER THREE

REWARDS AS A MOTIVATOR IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

If, as this work suggests, rewards are the Bible's chief method of motivating believers to obey, to a life of service to Christ, it would seem reasonable to expect that rewards would be taught throughout the Bible. It is reasonable and is also easily demonstrated.

Due to the sheer length of the Old Testament, as compared to the New Testament, the writer will be forced to be selective regarding the use of reward passages in the Old Testament. Depending upon one's copy of the Bible, the Old Testament is between 800 And 1300 pages in length. The Old Testament is, by volume, approximately 75% of the entire Bible, therefore, selectivity will be utilized in this chapter.

An additional observation is in order. The scriptures are God's revelation of Himself to man, they are inspired and inerrant. It is important to note that God progressively revealed Himself. That is He gave to man His revelation bit by bit, or step by step over the course of time. He did not give the entire Bible to men at one time. This truth is clearly taught in Hebrews 1:1-2, "God, after he spoke *long ago* to the *fathers* in the *prophets* [italics mine] in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world". Obviously Hebrews is a New Testament book, but the writer is clearly referring to Old Testament events when he refers to "...long ago...fathers...prophets". What progressive revelation teaches us is that the New Testament reader had more revelation from God than did the Old Testament saint. The modern reader has more than

the church in the book of Acts had. On any given subject, the revelation from God increases the closer one gets to the end of the New Testament. An illustration of this is a modern reader knows far more about the Messiah than did Abraham. He knew God would send a seed of the woman to crush the head of the seed of the serpent (Gn 3:15). The modern reader knows that He was to be born of the tribe of Judah (Gn 49:10), He would be born of a virgin (Is 7:14) that He is the eternal God who would reign forever (Is 9:6-7) that He was to be born in Bethlehem (Mi 5:2). The fact of progressive revelation is a New Testament truth as well (Jn 16:12-13). In that instance, Jesus declared the coming Holy Spirit would reveal truth to the disciples who could not have handled it all at that time. Since progressive revelation occurred in the Bible, it should not surprise the reader to note that the concept of rewards as a motivation for obedience is far more detailed in the new Testament than it is in the Old Testament. However, rewards are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament.

What does the Old Testament teach about motivation? More specifically, what does it say about how God seeks to motivate believers to obey Him? Clearly, He could just command obedience and have every right to expect it. But is this what He actually does? The scriptures indicate that this is not God's primary means of motivation. To be sure, there are many occasions when God commanded people to do something and gave no reason or motivation, other than that he had commanded it. This is not the norm, rather the exception.

In Leviticus 26, Moses speaks and writes God's Word to His people, Israel. It is important to note that in the context, many, if not the majority, of the people being addressed have been redeemed. They had believed God's promise for deliverance and applied the blood of the Passover lamb to their doorposts, just as God had commanded

(Ex 12:23-28). The message of Leviticus 26 is essentially one of blessings and curses. God's people, Israel, would be blessed if she obeyed Him (26:1-13) and she would be cursed if she disobeyed (26:14-39). Warren Wiersbe comments on this section of scripture,

The people of Israel were but children in their faith (Gal.4:1-7) and you teach children primarily through rewards and punishments. You can't give children lectures on ethics and expect them to understand, but you can promise to reward them if they obey and punish them if they disobey. This approach will protect them from harming themselves, and it will give them time to grow older and better understand why obedience is the key to a happy life.¹

The author would contend with Wiersbe that it is not only spiritual children who are motivated by rewards, spiritual adults are too. Additionally, not all these people were spiritual babes, some were mature in their faith (e.g. Joshua and Caleb) and these promises and threats were given to motivate them also.

God, through Abraham, had made an eternal covenant with Israel (Gn 13:15). One of the provisions of the covenant was a land, often called the promised land, due to the fact that it was promised to Israel by her God and the creator of the very land He was to give them. God specified its boundaries (the Nile to the Euphrates, Gn 15:8). It was to be an unconditional covenant - God would fulfill it with no strings attached (Gen. 15:17). However to *fully enjoy* the land God would give them, Israel needed to obey God. In Leviticus 26 over and over God says, "...if..", the conditions for blessing in the land are spelled out by the conditional clauses, "if". Conversely, if Israel refused to obey God, she could fully expect the chastisement of God. The writer finds it interesting that

¹ Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary, Pentateuch* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2001), 302

in this passage, the blessings occupy only eleven verses (vv. 3-13) while the curses occupy twenty-six verses (vv. 14-39).

The blessings God uses to entice, to motivate, Israel, include productivity in their work as an agricultural society, success in waging wars against the enemies that attacked, the blessing of large families (though considered a curse by many today, truly a blessing in ancient Israel, Ps 127:4-5). The final blessing is the favor of the Lord, He says, "I will also walk among you and be your God". Regarding this last blessing, one writer comments,

The chief blessing arising from their careful observance of his law would be the Lord's presence in their midst. He would look on them with favor and put his dwelling place among them. The other nations would eye Israel with envy and seek to plunder their wealth. But the covenant God who longed to dwell with them would protect them against all threats to their welfare if they obeyed his commands.²

It should be pointed out that all of these blessings, these rewards for obedience, were temporal in nature. None of the rewards mentioned here are eternal. Thus it is important to see that when it comes to God motivating His people, at times he uses rewards in the here and now, in this life. At other times He promises rewards which will be realized in eternity.

Intellectual honesty demands that the writer also comment on the second part of Leviticus 26, namely the curses, the chastisement that will result from disobedience. As noted earlier, this section is far longer and more detailed than the blessing section. This is not due to the character of God but God's understanding of human nature. "God

² Max Anders, Gen. Ed. *Holman Old Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Holman, 2001), 251

vividly expressed the result of failure to obey Him - I will punish (i.e., discipline) you for your sins seven times over (a round number for complete or full punishment)...continued disobedience would result in multiplied divine discipline in terms of affliction seven times over."³

The chastisements listed in Leviticus 26 include emotional/psychological problems (terror and fear), agriculture/work related troubles, crops would fail, military defeat and, rather than fellowship with God, an opposition from God. One writer comments on this section of curses, "Six periods of chastisement are described (Lv 26:16,17,18-20, 21-22, 23-26, 27-31 and 32-39), the last one being the most severe. In the first five, Jehovah punishes the people *in their own land*; but in the sixth judgment they're taken *out of the land* and dispersed among the nations ."⁴ A bit later in describing the individual curses, the same author states, "'Sudden terror' means confusion of mind, the kind of terror you feel when you can't control what's going on...During the book of Judges, the Gentile nations invaded Israel at harvest time and took her crops."⁵

One truth, among many, that runs throughout Leviticus 26 and is abundantly clear is this, obedience to God brings blessing from God and disobedience to God brings discipline, chastisement from God. The blessings and curses spoken of in Leviticus

³ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck eds. *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985), 212

⁴ Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary, Pentateuch* , 311

⁵ Ibid.

are temporal, in this life only, but were designed to motivate Israel to a life of service.

A similar passage is found in Deuteronomy 28. The context of Deuteronomy 28 is that it is Moses' final sermon to Israel before he is to die and not too long before Joshua will lead the people into the land of promise, Canaan. In Deuteronomy 28-30 Moses speaks, then writes, about the land they will soon enter and possess. Deuteronomy 28, like Leviticus 26, declares a list of blessings and curses. Regarding Moses' words,

He set before them the blessings and curses of the covenant they were entering. The curses section (vv. 15-68) is about four times longer than the blessings section (vv. 1-14). This may have been in keeping with the style of the ancient Near Eastern treaties which generally included more curses than blessings. More likely, however, the greater length of the curse section was meant to foreshadow Israel's eventual failure under the covenant.⁶

As was noted, the blessing section is much shorter than the curses section. It should also be noted, however, the blessing section is filled with great promises if Israel would only obey her Lord. Dillow, in his insightful work, writes of this principle of curses, "Throughout the Old Testament there are numerous judgments which come upon the people of God. Moses warns of many curses which will come upon the disobedient (Dt. 28:9-26)."⁷ Dillow proceeds to cite Saul, Solomon and Uzziah as examples of Old Testament saints being disciplined by God.

The specific blessings of Deuteronomy 28 are very similar to the blessings of Leviticus 26. They include the work of their hands being blessed (28:3-6), being chief

⁶ Walvoord and Zuck, 311

⁷ Dillow, 14

among the nations (28:7-14), agricultural prosperity and intimacy with God. The curses include destruction (28:20), disease (28:21-22), drought (28:23-24), defeat in battle (28:25-26), oppression (28:30-35), and exile (28:36-37). As a twenty-first century believer who has the complete revelation of God and more than three millennia of history to look back upon since this proclamation was first made, it is easy to see how those curses have been fulfilled in Israel's history. In Judges the Lord sent multiple oppressors in the form of other nations. There was a drought announced by Elijah, who believed the promised curses of this passage. Later there was subjugation by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans. Since the completion of the canon, Israel has continued to suffer many of these curses even up to the present time. Again it should be noted that the threatened discipline for disobedience was to God's people and, in this passage, was temporal in nature, not eternal.

A bit later in the Old Testament, Samuel, a young lad in service to Eli the priest, had a vision from God which he related to Eli, "Therefore the Lord God of Israel declares, 'I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before me forever', but now the Lord declares, 'Far be it from me - for those who honor Me I will honor and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed'" (1 Sm 2:30). God promised Eli that if Eli honored Him, God would honor Eli. Certainly honoring God would include many things but chief among them would be obedience to God.

Conversely to despise God, while including many things would include a disregard for the commands of God, a lack of motivation to obey Him. The honor spoken of in this passage included Eli's, and his descendants, elevation to the priesthood in Israel.

Since Eli had despised God, God would turn to another to graciously exalt to the position of priest. The story is told that Scottish runner, and later missionary to China, Eric Liddell was motivated by this verse when he ran in the 400 meter finals of the 1924 Olympics in Paris, France. Liddell, whose conviction was that he should not run a race on Sunday, did not run in his best event, the 100 meter dash, because it was to be run on Sunday. He opted to run in another event, the 400 meter race, more of a middle distance race. One writer tells the story as follows:

Committed Christian, Eric Liddell refused to race on Sunday and was forced to withdraw from the 100 meters, his best event. Instead Liddell raced in the 400 meters and little was expected of him. As Liddell went to the starting blocks for the race, an American slipped a piece of paper in his hand with the quotation from 1 Samuel 2:30, "Those that honour me I will honour". Liddell ran with that piece of paper in his hand and not only won the race but broke the existing world record with the time of 47.6 seconds.⁸

Perhaps Liddell's victory in an event in which he was not well suited for and in world record fashion was God's way of honoring Liddell's obedience to his conscience. At least one American, who handed Liddell the piece of paper, believed God would honor him in some fashion. In the narrative of 1 Samuel, from the issuing of the decree, God honored Samuel as a priest and did not honor Eli nor his sons due to their disobedience.

In Psalm 19:7-11, the psalmist, David, writes:

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true, they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes than much fine gold; sweeter also

⁸ <http://www.historymakers.info/inspirational-christians/eric-liddell>; Internet; accessed 26 April, 2011.

than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover by them Thy servant is warned; in keeping them is *great reward* [Italics mine].

David mentions several benefits that result from obeying the law, they include restoring the soul, making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart and enlightening the eyes. All of those are related to benefits in this life, namely wisdom for living. David, in verse 11, declares that the precepts of God serve as a warning to God's people. This is in wonderful harmony with Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. David also declares a positive benefit, "... in keeping them there is great reward". When a believer obeys the Word of God, he can expect a great reward! The word used here for reward means, "the end, the last of anything; hence recompense and reward, wages as the end of labour"⁹ The Lord promises to reward, to pay as a wage, to recompense the obedience of His children He not only promises to reward, but also says the reward will be great. The word for great can be translated, "much, many numerous, great, large, vast."¹⁰ It is the same word used to describe the great number of flocks Abram and Lot had (Gn 13:6), to describe the greatness of the seas (Psalm 107:23), to speak of people sitting in exalted places Eccl 10:6). David did not have all the revelation that modern saints do, but he had enough to know that obedience would lead to an overflowing abundance of reward. He did not specify in Psalm 19:11 if that reward was to be expected in this life or in eternity, but clearly he used it as a motivational method for his readers.

⁹ William Wilson, *Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 200

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 355

In the book of Ruth, which records events during the times of the Judges (Ru 1:1), Ruth, a Moabitess, became the daughter-in-law to Naomi. Both ladies were widowed and Naomi decided to return to Israel, after a period of time in Moab. Ruth joined Naomi in Her return to the land of promise. A relative, Boaz, praises young Ruth with these words, "May the Lord reward your work, and your wage be full from the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge" (Ru 2:12). The word used by Boaz here was, "sacar", which means "to hire, wages, reward". Boaz was stating his hope and expectation that the Lord would reward, would pay wages, to Ruth for her work to take care of her mother-in-law. One writer says of the word reward, used here, "Reward with us has associations of free bounty, but the Hebrew...denotes rather 'wages'. Ruth has deserved well, Boaz thinks, and he trusts that Yahweh, God of Israel, will pay her wage in full."¹¹ The word reward in Ruth 2:12, as in Psalm 19:11, refers to wages, something earned, not a gift. These "wages" can be earned by obedience to the Lord. Later in this work the writer will address the possible objection of earning rewards being a suitable motivation for obedience. In the meantime, David and Boaz both believed that rewards were the outcome for obedience, for a life lived well.

Isaiah, the prophet, on two occasions wrote very similar words. Isaiah 40:10 states, "Behold, the Lord God will come with might, with His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him." Later in Isaiah 62:11 he writes,

¹¹ D. J. Wiseman, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Judges & Ruth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Tyndale, 1968), 226

"Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth, say to the daughter of Zion, 'Lo your salvation comes; behold His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him.'" In both verses, the last half is essentially the same, a promise of reward which will follow the coming of the Lord. These verses take on a prophetic, eschatological tone that the previously mentioned texts do not. The subject here is the future kingdom, when Messiah rules. Israel had been promised a Messiah who would rule in Jerusalem, city of peace, and who would have as one of many titles, Prince of Peace (Is 9:6). Isaiah 40:10 and 62:11 both use the words "reward" and "recompense". Speaking of the Lord, one writer comments:

He will be ready to confer the appropriate reward on his own people. The idea seems to be taken from the custom of a conqueror who distributes rewards among his followers and soldiers after a signal victory. This was always done in ancient world, apparently because it seemed to be an act of justice that those who had gained the victory should share also in the result, and this participation of the booty was a *stimulus for future effort* as well as a compensation for their valour.¹²

Another writer states, "Jehovah brings with Him ... the gracious reward of the faithful of His people, whom He will compensate for their previous sufferings with far exceeding joys."¹³ Clearly the two Isaiah passages (40:10 and 62:11) do not state specifically what rewards and recompense the Lord will give when He comes in power, but He did promise them in order to motivate the saints of old.

Jeremiah, the Old Testament prophet who prophesied in terrible times just before the

¹² Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes on The Old Testament: Isaiah, Vol. 2* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 63

¹³ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol. 7* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 147

destruction of Judah by the Babylonians, is often called the weeping prophet. His ministry was largely ignored and he was greatly persecuted. As is true of much of the major and minor prophets' ministries and writings, Jeremiah's message was one of judgment and hope. Typically God will, through the prophet's mouth and pen, warn of judgment and offer hope through an encouragement. Jeremiah wrote in 31:15-17:

Thus says the Lord, "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more." Thus says the Lord, "restrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded," declares the Lord, "And they shall return from the land of the enemy. And there is hope for your future," declares the Lord, "And your children shall return to their own country."

Verse 15 was applied to the occurrence of the murders of the infant boys by Herod in the area surrounding Bethlehem in the days after the birth of Jesus (Mt 2:18). It might have been originally fulfilled when Babylon deported many young Jews into captivity. Jeremiah, as God's mouthpiece, tells the people for whom disaster is looming in the form of Babylonian conquest and captivity, "...for your work shall be rewarded" (31:16). The word used for reward here is the same as in the other passages cited in this chapter (Ru 2:12; Is 40:10; 62:11). *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* says of the word, "The basic idea of the word is engaging the services of a person in return for pay. The various contexts in which this verb appears adds color to the meaning...the word is used of hiring skilled workers for a particular job (2 Chr 24:12; Isa 46:6) of counselors for advice (Ezr 4:5)."¹⁴ Just as an employer promises to

¹⁴ Laird Harris, Gleason Archer and Bruce Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1980), 878

recompense those he hires, so the Lord promises to reward those who do what He asks. Jeremiah does not specify what the reward would be, merely that the Lord promises to reward their labor.

One of the great saints of the Old Testament was Abraham. God made a covenant with Abraham, often called the Abrahamic Covenant. It was stated in Genesis 12:1-3 and ratified in Genesis 15:12-21. Among many other things, God promised to make Abraham's name great, to give him a land, to multiply his descendents and bless the entire world through Abraham. In Genesis 15:1 Moses wrote, "After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision saying, 'Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great.'" The word "reward" that is used here is the same as in Ruth 2:12, Isaiah 40:10, 62:11, Psalm 19:11 and Jeremiah 31:16. God clearly communicated that He would reward Abram greatly. Interestingly, this came on the heels of Abraham refusing to greedily take spoils from a military conflict that he had recently won (Gn 14:22-24). What did God mean to Abraham when He said he would give Abraham a great reward? How did Abraham understand this promise? To answer this, the New Testament must be considered. Though this chapter is about rewards in the Old Testament, the Bible is the best commentary on the Bible and Hebrews 11 gives us some insightful comments on the reward Abraham was looking to. Hebrews 11 is often referred to as the Christian Hall of Fame of Faith. It is used by the writer of Hebrews to describe those who had been justified by faith who were examples to New Testament saints on living by faith as a believer, "but the righteous one shall live by faith..." (Heb 10:38). Hebrews 11:6 declares, "And without faith it is impossible

to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." In the early verses of Hebrews 11 the writer recounts the faith of Abel (11:4), Enoch (11:5), Noah (11:7), Abraham (11:8) and Sarah (11:11). The writer summarizes the first section of Hebrews 11 and the lives of the first five Hall of Fame of Faith "inductees", "All these died in faith *without* [italics mine]receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13). The writer goes on to say about them, "But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them" (11:16). Dillow says, specifically of Abraham and this verse, "Abraham began to look for the reward of possession of land in the afterlife (Heb 11:8, 16). He already had heaven, but he did not have the fulfillment of the Abrahamic land promise."¹⁵ A bit later in commenting on the phrase of verse 16, "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God ..." Dillow comments, "God will of course be the God of all in the heavenly city, faithful and unfaithful Christians (Re 21:3), but it is apparently possible for us to live in such a way that God is *proud to be called* our God. Evidently the writer has the title, 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob' in mind. God will say, 'I am proud to be known as your God.'¹⁶ Abraham lived such a life of faith that God was proud, not ashamed, to claim him as His son. The writer of Hebrews uses that to

¹⁵ Dillow, 57

¹⁶ Ibid., 473

motivate his first century readers. Modern students of the Word of God do not know all that Abraham knew and understood, but it can be ascertained from Hebrews 11 that he knew God would reward him in the life to come.

Still in Hebrews 11, permit the writer one more Old Testament example. Moses, the great leader and vehicle through whom God delivered the law, freed the people of God from slavery in Egypt and wrote the Pentateuch, is mentioned in this great chapter also. The writer of Hebrews declares that Moses chose, by faith, to cast his lot with the people been brought up in Pharaoh's palace and had, no doubt, enjoyed a life of luxury. Why would Moses make such an apparently poor choice? What motivated Moses to identify with the enslaved Jews? The Bible student is not left to wonder, the writer of Hebrews declares the reason, "...considering the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, *for he was looking to the reward* [italics mine]" Hebrews 11:26.

Govett, in reference to Moses wrote:

He surrendered the present, and the seen, in hopes of the future, and the promises of God to the men of faith. Here, Christian, thrice within a few verses, the principle of seeking God's reward is set before us. (1) Cast not away your confidence; *which hath great recompense of reward* (x. 35). (2) God becomes *the rewarder* of those that diligently seek Him (xi. 6). (3) And, how was Moses was honoured, who had respect unto the *recompense of reward*? That honour from God was only the *interest*; the *principal* is yet to come!¹⁷

The Old Testament is a bit like an early spring garden when it comes to rewards, there are seeds of the doctrine and occasionally a tender young shoot that pops through the soil,

¹⁷ Robert Govett, *Govett on Hebrews* (Miami Springs, FL: Conley & Schoettle, 1981), 407-408

but it is not until the New Testament that the summer and fall harvest come in abundance. Never the less, the doctrine of rewards is in the Old Testament. God used it to motivate His people to obey. To be sure the Old Testament focuses more on temporal rewards (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28) than it does on eternal rewards, rewards to be enjoyed in the life to come, in the kingdom. However Abraham and Moses clearly demonstrate that the saints before Christ's incarnation knew some truths about God promising rewards in the future, rewards which they did not see, realize, in their lifetimes. Both of these saints in God's Hall of Fame of Faith were looking ahead to the Messianic kingdom when the rewards would become reality, according to Hebrews 11, this motivated both men! Others, like Ruth and David, and perhaps the entire nation of Israel, were more familiar with temporal rewards and discipline.

CHAPTER FOUR

NEW TESTAMENT USE OF REWARDS AS MOTIVATION

As noted in the previous chapter, rewards are used somewhat extensively in the Old Testament to motivate God's people to obedience. The rewards and discipline mentioned in the Old Testament are predominantly temporal in nature. The major point of the rewards passages in the Old Testament is this, obedience toward God brings rewards in THIS life while sin in the life of a believer brings discipline in THIS life.

When a believer reads the New Testament, carefully observing the reward passages, he will undoubtedly and quickly observe two truths, 1) the sheer number of times rewards are mentioned and 2) the fact that eternal rewards, not temporal rewards, now take center stage.

In this chapter the writer, because of the sheer volume of passages in the New Testament that address rewards as a motivation, will be selective. This chapter will focus on four key New Testament personalities and what they said or wrote about rewards as a motivation for Christian service. The writer has chosen, admittedly a bit arbitrarily, four key personalities found in the New Testament. The four are, Jesus, Peter, Paul and John the apostle. Clearly Jesus is unique of the four as God who became man, undiminished deity and perfect humanity in one person. In addition to Jesus, this work will consider what three central apostles in the New Testament said or wrote about the topic of motivation and rewards. To be sure the writer's choice of Peter, Paul and John is a bit

arbitrary. By volume, Luke wrote more of the New Testament than any other author, including Paul. James and Jude also wrote, but because of the writings of the three aforementioned apostles, as well as the New Testament record of their lives, only they will be considered.

JESUS ON MOTIVATION AND REWARDS

When reading a harmony of the gospels, one does not proceed very far into the sacred record of Jesus' ministry before the subject of motivation and rewards arises. Matthew 5:10-12 and Luke 6:22-23 give an early mention by Jesus of the subject. Matthew records it as follows: "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecuted you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your *reward in heaven* [italics mine] is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Jesus is addressing the subject of rewards to His followers. He tells them very plainly that they will suffer persecution in this life as they declare His message to others. Knowing people's hearts like He does, Jesus addresses the question of motivation before His hearers can even voice it, "... for your reward in heaven is great." Govett comments, "The *false* prophets received their good things now and would have none in the kingdom. The *true* prophets had to endure much persecution here below; but theirs is the kingdom. Comp. Matt v.10-12 with Luke vi. 26. The returns brought in by earth are quick and small, future ones are like those of

Solomon's fleet, only after a long voyage."¹ Dillow, in his fine work, writes, "The idea of rewards is repeatedly emphasized in the sermon, which is addressed primarily to the disciples (5:1). The word *misthos* basically means a 'payment for work done'. Jesus is speaking of the inheritance here as a reward for a humble, trusting life. There is no indication that all Christians have this quality of life."² Dillow's comment aligns well with scriptural evidence and experience, many believers in history have been unwilling to take a stand for Christ and, thus, should not expect the great reward Jesus spoke of in Matthew 5. Conversely, many in history have been persecuted as they spoke out for Christ and were not rewarded in this life. Truth be known, many were horribly persecuted and were martyred for their faith. Why take a stand? Why not be uninvolved? Jesus used rewards to motivate his listeners to take a stand for Him and not faint from persecution. His intent was clear, let future rewards motivate in present difficulties.

As Dillow stated, the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7, contains a great deal of teaching about rewards. In Matthew 5:19 Jesus said, "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven". Jesus addresses, in the positive, two specific elements: obedience to the Word of God and the clear teaching of the Word of God. Obedience to the clearly

¹ Robert Govett, *Sermon on the Mount* (Haynesville, NC: Schoettle Publishing, 2001), 135

² Joseph Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Haynesville, NC: Schoettle, 1992), 67

revealed Word of God is declining among those who make claims to being evangelical. Also declining is the clear teaching of the Word of God. Fewer and fewer of those in leadership positions faithfully teach others by their example and word. Dillow offers some insightful comments here, "True Christians can lose their saltiness, their testimony, for the Lord. When they do they forfeit their reward in heaven. Furthermore, He specifically says the disobedient believer who annuls 'one of the least of these commandments' will be in the kingdom (Mt 5:19) but will be 'least' in contrast to 'great' in the kingdom."³ It was true in the first century and it is true in the twenty-first century, there is a tendency for those who listen to God's messengers to react poorly to truth that is not pleasant. It is also a tendency for the messenger to not practice what he/she proclaims. To say one thing but do another. If the messenger does not resort to hypocrisy such as this, there is another danger, that of altering the message from God, thus softening it to make it not so difficult for the hearer to bear. To combat these tendencies, Jesus used rewards to motivate those who are graced by God with the privilege of teaching God's Word.

Still in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus offers another word on rewards and motivation. This time His words deal with more of a negative motivation, for doing good things with the wrong motive. Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; *otherwise you have no reward with your Father*

³ Dillow, 67

[italics mine] who is in heaven" Mt 6:1). It is clear that Jesus is warning against doing good things, yet for all the wrong reasons (to be seen by others). Jesus goes on to say what good things some of the religious leaders of His day did to be noticed, they gave alms (6:2), they prayed on street corners (6:5), and they fasted (6:16). In each case Jesus said they did these admirable things to be seen by men. Additionally, He said they had their reward in full, that was the approval of men, which was what they were seeking. Woodroll Kroll observes, regarding the possibility of doing good things for the wrong motivation:

A Bible study leader may be extremely faithful in the preparation and presentation of her study. She may build the biggest group in the state. But if the group leader's motivation is to be invited as a speaker at some national conferences, her motive cancels any possibility of receiving praise from the Lord. A pastor and his people may work very hard visiting, ministering to, and evangelizing their community, but if their motive is to be known as the fastest growing church in the city, their faulty motives preclude the possibility of reward at the heavenly *bema*. Jesus said, "Truly I say to you they have received their reward (Mt. 6:2, 5)."⁴

Dillow observes, "The main point is probably that it should be given with the intent to help, for Christ's sake, and not for the purpose of obtaining the praise of men (Mt. 6:2-4)."⁵ Govett offers great insight when he observes fear and pride are two primary motivators of mankind. Speaking of the pride referred to in this passage he notes, "Against this danger our Lord is now arming us. He forbids not the doing of good work in the presence of others; but it is not to be performed from the *motive* of desiring their

⁴ Woodroll Kroll, *Facing Your Final Job Review* (Chicago, IL: Crossway, 2007), 150

⁵ Dillow, 571

applause."⁶ The writer finds it interesting that Jesus did not say that if people do good things for the wrong reason, they would not be rewarded. Jesus said they will have their reward in full, the approval of men. Conversely, when a person does the right thing with the right motive, he can expect God to reward his obedience.

Later in Jesus' ministry, Matthew records the following words from the mouth of Jesus:

He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it. He who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's *reward*; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's *reward*. And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you he shall not lose his *reward* [italics mine] (10:39-42).

One author, writing about the loss and gain of one's life spoken of in Mt10:39, states:

Nevertheless whatever loss is experienced, it will all be worth it. This life is not all there is. 'He who finds his life' [successfully acquires present gain from this world] 'will lose it [in the future reign of Christ], 'and he who loses his life for My sake' [forgoes the benefits of this world by obeying Christ] 'will find it' [when the King is in charge]. Again this warning and promise is not talking about free salvation, but earning rewards.⁷

Zane Hodges, in his excellent work, *The Hungry Inherit*, says of verse 39:

Yet, Jesus was saying, when men try to preserve their lives they actually end up losing them. And when they lost them for Him, as the disciples were doing day by day, they were really saving them. It was a striking paradox. And though it required much more thought than the disciples could give it just then, its general significance was clear. It would be easy enough for a man to decline the rigors and deprivations of

⁶ Govett, 132

⁷ Bob Wilkin, ed. *The Grace New Testament Commentary* (Denton, TX: GES Books, 2010), 49

discipleship in order to cling to his home, family, business, and pleasures. It was its eternal value. Living like that was selfish living and could really have no enduring significance or worth. Such a life was gone as soon as it was lived. Thus in seeking to preserve it, a man actually lost it.⁸

The words of Jesus here also teach an additional truth beyond the losing and finding of one's life. They also teach that when one does a good work, no matter how insignificant it might seem, it too will be rewarded. Offering hospitality to a prophet, giving a cup of cold water to a thirsty believer, a person does not have to perform great acts of service such as preaching a sermon or leading a ministry, simple acts of kindness will be richly rewarded! It must be noted that often these rewards do not come in this life. Jim Elliott, a missionary to Ecuador in the 1950's is famous for saying, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose". Elliott was martyred for his faith and clearly did not receive rewards in this life for losing his.

A bit later in Matthew's gospel, he records the words of Jesus another time about losing and saving one's life. Afterwards Jesus said, "For the son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then *recompense* [italics mine] every man according to His deeds" (Mt 16:27). This reward is clearly an eternal one, when Jesus returns, not an in this life reward. It is also important to note this recompense will be directly related to the deeds the person has done in life. To put it in the negative, the recompense or reward will also be proportionate to the lack of good deeds done during the person's life.

⁸ Zane Hodges, *The Hungry Inherit* (Dallas, TX: Rendencion Viva Publishers, 1997), 80

In Matthew 18, the apostle writes to inform his readers of a dispute that arose among the twelve as to who was the greatest (18:1). Jesus called a child to himself and used the child as an example (18:2). Jesus words were as follows, "Truly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (18:3, 4). The twelve argued over greatness and Jesus responded with words about humility. One must humble himself to be justified (e.g. enter the kingdom, 18:3). Jesus does not scold the twelve for desiring greatness, He merely redirects them on how to do so. Just as they had to humble themselves to be saved, they also must humble themselves to be great (18:4). This writer finds it significant that Jesus never chided the desire to be great. He never told them to settle for mediocrity. He encouraged the desire to be great when He becomes king! Here He said it would come by humility. Humble people usually serve and obey orders well. Proud people do not. Since pride is the tendency of all people, including believers, perhaps that explains why so many believers do not serve Christ and why Vilfredo Pareto's principle is often as true in churches as it was in the Italian economy more than 100 years ago.

Luke's gospel records yet another portion of Jesus' teaching regarding motivation and rewards. Luke records Jesus' words regarding His servants' lives and the second coming of the Lord, He said:

Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps alight. And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table and will come up and wait on them (Lk 12:35-37).

Wiersbe comments on these verses,

But the remarkable thing in this story is that the master serves the servants! In Jewish weddings, the bride was treated like a queen and the groom like a king; so you would not expect the 'king' to minister to his staff. Our King will minister to His faithful servants when He greets us at His return, and He will reward us for our faithfulness.⁹

The writer will comment more on the specific reward Jesus offered in the next chapter, suffice it to say Jesus wanted to motivate the disciples to obedience and watchfulness with this offer of reward upon His return. Another writer comments on these three verses as follows:

Preparedness and activity should mark the interadventive disciples as they expectantly await the return of the Messiah. Inhabitants in Bible lands would have to take up the bottom of their garments and tuck them into their belt to facilitate movement in certain kinds of work. This kind of preparation would indicate readiness for action. The lit lamps indicate visibility provided for night time activity, especially during the interim night of the present age. The disciples should also maintain a sense of expectancy. Jesus' words presuppose His return to heaven (cf. 9:26) and entail instructions for the interim. They should 'wait for their master, when he will return.' Working and watching disciples can thus welcome the returning Master immediately. The disciples' preparedness and activity will result in an unexpected blessing. Jesus 'will come and serve them', rewarding their service with His own.¹⁰

Later in Luke's gospel Luke tells his readers that Jesus observed how people like to choose places of honor at dinners they had been invited to (Lk 14:7). In response Jesus told them to pick the least honored spot and let the host honor them by inviting them to the "head table". Jesus' closing statement was, "For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted" (Lk 14:11). Jesus then turned

⁹ Wiersbe, 60

¹⁰ Wilkin, 293

His attention to the host (Lk 14:12) and told him to not invite those to dinner who could repay the kindness with an invitation of their own, rather invite the destitute (Lk 14:12, 13). Why should they do this, merely because Jesus said so? Surely that would be sufficient reason, but he gave his host, and all who would come after him additional motivation, "...and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for this will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (Lk 14:14). "The downtrodden invitees cannot repay, but God will...God will repay them for their righteous acts at the resurrection."¹¹

Dillow, responding to the charge that a believer doing such a thing as demonstrating God's love in view of a possible reward is selfish responds:

Even if the 'purely moral' see this as selfish, the One before whom we will render an account clearly does not. When He exhorted us to show hospitality to those who cannot pay, He did not appeal to duty as motive. Rather, He said, 'Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous' (Lk 14:14)."¹²

Wiersbe add an insightful comment regarding one's motives:

Our motive for sharing must be the praise of God not the applause of men, the eternal Reward in heaven and not the temporary recognition on earth. A pastor friend of mine used to remind me, 'you can't get your reward twice!' he was right (see Matt 6:1-18). On the day of judgment, many who today are first in the eyes of men will be last in God's eyes, and many who are last in the eyes of men will be first in the eyes of God (Luke 13:30).¹³

¹¹ Wilkin, 302

¹² Dillow, 593

¹³ Wiersbe, 230

In yet another passage in the gospel of Matthew, more teaching from our Lord emerges concerning rewards. It is found in Matthew 19 and is a conversation between Jesus and a man described as a rich, young ruler. The passage is variously interpreted, and in this writer's opinion, usually incorrectly. Most believe that the passage is about a conversation on how to go to heaven. In this, the usual, interpretation, the rich young ruler is asking how can he go to heaven? The young man asked Jesus a question, "what must I do to obtain eternal life?" (Mt 19:16). Jesus tell him to keep the commandments (Mt 19:17). The young ruler asked, which ones? (Mt 19:18). To which the Lord responded with six of the ten commandments (Mt 19:18, 19). A bit later Jesus tells the young man, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor and *you shall have treasure in heaven*[italics mine], and come follow me" (Mt 19:21). Jesus told the rich young ruler how to have rewards in heaven, not how to get to heaven. If this was Jesus' method of evangelism, then everyone who has not left all to the poor should be concerned about not making it to heaven. A common interpretation of the passage and the young man's refusal is as follows, "Such mercy toward the poor would demonstrate inner righteousness. If he were righteous (based on faith in Jesus as God) he should have given his wealth to the poor and followed Jesus."¹⁴

It seems to this writer that the conversation is much clearer than it is usually interpreted. Jesus tells the man he should sell his belongings and give to the poor if he wants to have treasure in heaven. Later Jesus speaks about how hard it is for a rich man

¹⁴ John Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press, 1983), 65

to enter the kingdom. What Jesus said in Matthew 19:21 was concerning *treasure* in heaven not entrance into heaven.

Dillow comments on the command of Jesus to the rich young ruler, "A person who parts with his money for Christ's sake is not really losing it. He is simply sending it ahead transferring it to a more secure place where there are no robbers or rust to ruin it. It takes great faith to believe that the eternal benefits we will receive are worth the sacrifices we must make now to obtain them."¹⁵

It is clear that the disciples, who overheard the conversation, understood, at least in part, that Jesus was speaking about rewards in the future, Peter's question in Matthew 19:27 reveals it. Peter's question and the Lord Jesus' answer will be dealt with later in this chapter.

Why be generous, even to the point of liquidating everything, in order to give to the poor? Clearly the answer cannot be to enter heaven, to earn eternal life. If that were the case, salvation would be of works and clearly that teaching would be at odds with the rest of scripture. Generosity, however, can, and in fact will, lead to eternal rewards when accompanied by a proper attitude.

In chapter 20 of Matthew's gospel, immediately following the conversation between Jesus and the rich young ruler (Mt 19) is a story Jesus told about workers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1-14). In this story, Jesus tells about a vineyard owner who goes to the marketplace to hire day laborers. He does this on five separate occasions throughout the

¹⁵ Dillow, 572

day (Mt 20:1, 3, 5, 6). In the story, the first hired agree to a wage, a denarius, while those hired at 9:00 AM, 12:00 PM, 1:00 PM and 5:00 PM agree to work and leave it up to the master to be fair with them. When the vineyard owner settled his accounts with the men at the end of the day, he paid the workers in reverse order of their hiring, last hired to first hired. Upon giving the last hired a full days wage for only one hour of work, the first hired began to greedily contemplate how much they might receive (Mt 20:10). It is apparent the first hired had a contract mentality, Matthew 20:2, 13 states twice they agreed with the master for a specific wage. All the other hires evidently believed the master would be good and fair. Dillow writes of this story:

The parable also teaches that...it is possible for a young Christian in terms of his time of service to receive the same crown of the aged who has served the Lord for fifty years. The crown of righteousness, according to Paul, is not for him only but for all those who love His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8). Samson's finest hour was his death (Jud. 16:30) and it earned him a place in the faith hall of fame (Heb. 11:32).¹⁶

Wiersbe does a masterful job in summarizing the essential element of the story when he write, "The parable is emphasizing *a right attitude in service*. It is important to note that there were actually two kinds of workers hired that day: those who wanted a contract and agreed to work for a penny a day, and those who had no contract and agreed to take whatever the owner thought was right."¹⁷

In being motivated by rewards, which is a good thing, the worker should avoid at all costs a contract mentality that reasons, work will only be done when the master has

¹⁶ Dillow, 530

¹⁷ Wiersbe, 74

clearly spelled out the conditions of such service, employment. The believer in Christ should be motivated by the fact that his Master is gracious and generous.

In Luke 19:11-27, Jesus tells yet another parable. This one is often referred to as the parable of the minas or pounds. In the story, a master gives each of his ten servants a mina/pound. A mina, or pound, was a weight of money, gold or silver. This is similar to the story of the talents, with one major exception, in the parable of the talents, the three servants received differing amounts of money to manage while in the parable of the minas/pounds there are ten servants and each receives the same amount. The talents teach the reader, among other things, that all do not receive the same stewardship to manage. Some are far more gifted than others. Since this is so, the responsibility of each differs. The Lord does not demand the two talent servant do as well as the five talent servant. The parable of the minas seems to teach that all people have a common stewardship in some sense. This writer believes that Jesus was teaching every person gets one life to invest for the Lord. Clearly some live longer than others, but each person does get one life to live, to invest for the King.

The first servant, who caused the master's resources to increase ten-fold, was met with a hearty commendation, "well done, good slave..." (Lk 19:17). He was also rewarded with a promise of honor and responsibility, "...because you have been faithful in a little thing, be in authority over ten cities" (Lk 19:17). The writer will give more details about specific rewards to be won or lost in chapter five, suffice it to say, the Lord is attempting to motivate His listeners as they waited for the kingdom to become reality (Lk 19:10) to be faithful to Him in light of possible reward or rebuke and lost.

A final passage of scripture to be considered in this section is Jesus' parable of the talents, found in Matthew 25:14-30. A quick summary might be in order. Jesus told a story of a wealthy man entrusting monies to three of his servants to manage for him while he was away. The servants received five, two and one talents respectively. A talent, in Jesus' day was a measure, a weight of gold or silver. Scholars argue over how much a talent weighed, but generally agree between 40 and 60 pounds. In a culture where a worker received just pennies per day for a wage, this trust would have been monumental, millions of dollars in modern culture. The Lord had just instructed His disciples to be prepared, daily for his any moment, unexpected return (Mt 25:12-13). When the master in the parable returns from his journey, he demands an accounting of his resources from his servant. While there may be some debate over the spiritual condition of the third servant, it is obvious the first two servants are wise in their management of their master's resources, each doubling his original investment. It is also clear that the master praises and honors them. The writer will cover the specific rewards these two received in chapter five. What is important for now is this; Jesus seeks to motivate His servants to watchfulness and faithfulness. He does this by putting before them the possibility of great rewards.

It has been clearly shown that Jesus often used rewards as a motivator. The writer contends it was Jesus' primary means to motivate His disciples to a life of obedience and expectancy. Since this is so, it would seem the men Jesus used most greatly to found the church and write the New Testament would adopt a similar message. To that end, the author would now direct the reader's attentions to Peter, Paul and John.

PETER ON MOTIVATION AND REWARDS

For whatever reason, perhaps due to the fact Peter did not write as much of the New Testament as did Paul and John, Peter's life does not have as many vignettes regarding rewards recorded in the gospels and Acts. Nor do the two epistles that bear his name have as many reward passages in them as do Paul's or John's writings. However Peter was motivated by rewards and sought to motivate others the same way, as can be demonstrated in the New Testament.

Earlier, reference was made to the conversation Jesus had with the rich, young ruler. After the young man left, dejected at what Jesus had told him to do in order to obtain rewards in heaven, Peter injects a question into the gathering, "Behold, we have left everything and followed you; what then will there be for us?" (Mt 19:27). Dillow observes, "Peter's question deals with rewards. That they saw a connection between leaving everything and obtaining some rewards is obvious."¹⁸ Later the same author adds, "Peter forthrightly asks what the benefit will be in the kingdom for a life of sacrifice now. Instead of rebuking him for striving for rewards, Jesus commends it and tells him he will rule with Him."¹⁹ Speaking of Peter, in contrast to the recently departed rich, young ruler, one writer observes, "he had sacrificed everything. Jesus had promised the young ruler treasure in heaven. So Peter wanted to know what he and the other disciples would receive. Peter's question is a legitimate one. If eternal life is by faith

¹⁸ Dillow, 66

¹⁹ Ibid., 592

alone, what does one get for self-denial?"²⁰ Self denial is clearly not an attribute that is praised in our culture, neither is it a character trait that is natural to the believer's fleshly nature. So what would motivate one to a life of such selflessness? Rewards in this life and eternity. Jesus words must have seared their way into Peter's mind!

Jesus gave them a marvelous promise of rewards in this life and the next. They would even share thrones when He established His kingdom. Whatever good things they had forsaken for His sake would be returned to them a hundredfold. In other words, they were not making sacrifices - they were making investments. But not all of the dividends would be received in this life."²¹

How much motivation it should give a believer to know whatever he gives up for Christ will be rewarded by the King of kings at a 10,000% return! Easy to understand why Wiersbe calls it an investment, not a sacrifice.

Admittedly, Peter's theology of rewards as a motivator is not nearly as comprehensive as Jesus', Paul's or John's. There are, however, several passages in the two epistles that bear his name that indicate Peter not only understood rewards were a motivator Jesus employed but also is one Peter used too. In 1 Peter 1:3-4, Peter writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead *to obtain an inheritance* [italics mine] which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away reserved in heaven for you." Peter declares that believers have been born again due to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and one's faith in the risen Savior. Peter goes on to say

²⁰ Wilkin, 89

²¹ Wiersbe, 73

the believer has been born again in order that he might obtain an inheritance. Speaking of the word "inheritance" one writer notes, "The same word is used in the Septuagint to refer to Israel's promised possession of the land."²² Dillow does an outstanding job in demonstrating that the word inheritance most often referred to the land of promise, Canaan, which was Israel's by promise, but possession of it could be forfeited by disobedience, they would not enjoy or possess the land or both.²³ In the New Testament, the writers build on this foundation regarding church saints not merely being in the kingdom but possessing or ruling in it. Thus the term inheritance, in the New Testament, most often means to possess the kingdom, to share in the rule with Christ, the King of kings, in the millennial kingdom. Thus Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Mt 5:5). Many believers are not meek and those who are do not inherit the earth now. However in the life to come, those who obey the Lord's commands (such as being meek) will possess, inherit, the earth.

Still later in his first letter, Peter writes to the saints regarding how those in the pastorate should serve and how those who are in the flocks should respond:

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; not yet as lording it over those allotted to you charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but

²² Walvoord and Zuck, 840

²³ Dillow, 43f

gives grace to the humble (1 Pt 5:1-5).

Peter gives the pastors, the shepherds, several admonitions that are timeless. He says to those in leadership to serve willingly, not for dishonest gain, to be good examples and then speaks to the issue of motivation in verse 4, namely the evaluation they will undergo by Christ, the Chief Shepherd, whose sheep believers really are. One writer comments, "Peter ends with a reminder of the reward for faithful service. He points out that Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, will judge the quality of the elder's service. The crown (*stephanos*) of glory is a wreath rather than a crown (*diadema*)... Like the inheritance of 1 Peter 1:4, this reward is eternal as well."²⁴

Warren Wiersbe adds rather insightfully:

Today a Christian worker may labor for many different kinds of rewards. Some work hard to build personal empires, others strive for the applause of men; still others seek promotion in their denomination. All of these will fade one day. The only reward we ought to strive for is the 'well done' of the Savior and the unfading crown of glory that goes with it.²⁵

Clearly the pastorate has some very unique challenges associated with such a ministry, not the least of which is working with nearly an entirely volunteer "labor force". Further, both the pastor and the rest of the flock all retain a sinful nature. To these specially called and gifted men who serve obediently, as described here and in other portions of the New Testament, a special crown will be awarded. Peter wanted to motivate the pastors who read this epistle by putting possible rewards in the fore of their minds. As a former

²⁴ Wilkin, 1167

²⁵ Wiersbe, 431

pastor, the writer can attest to how much encouragement he received from this passage, especially when faced with difficulty. He clung to the possibility that the Chief Shepherd would one day be pleased with His efforts, even when it seemed no one else was.

Peter's letter does not merely attempt to motivate the shepherds, he writes to the flock as well. He instructs the younger saints to submit to their shepherds (1 Pt 5:5) and then in verse six addresses both shepherd and the flock, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Pt 5:6). Modern culture, human nature and the Evil One all conspire to influence the believer to be proud, to make a name for one's self. God's Word consistently says to humble one's self, to be a servant and let God exalt him. Clearly God can, and occasionally does, exalt people in this life (i.e. Joseph and Daniel). Usually, however, it is in eternity when God does the exalting. One writer comments, "By **exalt**, Peter may be referring to God giving greater roles in the church. But more likely this refers to Jesus' second coming and rewards in His kingdom. This seems best because both elders and younger people are in view, and the elders have already been exalted in this life."²⁶

Peter's word of motivation can be summed up as follows, for pastors who serve well there is a reward, a crown, given only to pastors. Young believers follow the lead of your shepherd. All of you, humble yourselves and in eternity the Chief Shepherd will exalt you with rewards!

²⁶ Wilkin, 1167

In his second letter, Peter states the following:

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or shortsighted having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you (2 Pt 1:5-11).

Peter commands his readers, who are believers, to add to their faith certain qualities, character traits. They include moral excellence, self-control, brotherly kindness and love. Clearly not all believers exhibit these traits else Peter would not have admonished them to pursue them. Peter gives at least two reasons why his readers should pursue such qualities. First, they will be useful and fruitful if they possess these traits (2 Pt 1:8). Peter actually states the principle in the negative, the person who possesses these qualities will be, "...neither useless nor unfruitful...". One author comments about the word unfruitful or barren, "The Greek word translated barren might be better translated *idle* or *lazy*. A Christian who is *inactive* in his Christian faith will also be unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Conversely a believer who is vigorous in his service for God will most assuredly be fruitful."²⁷ The character traits Peter mentions will be rewarded in this life are that the believer is useful and fruitful. Peter also mentions the life to come, eternity, as a motivator. In verse 11 he mentions an abundant entrance into

²⁷ Wilkin, 1173

the kingdom. "All born-again Christians will *enter* the kingdom of Christ but only those who develop the Christian character described in this chapter will have a *special kind of entrance*.... Only if believers add to their faith the character qualities Peter describes will God *add* to a rich entrance to the kingdom."²⁸ Though many believers do not give diligence to have these character traits, those that do are promised a reward at their entrance into the millennial kingdom. To use a modern phrase, the "red carpet" will be rolled out for them! They will be given royal treatment, as well they should be, they are kings and queens. There will be more about the topic of specific rewards in chapter five.

Peter's theology of motivation and rewards is not as thorough or robust as are Jesus', Paul's or John's but it is present in the New Testament. He inquired of Jesus about what rewards he and the other disciples might receive. He also used rewards to motivate pastor (1 Pt 5:1-4), the flock (1 Pt 5:5) and the entire church (1 Pt 5:6). He also challenged all believers to be diligent to evidence certain character traits so that the King would grant them the red carpet treatment at their entrance into the kingdom.

PAUL ON MOTIVATION AND REWARDS

The apostle Paul took the concept of motivation by rewards to a new level. As the New Testament scriptures were progressively revealed (Jn 16:12-13), Paul and later John, will write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Pt 1:20-21) many more truths about rewards that were not revealed in either the Old Testament or the teaching of

²⁸ Wilkin, 1174

Jesus in the gospels. Due to the volume of passages that reveal Paul's theology on motivation by rewards, the writer will consider only some of the passages that occur and will comment on them in the order in which they appear in the English New Testament.

In Romans 14, Paul addresses the subject of doubtful things, those choices in life that are not clearly forbidden in scripture. At Rome, as in Corinth (1 Cor 8-10), there were believers who were mature and some who were immature. Paul calls them strong and weak respectively. In attempting to help these two groups get along, he writes:

But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.' So then each one of us shall give an account of himself to God (Romans 14:10-12).

Of this passage one writer comments,

There was no doubt in Paul's mind. As the servants in the Lord's parables had to stand before their masters, so, too, every believer must stand before God and give an account of his life and deeds. If you are a genuine Christ-follower, you have a divine appointment at the judgment seat of Christ. No Christian is excluded, regardless of how weak or strong his Christian life was.²⁹

The writer will deal with the nature of the judgment seat of Christ in chapter five, suffice it so say for now, the mere fact that the saints at Rome would stand and give an account of their lives was to be a motivation to them in obeying Paul's command to not treat each other with contempt. One thing is clear from Romans 14:10-12, every believer will stand to give an account for his life at a future time. Paul used this truth to admonish the Roman saints to pursue sanctification.

²⁹ Kroll, 94

When one reads the book of 1 Corinthians one thing becomes very clear, Corinth was a troubled church body! The writer would contend that it was easily the worst church in the New Testament era. Clearly the people written to were believers for Paul calls them saints (1:2), says they have every spiritual gift (1:7), they were babes in Christ (3:1) and had been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (12:13). Yet this same church had multiple problems. They had a brother who was living in a sinful relationship with his stepmother (5:1), they were suing each other in public courts (6:1-11), they were divisive and fleshly (3:1-5) and dishonoring the Lord at the communion service (11:17-34). Corinth was a troubled church to say the least! The writer often jokes with his students, if they ever get a chance to plant a church to not name it after the church at Corinth! The writer finds it very interesting that with what is the most problematic, immature church in the New Testament era, that was precisely the church that Paul wrote about rewards and motivation to the most. It was to the church at Corinth that Paul wrote his most lengthy teachings about the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor 3:10-15, 4:1-5, 9:24-27; 2 Cor 5:8-10).

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-5, Paul addressed the fact that many in the church at Corinth were carnal, that is they were born again (3:1) yet immature. Their immaturity did not spring from the fact that they had recently been regenerated, it sprang from the fact that they were living in the power of the flesh, their sin nature was in control.

In 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 Paul wrote to encourage and motivate them:

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation

with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

Paul contrasts building materials, some valuable, some cheap. Some things are lasting, while others only last a short duration. Paul advises the saints at Corinth to build with things that would survive the fire of testing, the fire of Jesus' scrutiny. Wiersbe says of this passage,

You can find wood, hay and stubble in your backyard, and it will not take too much effort to pick it up. But if you want gold, silver and jewels, *you will have to dig for them*. Lazy preachers and Sunday School teachers will have much to answer for at the Judgment Seat of Christ - and so too will preachers and teachers who *steal* materials from others instead of studying and making it their own.³⁰

Another writer, commenting on this portion of scripture notes, "While many see the issue as good versus bad works, it is more likely that Paul is discussing permanent versus impermanent works. Paul is urging the Corinthians to do what has eternal value. Of course those are the things God has commanded a believer to do."³¹ In his fine work, *Facing Your Final Job Review*, Woodrow Kroll contrasts the two categories of building materials with the following words:

The selection of building materials for our life of service to God is a personal choice. We each decide what kind of service we will have by the kinds of materials we choose. I can choose to serve in the spotlight so everyone sees me and praises what I do. I can choose popularity, pleasure and wealth. I can choose to get by with as little service to God as possible. When I come to a fork in the road, I can choose the

³⁰ Wiersbe, 581

³¹ Wilkin, 721

easy path, the well paved road, and the one with fewer obstacles. I can opt for style over substance, less over more, ease over difficulty. But in doing so, I may well be choosing straw over silver and that's a choice I will regret significantly at the judgment seat. The choice matters.³²

In the next chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul calls himself a servant of Christ, and a steward or manager, of the mysteries of God (4:1). Paul uses the word steward, a person who was entrusted with goods or responsibilities by his master to manage for the master. The master, who was the true owner, would at some time, demand a time of accountability for the goods and opportunities given the servant. Paul uses the next four verses, 4:2-5, to make several points about this coming accountability. In that day, the Master will be looking for one primary trait, faithfulness (4:2). Referring back to chapter one and Vifredo Pareto's principle as it is exemplified in most churches, the vast majority will not fare well when it comes to faithfulness to manage God entrusted resources and opportunities.

Paul goes on to write, in verse three, "But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court." In essence, what Paul is saying is that how the church at Corinth, or any other group or person, evaluated Paul's life was not his chief concern. Paul was more concerned about Jesus' evaluation of his life and that is what motivated him. Kroll observes, "People make judgments about us all the time. Sometimes their perceptions are true and accurate, sometimes they are not. But because other people rarely possess all the facts, when it comes to importance, the

³² Kroll, 130

judgment of other people is on the bottom rung of the ladder."³³

Most of God's people have felt the sting of being improperly judged by others who lacked important facts to make a good judgment. The writer knows of several occasions when he incorrectly judged others, foolishly giving some an approval they did not deserve and giving others a harsh disapproval that was lacking in grace and knowledge. Too often in today's culture others judge success based upon size of a congregation, amount of income or the ability to move a crowd. None of these are wrong, but all can be a poor basis for judging the success of another.

A word of caution might be appropriate here, Paul is not saying that an individual is not accountable to others and that a person can dismiss offhand the assessment of an elder board, a co-worker or a board of directors. Paul is merely saying that other's opinion is not nearly as important to him as God's assessment. Rather than being motivated by impure motives (pleasing others) Paul was motivated by an evaluation he knew he would one day undergo.

The writer remembers well that as a pastor he asked his elder board to evaluate him yearly. They evaluated him in several key areas, one being his organizational skills. One key leader admonished the writer several consecutive years to improve in this key area and gave the author a "C+" only because he did not have the heart to give the writer a "D" or "F". At the time the author was a church planter with absolutely no help around the office. One year, after receiving yet another admonition, a woman volunteered to help in

³³ Kroll, 72

the church office for twenty hours per week. The following year the elder who was always critical gave the writer an "A+" even though the writer had not changed at all! In this case, the evaluator had very limited knowledge of the writer's situation.

Paul went on to state that he could not even rightly evaluate his own ministry, "...in fact I do not even examine myself. I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted..." (1 Cor 4:3b, 4a). Paul states he cannot accurately judge his own life Wiersbe cautions, "Paul knew nothing that was amiss in his life and ministry, but even that did not excuse him. Sometimes we do not really know ourselves. There can be a fine line between a clear conscience and a self-righteous attitude, so we must beware."³⁴ The author's experience resonates with Paul. There have been many times in ministry, especially in preaching, when the writer's evaluation of the sermon was that it was terrible. Yet often the following week a church member would write a note of encouragement and state it may have been the writer's finest sermon in the past several years. Conversely there have been a few times when the writer thought the sermon had been particularly good, it was those weeks that the members nearly flew to the parking lot to get home or to a local restaurant. Not only is it impossible to evaluate others ministries and lives, it is also impossible to accurately evaluate one's own life, Paul continues by stating that it is too early, even if one had all the facts at his disposal, to make a judgment of self or another. Put another way, the last chapter of each person's life story is still being written and though the reader or the writer may think he knows how the story will end and when it will end, truth be told, only the Lord knows.

³⁴ Wiersbe, 582

That is why Paul admonishes, "therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time..." (1 Cor 5:5). As citizens of the United States learned in the 2000 presidential election when the television networks proclaimed one candidate a winner long before the outcome was truly decided, it is foolhardy to make a pronouncement about someone's life and ministry. It is up to the believer to follow Christ and wait for Him to render a judgment regarding one's works and motives. It is only when the last chapter of life has been lived that this will be possible, not until then.

The writer is struck with this observation, when one looks at the men and women of the Bible, particularly those who lived great lives, many ended life poorly. Examples of this would be Gideon, Moses and Eli. Their lives should be a warning to each Christ-follower not to rest on one's past achievements but to run the race before him with endurance.

A bit later in 1 Corinthians Paul again admonishes the saints with the following words:

Do you not know that those who run a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified (1 Cor 9:24-27).

Wiersbe explains Paul's use of an athletic metaphor with the following, "The Corinthians would have been familiar with the Greek Olympic Games as well as their own local Isthmian Games. Knowing this, Paul used a metaphor very close to their experience."³⁵

³⁵ Wiersbe, 602

The writer will refer to this scripture in chapter five concerning specific rewards that might be given to the believer, yet since it also addresses a motivation issue it will be commented on here also. Paul notes that the athletes of the first century practices great self discipline in order to win a very temporary prize. He then contrasts the prize available to first century athletes to the prize available to Christians who are highly motivated and practice self control. One might win a laurel wreath that would fade in a matter of days, the other could win a crown that would last eternally! One writer notes, "All believers are given this same opportunity to win an imperishable crown. An imperishable crown, awarded by the King of kings, is for more valuable than a perishable one awarded by some local official."³⁶

Paul mentions the self-control, the discipline necessary to be a great athlete. It translates into greatness in the sanctification process too. Kroll observes, concerning this self-control:

...everyone who runs is moderate in all things. That means a runner doesn't sit down to a Thanksgiving dinner, get up from the table and hit the streets for a marathon. Eating a Thanksgiving dinner and running a marathon within minutes of each other is not a good idea. Runners have to be temperate, restrained, and sensible. They eat in moderation as they train. If you want to win a race, you have to be sensible in how you prepare for it.³⁷

Wiersbe comments about the apostle's life and actions, "Paul had one goal in life ...to reach this goal he was willing to pay any price...he sacrificed immediate gains

³⁶ Wilkin, 741

³⁷ Kroll, 178-179

for eternal rewards, immediate pleasure for eternal joys."³⁸ It has been said that people can live for the dot (temporary, short-term) or the line (eternally). Paul lived for the line, yet it seems to this writer that if the Pareto principle is true in the church, the majority live for the dot. Preferring ease over spiritual exercise, luxury over a life of self-sacrifice, full service over humbly serving. Paul's words are clear, such people should not expect to run well in their race, nor receive a prize at the conclusion of their race.

Turning to Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth, Paul's ministry had been attacked (2 Cor 10:1, 10) and he writes to defend his apostolic ministry. In his defense, Paul's letter is much more autobiographical than his other epistles. In 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Paul writes of his sufferings for the service of Christ and exhorts his readers to suffer well for Christ, his words were:

Therefore, we also do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Paul's topic is suffering and in response he writes "... therefore, we also do not lose heart...." Why does Paul write about losing heart? Because when a person suffers, that is the most natural thing to do. To lose perspective, to throw in the towel is tempting. When a person runs, depending upon his cardiovascular conditioning, he will sooner or later experience a stabbing pain in his side. Most people have experienced this and have discovered the easy way to make the pain go away is to quit running! Believers can, and

³⁸ Wiersbe, 602

often do, the same thing. They stop allowing God to mature them in the midst of suffering trials.

Life in general, and physical suffering in particular, causes our bodies to fall apart, to decay as God's Word puts it (2 Cor 4:16). All the while, as the body is decaying, the real person, the inner man, the immaterial part of a person can be and is renewed as the believer walks in obedience and fellowship with Christ (2 Cor 4:16). Paul tells his readers why they should not lose heart in the midst of suffering. He states the outcome of suffering is an eternal weight of glory. Paul contrasts in-this-life suffering (momentary to and light) to the future reward it will produce (eternal and weighty glory). This writer would contend that suffering is God's primary way to renovate a believer's value system. Just as a carpenter's choice instrument is a hammer, a surgeon's choice instrument is a scalpel God's is suffering. Through it He changes the way a person views life and eternity. As any believer endures it well, he is being prepared for the life to come. One writer observes, " In passage after passage the New Testament writers invest human suffering with high dignity. It is through suffering with Christ that we are trained and equipped to join the great company of metachoi (Those who will rule and reign with Christ)."³⁹ Paul states the principle of temporal versus eternal in verse 18. Believers, in the midst of suffering, need to look to the eternal not what they can see. Paul could have seen, at various times in his life, chains, Roman soldiers, scars from stoning and

³⁸ Wiersbe, 602

³⁹ Dillow, 565

scourging, but he chose to "see", by faith, the glory that would one day be revealed when he stood before the Lord to be rewarded for his suffering for Christ.

Paul writes about his own ambitions and his motivations in life. He writes, in 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, "Therefore also we have as our *ambition* whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be *recompensed for his deeds* [italics mine] done in the body, according to what he had done, whether good or bad". The writer often mentions to his students the bestseller, from several years ago, *The Purpose Driven Life*, by Rick Warren, the writer asks his students if they ever wonder what it would be like to ask Paul about his purpose in life? The modern reader of God's Word is not left to his own imagination, Paul states his purpose very clearly. His ambition, his single most important motivation in life was to do well at the judgment seat of Christ! It is important to note what will be tried at this future time, one's deeds. Not merely good deeds, but good and bad ones. Kroll comments on the bad deeds spoken of here, he wrote of Paul's choice of the word translated "bad":

...he did not use the usual words for bad. Rather he used a word that does not imply ethical or moral evil, but rather a sense of good-for-nothingness or worthlessness. The judgment seat is where our works for the Lord will be closely scrutinized to see if they are valid or not, acceptable or not. The Judge is concerned with what sort of work we have done, what sort of life we have lived as a Christian servant.⁴⁰

Another writer says of Paul's outlook, "Putting his suffering in perspective, Paul maintained the integrity that had always marked his service. He was living, not for

⁴⁰ Kroll, 78

human applause, but for divine praise at the Judgment seat of Christ."⁴¹

Wiersbe adds, about Paul's motivation, "Paul was ambitious for the Lord because he wanted to meet Him with confidence and not shame (1 John 2:28)."⁴² Yet another author sees and comments on how the Judgment Seat affected and motivated Paul, "This perspective...had a solitary effect on Paul. It enabled him to persevere in the face of hardship (2 Cor 4:7-12). And it motivated him to be faithful in discharging his ministry (5:11; cf. 1 Cor. 4:2-4)."⁴³ The writer contends that Paul writes, in this passage (2 Cor. 5:8-10) that his purpose, his goal, his motivation in life and ministry was to please Christ and that would happen if Paul lived in light of the Judgment Seat of Christ and its attending ramifications, namely rewards or loss due to obedience or sloth.

In one of Paul's prison epistles, a letter of thanks to the church at Philippi for their generous gifts toward his mission work, Paul again writes about suffering and its results. He states in Philippians 3:8-11:

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Paul states his desire, that he will, through responding well in suffering, "attain to the

⁴¹ Wilkin, 786

⁴² Wiersbe, 646

⁴³ Walvoord and Zuck, 566

resurrection [italics mine] from the dead". The word translated resurrection here (exanastasis) is not the usual word (anastasis, verse 10). In fact it is the only place this word is used in the New Testament. Clearly Paul is not merely hoping to be resurrected one day as if that was in doubt, that would violate all he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15 about the certainty of the resurrection of all believers. The word Paul uses, in verse 11, for resurrection could better be translated, "out-resurrection". Dillow's comments here are especially good:

In this verse he refers to the resurrection by the Greek word exanastasis. This is the only time this word for resurrection is used in the entire New Testament. The normal word is anastasis. The fact that Paul would switch to such an unusual word causes us to wonder if he meant some particular kind or aspect of the resurrection. Because the word is used so rarely, there is no convincing evidence to help us determine exactly how, if any, this word might have differed from the regular word. We are therefore thrust upon the context and the word's basic meaning. Rather than being translated 'resurrection', this word could be literally rendered 'out-resurrection'. This might suggest a 'resurrection out from among the resurrected ones' in contrast to a mere 'resurrection from among the dead.' In other words, a special category or class of resurrected saints is referred to in this verse.⁴⁴

The writer believes Paul's comments here are in perfect harmony with what Peter writer of Hebrews wrote in the great Hall of Fame of Faith passage, "Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, *in order that they might receive a better resurrection* [italics mine]" Hebrews 11:35. The perfect harmony of scripture is incredible, Peter, Paul and the writer of Hebrews agree perfectly, when suffering is endured well, a reward, a better resurrection, a red carpet treatment awaits! However, not all believers suffer well. Many suffer poorly and lose

⁴⁴ Dillow, 559-560

heart, get angry at God and disillusioned in life. Why suffer well? The reward of the Judgment Seat of Christ awaits and while suffering may seem to never end in this life, it is really only a vapor *when compared* to the future that awaits the saint. Paul, once more, stated his motivation, in suffering, was to receive a reward, here called the "out resurrection" that would be awarded to all who suffer well.

In another prison epistle, Colossians, Paul wrote the following, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the *reward of the inheritance*. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve" (Col 3:23-24). In the context, Paul was not writing to pastors or vocational Christian workers, he was writing to slaves. Thankfully our culture has long since abolished slavery, so the closest application one might make would be to a person's employment. An employee is commanded to work heartily, as though Jesus Christ were his boss. Again the question could be raised, why? What motivation could there be for working heartily rather than half-heartedly? Again Paul's answer is rewards. An inheritance, possession, awaits the hard worker as his reward. Dillow observes, "The inheritance is a reward which is received as 'wages' for work done. Nothing could be plainer. The context is speaking of the return a man should receive because of his work, as in an employer-employee relationship. The inheritance is received as a result of work; it does not come as a gift."⁴⁵

The writer remembers well as a church planting pastor taking a second job to help make ends meet. The job was at a business that paid well and was unionized, so it was a

⁴⁵ Dillow, 68

place nearly impossible to lose one's job. The writer had many a struggle working harder than all others around him, a statistic proven daily by computer printouts that measured performance. It was important for the writer to remind himself, his true Master was Christ and a reward might be his some day for a job well done in this life. This theology, when applied, really does change a person's life!

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, widely believed to be the last of Paul's letters before he was martyred, the following words are recorded, "It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him we shall also live with Him; If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, he also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tm 2:11-13). In verse 11, Paul states, to Timothy, if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. In the original Greek, it is in a construction, called a first class condition, that could well be translated, "...since we died with Him...." This thought is in perfect unity with Romans chapter 6 which states that a believer in Christ has positionally died, been buried and resurrected with Christ (6:1-4). Verse 12 gives the reader two options, enduring suffering for Christ which will result in reigning with Christ in His kingdom or denying, saying no, to Christ and having Christ deny, say no to believer regarding the reward of ruling with Christ. Wilkin comments on what Paul said in verse 12, "...he warns that only those who endure will reign with Christ."⁴⁶ Kroll comments on the endurance challenged in this passage, "So whatever you have to endure now in being faithful as a steward of what God has given you, endure

⁴⁶ Robert Wilkin, *The Road to Reward* (Irving, TX: GES Publications, 2003), 171

it because there's a throne in your future."⁴⁷

The writer can attest to many a time when rather than enduring well, he whined and complained about suffering. It is obvious to even the casual observer that many a believer does not endure suffering well. Paul's words in verse 12 harmonize beautifully with James' words in James 1:12, "Blessed is he man who perseveres under trial for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

Dillow adds, with great insight:

Here the promise of reigning with Him, being rewarded in the coming millennial kingdom is in the forefront. Those who are victorious in suffering, who persevere to the end will enjoy a joint participation with Christ in the future reign of the servant kings. This theme is taught extensively in the New Testament (Mt. 16:24-27; 19:28-29; Lk. 22:28-30; Rom. 8:17; Rev. 3:21; 2:26-27).⁴⁸

In yet another place he adds:

As in Rom. 8:17 reigning with Christ seems to be conditioned upon endurance. The converse, to disown Him, will result in His disowning us when He rewards His church according to the things done in the body, 'good or bad' (2 Cor 5:10). The possibility of being 'disowned' does not refer to loss of salvation, because the apostle clarifies that, even when we are 'faithless', He will remain faithful to us. But it does mean that we may be 'disqualified for the prize' (1 Cor 9:27) and stand ashamed at His coming (1 Jn 2:28).⁴⁹

Finally, on this passage, one writer notes, "Paul was at the end of his life, Timothy and those to whom he ministered to were not. *If we endure we shall also reign with Him.*

⁴⁷ Kroll, 171

⁴⁸ Dillow, 427

⁴⁹ Ibid., 376

The issue is rulership, not kingdom entrance."⁵⁰

When life is good, most believers do well, when the fire of affliction is turned up, many do not. To those who walk in obedience to Christ through those deep and dark valleys, God, through Paul's pen, offers comfort and motivation, one day and ever after you will reign with Christ! So hang in there, do not throw in the towel.

One final passage regarding Paul's theology of motivation and rewards is found in 2 Timothy 4:6-8:

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

As noted previously, most scholars believe that 2 Timothy was Paul's final letter before his martyrdom. As an older man, facing an imminent death, he wrote the above words. Paul stated he had poured out his life as a drink offering. A drink offering was a voluntary sacrifice to the Lord in the Old Testament. It involved a bit less than a quart of wine. It was not a drink offering unless it was poured out. In like manner, Paul had, in many ways, poured his life out in obedience to Christ. He had refused to "save his life", rather he "lost" it for Christ. In verse 7 Paul refers to how he had lived and alludes to what he had written earlier (2 Tm 2:3-6) when he exhorted Timothy to live a life pleasing to God and illustrated it by referring to a soldier, an athlete and a farmer. Here Paul says as a soldier he has waged a good fight, as an athlete he has finished a race run

⁵⁰ Wilkin, *The Grace New Testament Commentary*, 1000

well and as a farmer he has kept the faith that his cultivating, sowing and watering efforts would produce a harvest. Wiersbe comments on the crown to be won in this passage, "The crown of righteousness is God's reward for a faithful and righteous life; and our incentive for faithfulness and holiness is in the promise of the Lord's appearing. Because Paul loved His appearing and looked for it, he lived righteously and served cheerfully."⁵¹ Kroll observes, about the crown of righteousness spoken of by Paul, "The crown of righteousness literally means a 'crown for doing right'. Anticipation and purity go hand-in-hand. You cannot longingly look for Christ's return and live a life that is displeasing to Him at the same time."⁵² The writer wholeheartedly agrees. If the eighty percent of believers that seem to fall into the Pareto principle longed for Christ's return their lives would not evidence disobedience and carnality.

Paul's theology of motivation and rewards takes the reader of the New Testament to new heights of understanding never before witnessed in the Old Testament of the gospels. Paul was personally motivated by this principle (1 Cor 4:1-5, 9:24-27; 2 Cor. 5:8-10) and sought to motivate pastors, carnal Christians, suffering Christians and slaves to a life of obedience by considering the rewards they might receive from Christ in the life to come.

JOHN ON MOTIVATION AND REWARDS

The writer has chosen to consider John the apostle last due to the fact that the epistles he penned are after Paul's and Peter's in the English New Testament. Also, according to

⁵¹ Wiersbe, 255

⁵² Kroll, 188

church tradition, he outlived the other two apostles discussed in this chapter. Like Peter's, John's theology on motivation and rewards is not as full as Paul's yet it is present. A careful look at his life and writings reveals a good bit of detail about his own motivation and how, through the Holy Spirit, he sought to motivate others

In the gospels there is an account of John, along with his brother James, interacting with Jesus about rewards in the kingdom. Mark informs his readers that James and John approached Jesus with a request, might they occupy the two premier positions in Jesus' kingdom (the thrones to His right hand and left hand; Mk 10:37). The writer finds it curious that the other ten became indignant when all twelve had often argued about greatness in the kingdom. The writer also believes it is important that John, along with James, aspired to greatness in the kingdom. Further, and perhaps most importantly, Jesus never scolded or chided the two brothers for their aspiration, He did, however, warn them about their views on how one might become great in the kingdom (Mk 10:39-40).

Jesus, in essence, told John and James that greatness in the kingdom is a lofty goal, however it is not obtained by asking for favors, it is obtained by obedience. In this passage, Jesus said it will require suffering, drinking from the same cup of suffering he was about to drink of (Jn 10:38-39). Writing about John, and the rest of the apostles lack of understanding on the connection of suffering to rewards, one writer comments, "...the disciples did not understand the role of suffering which leads to rewards in the kingdom. The positions they ask for do not come by asking, but by suffering according to the will of God. Jesus' two metaphors describing His own reveal that His own glory is preceded

by suffering."⁵³

There was a commercial on television, years ago, about a certain investment brokerage firm whose point was that, as a firm, they did not ask for people's respect, they earned it. That is what Jesus told John, and James, upon hearing their request. Positions and rewards in the kingdom, are not the result of the Lord granting a request but rather directly related to humble service and often accompanied by great suffering. According to the Word of God, James willingly drank the cup of suffering Jesus spoke of (Acts 12:1-2) as one of the first martyrs of the church. John would pay dearly too as he was exiled to the island of Patmos (Rv 1:9). This passage has long intrigued the writer. Like John he wants to be great in the kingdom, what haunts the writer is the question, "...are you willing to drink the cup that I drink of..." to obtain greatness?

In the first epistle of John, the apostle wrote the following words, "And now little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming" (1 Jn 2:28). John tenderly addressed them as little children and proceeded to admonish them to abide in Christ. Perhaps John had Jesus' words in John 15 in mind where Jesus commanded the twelve to abide in Him. To abide includes to walk in obedience, a close fellowship with Christ. As the believer abides in Christ, he will bear much fruit for the Father's glory (Jn 15:8). 1 John 2:28 contains a command, "abide in Him". Like every command of scripture, there are two options, obedience or disobedience. The apostle tells his readers why they should be

⁵³ Wilkin, *Grace New Testament Commentary*, 106

motivated to obedience using a negative example. Should they fail to abide, at Christ's return, His appearing, non-abiders will be ashamed. Speaking of the word abide and the command to "abide in Him", Kroll comments, "This is the basis of rewards or the cause - of loss - remaining in the Christ dependent life. John is concerned that his friends live in the Lord and labor for Him."⁵⁴

The possibility of experiencing shame at Jesus coming is a new revelation to many believers. Wilkin comments:

Some believers live as though they couldn't possibly experience shame before Christ. After all, sins are supposed to be forgiven, right?

It is true, of course, that the Lord Jesus by His death on the cross took away all of our sins, past, present, and future (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2). Sin is no longer a barrier to anyone having eternal salvation. The moment we believe in Jesus for eternal life, He gives it to us. Eternal life, however, does not exclude accountability. Believers still need fellowship forgiveness (1 John 1:9). And if a believer is out of fellowship with God when his life is over, he will experience shame at the Bema.⁵⁵

Wilkin goes on to state that fear can be a very appropriate emotion in many circumstances. He illustrates it with life experiences such as seeing a policeman when one is speeding, having a parent ask what one is doing when the child is disobeying or having a boss evaluate one's performance when it is substandard.⁵⁶ So too there will be many believers who are ashamed at Christ's coming, and of the results of His evaluation of their lives if the Pareto principle continues to be the norm in the body of Christ. John

⁵⁴ Kroll, 118

⁵⁵ Wilkin, *The Road to Reward*, 44

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 44-45

sought to motivate his readers to not need to experience shame at Christ's coming by living an abiding kind of life exemplified by obedience and fellowship.

In his second epistle, John wrote about the possibility of not receiving a full reward, only a partial reward. He wrote, "Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a *full reward*" [italics mine] 2 John 8. In the context, John is warning his readers about false teaching. Through the influence of false teachers, his readers may be influenced negatively and through commission of sin or through omission of obedience and thus lose rewards.

Kroll writes, "Losing rewards is possible in two ways. We may lose them by default by not seizing opportunities that are presented to us. But we also may lose rewards by defect, by living our lives in such a way that what we do does not meet the criteria to qualify for reward."⁵⁷ Wiersbe adds perceptively, regarding the danger of false teachers mentioned by John, "Satan is a thief and so are his helpers. John wanted his readers to receive a 'full reward', which is his equivalent of 2 Peter 1:11, an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom."⁵⁸

Though the teaching on loss of reward is not as detailed as some believers might like, this passage does seem to state that rewards are not a "pass/fail", "A" or "F", proposition. To use an illustration from the classroom, a believer might be an "A" student at this point of the semester but fail to do what the teacher expects and by final exam have dropped to

⁵⁷ Kroll, 121

⁵⁸ Wiersbe, 537

a "C-". In the sports world, a gymnast might score many "9s" or "10s" in preliminary competition but do poorly in the finals and drop from a gold medal to a bronze. John challenged his readers to keep abiding, keep on watching so that they might receive an "A", a "10", from the true Judge.

In the book of Revelation, John has much to say about rewards and used them at critical points to motivate his readers to obedience, to a life well lived. In Revelation 2 and 3 John writes to address seven churches in Asia Minor. The churches, in order, were Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Generally speaking, John, by the Lord Jesus' revelation and the Spirit's inspiration, commends each church for what it was doing well and admonished each for problems that needed to be addressed. Finally there was a prescription, a correction, given to each church. In essence John writes, if you do such and such, the Lord will do this for you. These promises were clearly given to motivate the seven ancient churches to do what Jesus said through John's pen. Seven times John wrote to people in each church admonishing and imploring them to be overcomers (Rv 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). In each case John promised those who were overcomers that they would receive specific rewards. The writer will only address the concept of being an overcomer here, specific rewards John used to motivate them will be discussed in chapter five.

What is an overcomer? The prevailing view is that it is every believer. Support for this view is garnered by citing verses such as 1 John 4:4. It is true that 1 John 4:4 teaches that believers are overcomers. Put another way, a believer's *position* is one of being an overcomer. However a believer's *practice*, how they live, may not be one of overcoming

at all. In fact, truth be told, it appears more believers are not overcomers than are, when speaking of practice rather than position. The fallacy of using 1 John 4:4 to prove what the word overcomer means in Revelation 2 and 3 is a principle in hermeneutics called illegitimate totality transfer. To put it simply, it is the claim that a word or term always means the same thing, no matter what the context.

The writer often asks his students to think of at least five ways the word "trunk" is used in the English language. The five they nearly always respond with are, the "nose" of an elephant, the "rear end" of a car, the "bottom" of a tree, a "box" for storing sweaters in the attic and a person's "torso". At this point of the class the writer usually asks his students, "what does the word 'trunk' mean?" They usually respond correctly, "it depends upon the context!" In Revelation 2 and 3 John writes to believers, yet it is clear that they might not overcome, else why would he admonish them seven times to overcome?

The word used in Revelation 2 and 3 for "overcomer" could well be translated, "one who is victorious". It is used of Jesus in Revelation 3:21, "He who overcomes I will grant to sit down with me on My throne, *as I also overcame* [italics mine] and sat down with My Father on His throne". As the God-man, Jesus perfectly overcome, was victorious over the enemies He faced, the world system and the Evil One. His victory was not merely consistent, it was perfect. In Revelation John challenges his readers to use Jesus as an example and be victorious Christians, to not be defeated by the three enemies they face, the world, Satan and the flesh. In principle, all believers could be overcomers in fact, few have been or are. Jesus, through His indwelling Holy Spirit, has

given to believers everything they need for life and godly living. Dillow comments, "An overcomer in 1 John is simply a Christian; an overcomer in Revelation is a persevering Christian.... An overcomer is simply a 'victor' and the word itself does not even imply that the victor is a Christian; he could be a victor in the games."⁵⁹ The word "overcomer" comes from the Greek word "nikao" which means victor. The athletic apparel company NIKE wants people who wear their brand to believe they will be victors wearing Nikes. John wanted his readers to be victors too, but with much more at stake.

Victory in sports does not just happen. It occurs when a person or members of a team are disciplined in training, have a goal in mind and persevere in difficulty, so also in the life of sanctification. John tantalizes his readers with the promise of various rewards which will be the subject of chapter five.

One final passage by John on rewards is found in the last chapter of Revelation. The verse could easily have been included in the section on Jesus on motivation and rewards since Jesus is the speaker in the passage. The writer decided to include it here, however, since John is the writer and it is an appropriate way to draw to a conclusion how the New Testament uses rewards as a motivator. In Revelation 22:12, Jesus said, and John wrote, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and my *reward* [italics mine] is with me, to render to every man according to what he has done." The writer finds it highly significant that in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible, as God is about to conclude special revelation nearly the last thing Jesus spoke of was rewards and John records it to

⁵⁹ Dillow, 37

motivate people to obedience in this life. What one does, or does not do, really matters. It is a truth that people need to hear. If the Pareto principle holds true in the body of Christ, eighty percent need to get serious about obedience and the twenty percent need to be encouraged that they will be richly rewarded.

CONCLUSION

Jesus, Peter Paul and John said and wrote a great deal about rewards in the future as a motivator in this life. They employed rewards to encourage carnal Christians to stop living in the flesh, to encourage pastors to lead their flocks diligently and wisely as they set an example. They used rewards often to challenge people who were suffering to persevere, to church members to submit to their shepherds, to believers to be diligent to develop important character traits, to caution against an unfair or untimely assessment of anyone's life. Yes, these four men used rewards as a motivation in nearly every conceivable situation. In the next chapter, the writer will demonstrate what these rewards might be and why they should serve as such a motivator.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST AND REWARDS THAT MOTIVATE

In the last chapter it was suggested that the prominent New Testament personalities used rewards as a chief motivator for believers. It would be a misrepresentation of scripture to say that all the rewards of obedience are future, in the life to come. Certainly there are rewards that come to a believer in this life when he obeys the Lord. Though not an exhaustive list, rewards in this life would include the satisfaction of seeing God use one's life to bless others, to minister to their needs. There is the joy of obedience, who has not known the joy of meeting a need, perhaps anonymously, and knowing that one's actions have pleased the King? Sometimes God directly honors the obedient believer in this life. Several prominent characters in the Old Testament serve as examples, Abraham, Job, Daniel and Joseph. All four were blessed materially and Daniel and Joseph politically. Others are blessed by our obedience which also serves as a reward in this life. Yes when a believer obeys, blessings, rewards do come in this life but not always and never to the extent the Lord promised in the life to come.

While agreeing to the fact that God often rewards obedience in this life, it is clear in the New Testament the greatest and most enduring rewards are still future. These rewards will be given at the time the Bible calls the Judgment Seat of Christ.

What is the Judgment Seat of Christ? Perhaps a better way to begin is to state what it

is not. It is not a time to determine who goes to heaven and who is banished to hell. It is not to determine entrance into Christ's kingdom. That issue was settled in this life. When an individual hears the gospel of Christ, is convicted by the Holy Spirit of God of his sin, and convinced of the truth of Christ's offer of eternal life to all who believe, he is justified, declared righteous and is secure in his position as an adopted son of God. Justification is a gift, rewards, as we shall see, are a gracious response of God to our works as believers. Let the writer be clear, the Judgment Seat of Christ has nothing to do with where a person will spend eternity, whether he will be in heaven or hell.

On the positive side, the Greek word, "bema", translated "judgment seat", was used in the culture of the New Testament to refer to a raised platform on which a person sat to render a judgment. In modern vernacular it would be the "bench" of a judge. Pilate sat upon a judgment seat to hear the case against Jesus and render a verdict (Mt 27:19). It was also used in the realm of athletic competition of an official that observed the participants to ensure rules were followed and then award the prize to the victorious athlete. In short, the Judgment Seat of Christ will be a true evaluation of the evidence to render a decision. It will be a time to give rewards to deserving participants.

When will the Judgment Seat, this examination by Christ, take place? It will be sometime after the rapture of the church to heaven to ever be with the Lord. Paul referred to a crown he would receive "on that day" the day of "His appearing" (2 Tm 4:8). He also spoke of the rewards one might receive when "...the Lord comes" (1 Cor 4:5). Peter also connects the rapture and rewards when he writes to the shepherds of a local church and says to them, '...when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will be rewarded the

unfading crown of glory' (1 Pt 5:4)."¹ Thus the timing of the Judgment Seat can be established, it will be after the Lord raptures the church. Based upon the fact that one when Christ returns with His saints to the earth, believers are seen already rewarded for their righteous acts (Rv 19:7-16; they are wearing crowns), a careful observation leads to the conclusion that it must be after the rapture but before the Lord comes to establish His kingdom, thus it takes place during the tribulation. This fact also tells the reader of scripture that the place of the Judgment Seat will be in heaven, for that is where the Lord takes the church at the rapture and the place He, and they, are coming from when He returns with the church.

As with any courtroom, there must be a judge. The Judgment Seat of Christ is no exception, except for the nature, the character of the Judge. As God, Jesus is omniscient, He knows all things. In earthly courtrooms, judges, no matter how skilled in a knowledge of the law and the facts presented to them, have limited knowledge. First Corinthians 4:5 declares that Jesus not only will reveal things hidden but also will disclose the motives of men's hearts. Unlike earthly judges, Jesus has all knowledge and knows the motive behind every action, every word. Erwin Lutzer comments on the believer's Judge with the following words:

I'm told that there is a central location is the World Wide Web that records all the "visits" of millions of subscribers. Somewhere, there is a person who could tally every Web site you and I have ever contacted. On the Internet there is much that is good and helpful as well as that which is destructive and evil. Whether good or bad, our actions are recorded.

¹ Harlan Betz, *Setting the Stage for Eternity* (Kingwood, TX: Falcon Publishing, 2006), 39

Just so, God has His vast information network. Everything we have done or said is known to Him. He can, if necessary, "download" the information at a moment's notice. And whatever He chooses to reveal to us, whether it be little or much, we will not dispute the facts. We don't need to ask for dates, times, and places, for all such details are known to Him.²

Kroll, in his book, *Facing Your Final Job Review*, notes, "Judgment is best left to God because only He sees everything that has happened.... It's because God is in a much better position to discern why we do what we do and to assess the real outcome of what we have done...."³ A bit later Kroll comments again about our omniscient Judge:

The righteous Judge will see through all the things we have done in his name. Likely he will discern that many things we did, which we felt were very valuable, were actually quite worthless, perhaps because of the attitude with which we did them. He will sort out the works of our lives done through a pure motive and allow them to stand. At the same time, those things done with an improper motive will perish....⁴

Dillow comments on the fact that one's motives will be judged by the only Judge who knows them:

A work done has two aspects to it: the deed itself and the motive behind it. Is it not true that we often begin good projects for the Lord but they become total failures? Conversely, sometimes some of the works which outwardly are the biggest and most public were done for the wrong motives. When our Lord evaluates our lives, He will look deeper than the works themselves. He will search "the minds and hearts" (Rev. 2:23).⁵

One's motives are an important part of the evaluation Jesus will perform. Acts of

² Erwin Lutzer, *Your Eternal Reward* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1998), 29

³ Woodrow Kroll, *Facing Your Final Job Review* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 74

⁴ *Ibid.*, 78-79

⁵ Joseph Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Haynesville, NC: Schoettle, 1992), 523

kindness, perhaps many good deeds will fail to pass His scrutiny, rather they will be like the religious leaders of Jesus' day who did good things (praying, fasting and giving to the poor) for all the wrong reasons (to be seen by others).

The Judge is not only all knowing, He is also righteous. Paul called Him the righteous judge (2 Tm 4:8), and expected to receive a reward from Him. It is due to His righteousness that the Judgment Seat must take place, He has promised believers he would reward them, to fail to do so would be unrighteous, to be unfaithful to His word. Speaking of the character of the Judge, Kroll comments, "It is quite evident therefore, that we will be dealt with fairly at the judgment seat of Christ. Any reward that is earned and proven worthy will be awarded to us because of the very nature and integrity of the one who judges us, the Lord Jesus Christ."⁶

Who are the people to be examined at the Judgment Seat of Christ? The New Testament teaches clearly that it will be the church, the bride of Christ. The writer understands the church to be distinct from Israel. The church is a group comprised of every believer since Pentecost and continuing until the rapture of the church to heaven. Clearly there are other believers in history (Old Testament saints, believers in the gospels and tribulation period) and they will be rewarded for their obedience too, however those groups are not the subject of this chapter, the church is. Every believer from roughly 30 A.D. until the Lord calls His church to heaven at the rapture will be included in the Judgment Seat of Christ. The writer concludes this due to the fact that every place it is

⁶ Kroll, 59

referred to is in the New Testament and is written to believers only. Betz states,

...it is only Christians who will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. Contrary to popular opinion, the Bible does not teach that there will be one great all-inclusive judgment. There will be no unbelievers at the judgment seat of Christ. Most unbelievers will be judged at the great white throne judgment spoken of in Revelation 20:11-15. The judgment seat of Christ is designed uniquely and exclusively for those church-age believers who trust in Christ as their personal Savior.⁷

When the Judgment Seat of Christ occurs, what will be examined, what will the Judge be looking for? He will be evaluating one's works, one's motives, stewardship and opportunities. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 concerning the Judgment Seat. In part, he wrote, "...it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy" (4:2). A steward was essentially a manager. He managed the resources of another person but he did not own them. Paul understood that even the message he proclaimed, the gospel that unites people to Christ and to others, had been entrusted to him. What has God entrusted to the believer? In short, the correct answer is everything. But when such an answer is given it tends to obscure the point. To answer in detail would be to say God has given the believer money, relationships, a spiritual gift, opportunities for training, opportunities for sharing the gospel and mentoring others. For most western Christians, the answer would also involve higher education, a house and a vehicle.

Suppose a person's income was \$50,000 per year for forty years, in his lifetime he managed \$2,000,000 for God. Either he was a good manager or not. For the writer, his management will include the following items to give an account for: being raised in a

⁷ Betz, 37

godly, Christ- centered home, a treasure beyond compare to be sure. His parents were wonderful examples of Christ, generous, gracious and loving. Many people did not have such an opportunity in their formative years. While very grateful, it is another facet of the account the writer will one day give to the Judge. Additionally the writer had opportunity to attend a great Bible college and three fine graduate schools and seminaries, have several mentors to impart wisdom, has been given a grand bride, three children to train, a more than fair salary, excellent health, opportunities to preach on more than a thousand occasions, to lead a Bible college and teach hundreds of students. The list could go on and on. Everything will be open for scrutiny.

The longer one lives, after trusting Christ as Savior, the more accountable he will be at the Judgment Seat. Kroll observes, "We are to be found faithful where our service for the Lord is large or small.... If we love the Lord as we should, we will then be faithful in a small, unnoticed task, just as we should in a large, spotlighted task. Our faithfulness doesn't stem from the nature of the task but from our love for the Master."⁸ Dillow offers insight, "A faithful man is of high value to God. Solomon asks, 'who can find a faithful man' (Prov. 20:6). In the final analysis this will be the 'bottom line', God will not judge us on the basis of our success but on the basis of our faithfulness."⁹ Thankfully God does not expect perfection, only faithfulness.

Because the United States is such a land of freedoms (speech and assembly to name a

⁸ Kroll, 142

⁹ Dillow, 525

few) and opportunity (biblical education and resources) great will be the level of accountability for each American believer. However the level of accountability differs from person to person, like snowflakes, no two people are alike in their giftedness, personalities and opportunities. In the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-30), Jesus mentioned three servants, each given a different amount of money to manage (five, two and one talents respectively). When the master in the parable, a figure of Jesus, returned from a trip and demanded an accounting of his goods, entrusted to his three servants, he did not ask the two talent servant to give an account for five talents, only what he had been given. The writer has a friend and mentor who is a five talent sort of person in terms of giftedness. He is unbelievably gifted as a speaker and writer, known and loved by millions. His congregation has multiple thousands in it and his books have influenced hundreds of thousands. There have been times when the writer has wished for more gifts, talents and abilities to be more like this man, but then he thinks of the Bema and is glad he will not have to give an account for a flock of thousands. Conversely, when it comes to physical health, the writer is a five talent person, blessed with excellent health to this point of his life. The writer has another friend in ministry who was diagnosed with diabetes at age thirteen and has struggled with it for forty plus years with many attending health problems. In this case, he will not give an account for his outstanding health, the writer will.

Clearly the believer will give an accounting of his management of life from conversion to the rapture or death, whichever comes first. More specifically he will give an account for works done, whether good or bad (2 Cor 5:10). The works that are worthy of reward

from the Judge are only what He deems good works. Nothing that is sinful could ever be classified as good by the Judge, though people today pervert God's standards. Even works that are not evil, might not be good works. As stated previously, the word "bad", used to describe a believer's works in 2 Corinthians 5:10, can be translated "worthless". These are things a believer does that are not eternal in nature. Things that might be merely silly or a waste of time.

The good works one does need not be considered great works by man to be rewarded by the Judge. The Word declares showing hospitality to a prophet and merely giving a drink of water to a thirsty brother or sister are works the Judge will reward (Mt 10:41, 42). When the writer was a pastor, on numerous occasions he commented to people in his flock that Jesus would reward their works. It was not uncommon for them to be surprised and even mention that what they had done was not important, it was only a minor act of service. The belief was that since they had not preached a sermon or shared the gospel or written a large check, it would not be rewarded. It should serve as a great motivator that not only is the Judge all knowing, He never forgets any work done for Him, but also that He will reward even what men might consider a minor act of service.

THE CROWN REWARDS

What rewards can be won or lost? Many specific rewards are mentioned in the New Testament. Nearly all of them are possible to win for every person. There are a few exceptions, such as one available only to pastors who shepherd well, but for the most part any saint who walks in obedience has the chance to receive the rewards promised in the New Testament.

The writer will begin with the ones that are most well known, the crown rewards.

There are five specific crowns mentioned in the New Testament. These are: the crown of life, the crown of rejoicing, the crown of righteousness, the crown of glory and the incorruptible crown. For reasons too numerous to mention here, the writer believes these are literal crowns. When the Bible is interpreted literally, or at face value, there is no reason to allegorize these rewards. Jesus is called the King of kings, He will literally sit on David's throne and have not only a crown but a scepter too. Additionally, saints are seen casting crowns at Jesus' feet in Revelation 4:10. What are these crowns and what must be done to obtain one?

In no particular order the writer will consider the five crowns mentioned. The crown of life is mentioned in James 1:12, "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved; he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." In this passage, it is associated with faithful endurance in trials. In this way the persevering believer, and many are not, demonstrates his love for Christ. The crown of life is mentioned again in Revelation 2:10, "...be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." Again associated with faithfulness, whether in suffering or even all the way to death. Betz comments on this crown:

Once again it must be pointed out that the crowns are rewards and not gifts. The crown of life is distinct from the gift of life. Every believer has received the gift of life, but not every believer will receive the crown of life. The gift of life is received freely (Eph. 2:8,9). The crown of life is earned sacrificially (Jas. 1:12). The Scriptures clearly distinguish between the possession of eternal life as a gift to be received (Jn. 3:16) and the full, rich experience of eternal life as a goal to be pursued (1 Tim. 6:12-19)! The believer who is willing to die to self and live for God is going to experience a richness, a fullness, and an abundance that other believers won't ever experience.¹⁰

¹⁰ Betz, 174-175

Kroll mentions that the crown of life is sometimes called the sufferer's crown. He says,

The sufferer's crown is promised to every believer who remains faithful under trial and does not cave in when Satan's attacks are most severe. When you love the Lord in spite of your trial and are not embittered because of them, you are on your way to winning the crown of life.

Jesus' summary to his teaching of the beatitudes was this, 'Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you' (Matt. 5:11-12). There is clearly a connection between bearing the cross and wearing the crown.¹¹

Dillow comments on the crown of life with great insight, "What is this 'crown of life'? Since it is the reward given for an accomplishment subsequent to initial faith, it is probable that it refers to a higher quality of life in the kingdom...the special riches of eternal life merited by faithful service on the field of battle."¹²

Jesus said, in John 10:10, "...I come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly." Eternal life, in the Bible, is not merely *length* of life, as in never ending, but also a *quality* of life, as in fullness. The crown of life, then, seems to be a richer, fuller experience of life in the kingdom than a person who does not receive the crown of life. The apostle Paul said, of heaven, that it was better by far than any experience this life had to offer (Phil 1:23), so all believers will enjoy eternity, but those who receive the crown of life will have a richer, fuller experience there.

The crown of exultation, or the crown of boasting as it is rendered in some translations, is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, "For who is our hope or joy or

¹¹ Kroll, 197

¹² Dillow, 576

crown of exultation? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy." Of the five crowns, this is the only one that might not be a literal crown, for Paul states the Thessalonian believers that those he had led them to faith in Christ were his crown. Dillow comments, "It is apparently not a literal crown but people. Apparently Christ will in some way give special honor to those who have faithfully labored at bringing people to Christ."¹³ Others believe it is a literal crown to be won. No matter if this crown is literal or not, there is a reward to be won for being faithful at sowing the seed of the gospel and letting the Spirit of God work. Kroll encourages his reader to imagine the Judgment Seat, "Just imagine the reunions that will take place on that day. Imagine the tears. Imagine the shouts and hugs. All because we have been faithful in sowing the seed. One of the joys of appearing before the judgment seat of Christ is seeing others there who were reaped from seed we had sown."¹⁴

The writer would speculate, though he cannot prove, that those who give generously to missionaries and organizations whose purpose is evangelism will share in this crown as well. What a motivator to share Christ and give generously to those who do! The writer knows several people that he is confident will receive the crown of exultation, some for consistently sharing Christ with others wherever God has placed them, on college campuses, in airplanes and airports, and with teammates. Others for generously and consistently giving so others could tell the message of Christ.

¹³ Dillow, 574

¹⁴ Kroll, 185

The largest protestant denomination in the United States claims that the vast majority of their churches did not add even one new member in the previous year. Further they polled their constituents and found that more than 85 percent had never shared the gospel with one other person. This writer thinks it is time to tell others about the crown of exultation.

The next crown to be won or lost is the crown of righteousness. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:8, "...in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me but to all who have loved His appearing." Paul was, evidently, confident that he would one day receive this crown. Lest Timothy or any other future reader think the crown of righteousness was reserved only for Paul or any other apostle, he added that it was a potentiality for all who loved Christ's appearing. Kroll comments, "The crown of righteousness is also known as 'the watcher's crown'. It's awarded to those who are longing for and anticipating the return of the Lord."¹⁵ Betz does a fine job commenting that there are two kinds of righteousness for the believer, an imputed righteousness given to us by a holy God when we trust Christ as Savior, and a practical righteousness that is cultivated not only by God's grace but also a believer's pursuit.¹⁶ When a believer looks for, even longs, for the return of Christ, it changes the way he lives. He who looks for the any moment return of Christ will live righteously. The writer has been privileged to

¹⁵ Kroll, 187

¹⁶ Betz, 156-157

know several people like this over the years, without exception they are all very godly. The writer has heard the story attributed to both Martin Luther and D. L. Moody, perhaps it was Luther first and Moody second, that the man had two days on his calendar, "today and that great day". The Lord's appearing for His bride and His evaluation of her to reward her really does change the way one lives today.

The next crown to be won or lost is the crown of glory. Peter mentions it in his first letter. In chapter 5 verses 1-3 he instructs pastors how to shepherd the part of Jesus' flock they have been entrusted with. He tells pastor to not be greedy, to be humble and be good examples. If they do these things, he offers a promise, "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory" (5:4). The writer has often been motivated by the possibility of winning this reward. As a former pastor of fifteen years, this verse often motivated him to persevere when discouraged, work when tired and keep plugging when he felt like quitting. Merely being a pastor does not merit this crown, the pastor must fulfill the conditions set forth by Peter in 1 Peter 5:1-3. Many pastors do not, hardly a day goes by that there is not a news story about another pastor who has fallen into sexual sin or embezzled money. Still others behave like CEO's of their own little kingdom rather than examples of humility to Jesus' flock. A pastor is more than a teacher, but he is a teacher. James warned that teachers will incur a stricter judgment than non-teachers (Jas 3:1). Pastors alone are eligible for the crown of glory. All pastors will undergo a stricter judgment than other believers because of the position of influence they hold as spokesmen for God. As sobering as that truth is, pastors alone are qualified to win this crown, which should serve as a great motivator to

shepherd well.

The last crown is the crown of victory. Paul wrote about it in 1 Corinthians 9:24, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win." Later, in verse 25, Paul talks about the perishable wreath (crown) an athlete could win at the Isthmian games and contrasted to the imperishable, eternal, one a believer could win for being a victor in the race. The main point Paul makes about how to win this prize is that the runner must be self-controlled, disciplined, to win. To win the prize, a believer must consistently exercise discipline in every area of life. Physically he must be on guard to not live in ease so that ease become his goal and his god. Spiritually, he must be disciplined to grow strong spiritual muscles (1 Tm 4:7). It is easier to sleep in than to be in God's Word, easier to take a friend to lunch than to fast for a meal or a day.

There are two words used for crowns in the New Testament Greek. One word "diadem" was used of a king or even a usurper to the throne. The other word, "stephanos" was a victor's crown. A crown won by an athlete, a participant in a contest. Kroll summarized the crowns mentioned with the following, "This means that whenever a New Testament writer speaks of a crown given to a faithful servant, it is the stephanos, that crown that is earned."¹⁷

Our culture cares little for crowns, it is more interested in ball caps, headbands and such. When the writer has opportunity to teach about these crowns he usually uses the

¹⁷ Kroll, 176

Miss America beauty pageant as an illustration. Imagine watching the pageant on television and the top five finalists have been named. After a commercial break, and a few other details, the announcer names the fourth runner-up, third runner-up and second runner-up. By this time the last two young ladies are getting very nervous. When the announcer names the first runner-up, the other young lady realizes she is the winner! She begins to cry and the reigning Miss America will come up behind her and put a tiara on her head. Why is the new Miss America so excited? It is not because of the great value of the crown that has been placed upon her head, it is what the crown symbolizes. It represents something that the young lady has dreamed of for years, a position, an honor. So too the crowns mentioned earlier, while incredibly motivational in and of themselves, what is more powerful is what they represent. A life well lived, examined by an all knowing and righteous Judge and rewarded by Him.

For some believers the crown rewards are familiar. Those that are familiar with them usually think that these are the only rewards mentioned in the Bible. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are many other rewards to consider. In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus said a great deal about rewards that could be won or lost when he spoke a parable modern scholars usually call the parable of the talents. In the parable, Jesus told his listeners about a master who gave differing amounts of money to three of his servants to manage while he is away on a journey. As the story unfolds, the master returns from his trip and demands an accounting of his resources from the three servants.

The first servant, given five talents (a huge sum of money in a culture where the average worker made pennies a day), was asked by the master to give an account of what

he had done with the master's money. He informed his master that he had doubled the master's deposit to ten talents. Matthew 25:21 is very informative of what other rewards, beyond the crowns, might be won by faithful servant, there it is written, "His master said to him, well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master." To hear some people teach this passage, especially at funerals, one would think every person will receive this commendation. Few things are more erroneous than that thought. One writer, D. M. Panton, remarks, "God gives unmerited salvation, but He never gives unmerited praise."¹⁸ Several years ago, the writer volunteered as his son's basketball coach through a local parks and recreation department. At the end of the season, it was time to give awards out to the participants. In that case, every participant in the entire league received a trophy. The writer happened to be standing near the Parks and Recreation Director and his assistant and overheard the director say that there were several trophies left over, were there any younger siblings present who wanted a trophy? Consequently all the trophies were devalued, if everyone gets one, what is the value in getting one? It seems to this writer that has happened to the concept of rewards from Christ too, when they are taught, it's as if everyone will get an "attaboy" slap on the back from Jesus. Only those who, after examination, earn a "well done" will get one. Most people know the feeling of receiving praise from a teacher, a coach or someone else whose opinion mattered. That praise can be an encouragement years later. What will it be like to hear those words of

¹⁸ D. M. Panton, *The Judgment Seat of Christ* (Haynesville, NC: Schoettle Publishing, 1984), 6

commendation? Only some will know. All believers should work for such a commendation. Kenneth Boa has said, "Write your obituary and see how it plays in heaven."¹⁹ Put another way, live now so that your obituary and Jesus' words of your life can be "well done!" When the writer was a boy, he had a terrific father. His dad was a great athlete, a loving tender man of God and expressed his love regularly to the writer. One time in a critical situation in a very important baseball game the writer made a very difficult diving catch in center field. His father whistled, from beyond the fence, his approval. More than forty years have passed since that moment and the writer still fondly remembers his dad's "well done" whistle. Kroll says of the Master's well done:

How much a commendation by our Lord means to us after the judgment seat will depend on how much we love and respect Him. The praise of men did not mean much to Paul, for he had not served them, and they were not qualified to judge him. But the praise and commendation of the Lord meant a great deal to him. Paul's entire life as a believer was spent in service to the Master and the Lord is the most qualified to Judge in the world. To have Jesus commend him was not just a pat on the back for Paul. It was the acclamation of the only person who mattered to him.²⁰

A commendation is not the only reward given the first servant in Matthew 25.

According to verse 21, "...you were faithful in a few things, *I will put you in charge of* (italics mine) many things", there is a second reward. Another reward the first servant was to receive was a responsibility. Here the servant is not only commended for his service and faithfulness, he is given a responsibility to be in charge of many things. In the kingdom, when Jesus reigns as the King over all He created, He will assign

¹⁹ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 71

²⁰ Kroll, 161-162

positions of responsibility to His faithful servants. One of Jesus' titles is that He is King of kings. This implies at least two things, 1) that He is sovereign over all and 2) that there are other kings beside him. Put another way, He is the Ruler of all rulers, but there will be some who rule under His authority. These believers will manage a portion of Jesus' kingdom. The writer finds it interesting that, before the fall, God told Adam and Eve to rule over His creation (Gn 1:28). After they chose to sin, they no longer fit to rule for Him since they were in rebellion to Him. Since the Genesis 3:15 promise of salvation, God has been working to put people back into right relationship with Him. Once a person has been justified by God, the rest of life on earth is a training ground, a prep school if you will, for the kingdom. If a servant chooses not to be faithful in little, why would Jesus entrust him with great responsibility in eternity? In the last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22, the following words appear, "...and they shall rule and reign forever and ever" (verse 5). Regardless of what happens with the crowns (whether they are cast at Jesus' feet in an act of worship never to be repeated, or cast there and picked up to repeat later) one thing is clear, crowns represent rule and rulers must have a place to rule if they are legitimate kings. The concept of ruling over a portion of Jesus' kingdom should not surprise those who read their Bibles. Ezekiel prophesied that David would rule over Israel (Ez 34:25, 37:25). Jesus told Peter that the apostles would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt 19:28) and in the parable of the minas, the first servant was put in charge of ten cities (Lk 19:17) and a second servant is put in charge of five cities (Lk 19:19). These positions of responsibility will never

end. What a great investment of life, to give forty, fifty or even sixty years of service and receive an eternal benefits package.

Though the political system in the United States is far from perfect, there is something in it that illustrates a biblical truth. When a person runs for the highest office in the land, President, he needs all sorts of people serving to get elected. If he wins, upon assuming office, he confers certain positions on those men and women who served him well in the campaign. Though Jesus needs no assistance in being elected, when He is the theocratic ruler of this world, He will confer certain responsibilities upon faithful men and women, to rule over a portion of His kingdom, under His authority. An illustration of this can be seen in the Old Testament when David conferred positions upon his mighty men when he assumed the throne after Saul's death.

In Luke 12, Jesus spoke to His disciples about being ready for His return. In the context He brought up the concept of a Jewish wedding feast that the master's servants were to be prepared for, then He said, "Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes, truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table and will come up and wait on them" (Lk 12:37). Imagine a banquet feast either in heaven or the kingdom where the King of kings has certain expectant servants of His sit down at the "head table" and He graciously honors them by waiting on their table! At first glance this verse seems nearly impossible to contemplate. One writer comments, "The disciples preparedness and activity will result in an unexpected blessing. Jesus will come and serve them, rewarding their service with His

own."²¹ The writer believes that all those believers who are honored by the Lord in this way will feel as unworthy as Peter did in John 13 when the same Jesus gird Himself to serve, on that occasion by washing Peter's feet.

OVERCOMER REWARDS

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, John the apostle writes to seven churches in Asia Minor. As discussed in the previous chapter, he sought to motivate the believers in those churches to be victorious, to be overcoming believers. He challenged the churches that, if they will overcome, they will be rewarded. Again, as mentioned earlier, not all believers are overcomers. At Corinth, most were overcome by sin rather than being victorious. The overcomer rewards can be won if certain conditions are met, or lost if they are not. An overcomer, in Revelation 2 and 3 is a believer who is faithful, he is consistent in overcoming the three enemies of the believer, the world system, Satan and his own fleshly, sinful nature.

To the believers in Ephesus, John wrote the following words, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit say to the churches, "To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" (Rv 2:7). Dillow remarks about what it means to eat from the tree of life, "to eat from the tree must refer to a special intimacy with the Lord (eating = fellowship) which will be enjoyed in heaven by faithful

²¹ Bob Wilkin ed. *The Grace New Testament Commentary* (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2010), 292

Christians. Those who do not eat are not non-Christians but regenerate people who have 'lost their first love (2:4). The danger is that they will lose their share in the tree of life as well."²² Years ago the writer was asked to be the best man at a friend's wedding. After the wedding, there was a grand reception attended by nearly 200 people, all friends of the bride and groom. As the best man, the writer was invited to sit at the head table and enjoy a more intimate conversation with the newlyweds. This, at least in part, seems to be a picture of the reward John promised overcomers at Ephesus, a more intimate "meal", closer fellowship with the King than those who are not overcomers.

To the church at Smyrna John promised those who would overcome, "he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death' (Rv 2:11). This reward is a bit cloudier than most. What does John mean a believer will not be hurt by the second death? Does that mean a non-overcomer will be? One major system of theology says yes, unless one perseveres he will be forever cast into hell. Context is always key to interpreting the scriptures. In Revelation 2:10 John warns the Smyrnan believers of impending suffering and promises a crown of life to those who endure it well. The next verse is the somewhat veiled promise of not being hurt by the second death. The writer believes this is one of several uses of a litotes that occur in scripture. A litotes is a literary device where the writer says a negative to make just the opposite positive point. Modern culture employs this too, in our culture one might say, "He's no dummy" which means "He's smart" or "that's not

²² Dillow, 555

rocket science which means, "that's easy to figure out". Dillow comments:

Of course no believer will be harmed by the second death so how is this a reward for overcoming? He is simply saying that, even if they take your physical life, they can never touch your eternal destiny. This is an illustration of the use of litotes. When John says we will not be hurt by the second death, he is actually expressing the positive idea of a rich reward in the future world.²³

Another writer comments on the litotes in this verse:

A biblical example of litotes is Heb 6:10: 'God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name,' meaning God will *definitely remember* all your hard work. So when Jesus says, "*He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death,*" He is making an understatement. He is saying that the faithful Christian will be more than amply repaid for whatever sacrifice he may make for Christ's sake, and that his eternal experience will be so far beyond the reach of the second death that it cannot be imagined. The suffering believers in Smyrna could rest in this glorious promise given to them from the Lord Himself.²⁴

The third church in Revelation 2 was the church at Pergamum. To the overcomers there, John wrote, "...to him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it" (Rev 2:17). Exactly what is hidden manna and a white stone with a secret name? Manna, in the Old Testament, was a bread-like substance that God gave for food to the Exodus generation of Israel during their wilderness journey. But what of this hidden manna? Govett does not clarify much when he remarks, "That was typical of something yet to be granted to the overcomers of the churches."²⁵ Dillow

²³ Ibid., 555, 556

²⁴ Wilkin, 1262

²⁵ Robert Govett, *Christ's Judgment of His Saints* (Miami Springs, FL: Schoettle Publishing, 1985), 8

says of the hidden manna:

We cannot be certain what the 'hidden manna' promised the overcomer is. Because it favors his view of the wedding banquet, the writer is inclined to Ladd's suggestion that it is a figure depicting admission to the messianic feast. Ladd, of course, is not drawing a distinction between entering the kingdom and entering the banquet. The parable of the virgins and the wedding banquet, however, draw just such a distinction. The danger of forfeiting the manna then is the danger found in those parables, of exclusion from the wedding banquet of the Lamb.²⁶

Betz holds the view that since the word of God is referred to as bread, an overcomer is a person who does not live only for physical bread but feeds on the Word of God. His reward will be intimate fellowship with Christ as a reward for this pursuit.²⁷

Though Betz and Dillow do not agree completely, they do agree that the promise of hidden manna will be some sort of special intimacy with Christ, a privilege to share a more special fellowship with Him than a non-overcomer.

Jesus, through John's pen, also promised a white stone with a new name written on it known only to the recipients. Dillow surmises of the new name, "The new name refers to a Jewish custom of assigning a name at a point in life which characterizes the life."²⁸ Abram's name was changes to Abraham, Jacob's was changed to Israel, so Dillow's point appears to be on target. Betz is enlightening here, in summary he writes white stones were used 1) as a mark of acquittal, these saints will be acquitted of moral and doctrinal compromise; 2) as a token of friendship. As friends of God these overcomers chose

²⁶ Dillow, 556

²⁷ Betz, 229

²⁸ Dillow, 556

friendship with God over friendship with false teachers; 3) a white stone was used as a medal of honor and often admitted the victor to feasts and entitled him to a triumphal entrance in his hometown.²⁹

The writer lives near the largest military base in the United States. The United States military gives certain medals to soldiers for bravery, for heroic service to our country. These medals include the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star and the Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor is the rarest and most often awarded posthumously. Each of these medals carries with it honor bestowed upon the recipient, imagine the honor of being awarded a white stone, with your new name engraved on it, by the King of kings! Overcomers are promised they will receive this reward.

To the church at Thyatira, John wrote, "and he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations" (Rv 2:26). This promise, in light of earlier mentioned rewards, is fairly easy to comprehend. The apostles, who left all to follow Christ will sit on twelve thrones (Mt19:28). Certain servants will rule over five or ten cities (Lk 19:17, 19). Those who suffer well and endure will reign (Rm 8:17; 2 Tm 2:12). In the verse that follows this promise in Revelation 2:26, John quotes Psalm 2 which refers to Christ's rule over all the nations (Rv 2:27). When He comes to rule those who have been faithful will be given the honor of co-reigning with Christ over the portion of His kingdom assigned to them. The writer thinks it is important to remind the reader, this reign will never end and it is based upon

²⁹ Betz, 231

faithfulness in this life, what a great investment of time, energy and the Lord's resources.

The believers at Thyatira were challenged with a second potential reward, those who would be overcomers were told, "...and I will give him the morning star" (Rv 2:28).

Jesus is called the bright and morning star in Revelation 22:6, but this is not the promise of a believer "receiving Christ", for all believers already possess His life and Christ is already in them through His indwelling Holy Spirit. Daniel used a similar picture in Daniel 12:3 when he writes that those who lead many to righteousness will be like bright stars. It is important to note that not all believers do this, in fact very few do what Daniel spoke about. For the believer that does, he will be better able to reflect the glory of his creator and redeemer, just as a bright star is more glorious than a dim star. The writer tells his students that some light bulbs are only designed to give off 25 watts, others are designed to give off 100 watts. Betz comments about this reward, "...I can tell you that this is a motivation big enough to move me. Can you even imagine radiating the glory and splendor of our Lord?"³⁰ Yet another writer comments on this possible reward, "Overcomers will also be given 'the morning star' - referring to the special intimacy they will enjoy with the Morning Star Himself, Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Pet 1:19; Rev 22:16)."³¹

In Revelation 3, John addresses the church at Sardis. He promises the saints who overcome, "He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not

³⁰ Ibid., 235

³¹ Wilkin, 1265

erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels" (Rv 3:5). The church at Sardis is given motivation through three possible rewards. The first is to be clothed in white garments. In the Bible a person's clothing, whether it was Joseph's coat of many colors or a mourner's sackcloth, indicated a great deal. In Revelation 19:7, 8 John would later write that the clothing of the bride was her "righteous acts". In a believer's position, he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ due to faith in Jesus (Is 61:10). John writes in the apocalypse of a believer's practice, not his position. Put another way, Isaiah refers to the believer's justification while John refers to the believer's sanctification. A friend of the writer used to describe the white raiment in this way, every believer is currently sewing, tailoring his own tuxedo or wedding dress. Each good work done with a proper motive is another piece of fabric, another stitch with needle and thread in one's outfit for that great day. Ask any young lady when she wants to look her best and she will tell you, her wedding day. Those who overcome will be like radiant brides in that day!

Jesus' second promise, via John's pen, was, "...and I will not erase his name from the book of life and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." The first half of the promise is another litotes, stating the negative for a specific opposite effect. The idea is this, if a person overcomes, not only will his name not be erased (the negative) but Jesus will confess his name to the Father and the holy angels. The writer believes it could be something like this: Jesus will put His arm around the shoulder of the overcomer and say to His Father and a hushed band of millions of holy angels, "Father, angels, I present to you My faithful servant...!" Betz states, "You see, the

overcomer will not simply be present in heaven, he will be praised in heaven. The overcomer has far more awaiting him than personal admission into God's eternal abode; he will receive public recognition in God's eternal abode. Jesus will gladly acknowledge the overcomer before His Father in heaven."³² Imagine Jesus introducing you as a victor to His Father and millions of assembled angels, it changes one's perspective on service and perseverance when so many are slothful and selfish.

To the church at Philadelphia, Jesus promised, "he who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it any more and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name" (Rv 3:12). To be a pillar, even in modern culture, means to be prominent, important. It might be said of someone, "he's a pillar in this community". One writer comments, "...the reward is probably an especially wonderful experience of nearness to God as well as a key position of support and prominence in God's eternal kingdom. Jesus said, in essence, not only will the overcomer never leave the temple, he will have a prominent place in it."³³ Betz point out that the term "pillar" is used four times in the New Testament, always figuratively.³⁴ He then adds this thought, "To be called a pillar is to be recognized as one who is stable and supportive and trustworthy. It is a picture of one who has fought the good fight, finished the course and kept the faith. It is a picture of one who, in today's

³² Betz, 239

³³ Wilkin, 1268

³⁴ Betz, 241, 242

language, 'kept on keeping on.'"³⁵

To the last church in Revelation 3, the church as Laodicea, Jesus uttered this promise to those who would overcome, "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Rv 3:21). Jesus is the model overcomer or victor. As seen in His life, especially during His period of temptation by Satan in the wilderness. Jesus said He always did His Father's will (Jn 4:24). As a believer follows Christ's example he too can earn a throne.

Remember John's and James' request, the favor of sitting on Jesus right and left? Jesus said those positions are not favors to ask for, they are rewards to be won by obedience, by persevering in trial, by refusing to indulge the flesh.

It becomes clear to the writer that the Word of God and the God of the Word are attempting to motivate believers to obedience, to a life of faithful service by tantalizing them with promises of great reward in the life to come. These rewards include a commendation, a responsibility to rule over a portion of Christ's kingdom, being honored with special privileges, being able to better reflect the glory of Christ, a commendation before the Father and the holy angels, a new name and more.

The writer has taught on the subject of rewards enough in the past fifteen years to have heard several objections and field many questions. He will attempt to summarize a few of them here. One of the questions often raised is this, "is working for rewards selfish?" Sometimes it is an objection or even an attack, "Sounds very selfish to me!

³⁵ Betz, 242- 243

Believers should just obey because they love Jesus". Like many statements, there is a measure of truth in this one. Yes, a believer should be motivated out of love for Christ, however, it was God himself who created the idea of rewards. It is Jesus who spoke of coming to reward people according to their works (Rv 22:12). As for reward seeking being selfish, it can become that but this writer has never met a believer who was passionate about the Judgment Seat and rewards who was selfish. Zane Hodges once made a great observation in noting the difference between selfishness and self interest,

But is this motivation selfish? We believe that no motivation encouraged by the Lord Jesus and His apostles could ever possibly be termed 'selfish'! What is wrong, in fact, is our own incorrect view of 'selfishness'. Scripture does not teach us to be uninterested in our own happiness or well being. The very desire to escape eternal damnation is a legitimate and urgent self-interest. The instinct to preserve our lives is the same.... Selfishness ought not to be defined simply as the pursuit of our own self interest. Instead, it should be defined as the pursuit of our self interest *in our own way*.³⁶

Selfishness is attempting to earn rewards one's own way (pride) rather than God's way (humble service).

Another question that often has been raised to the writer is this, "What about confessed sin, will it be brought up at the Judgment Seat of Christ?" The short answer is an emphatic no! First John 1:9, written to believers in Christ to help them restore broken fellowship states, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The Judgment Seat of Christ is for the purpose of granting rewards, however sin does play a part in it. Perhaps an illustration would be

³⁶ <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1991b/rewards>

helpful. The apostle Paul likened a believer's life to that of a builder (1 Cor 3:10-15). Using that analogy, the writer asks his students to imagine they are builders and Jesus is the General Contractor. As such He gives them all the skills and resources needed to build for Him, nails, sheetrock, block, brick, sand, mortar, shingles, insulation windows, wire, fixtures and more. The believer, or builder if you will, is left to build by the General Contractor. Supposing that miss cutting a board was a sin, the builder could miss cut, and confess the deed and toss the board on the "1 John 1:9 pile". Suppose many years pass and the General Contractor returned to check on the builder's progress. If the builder would say to the General Contractor, "Sir I am so sorry for that big pile of boards over there, the 1 John 1:9 pile". The General Contractor will say, "I am not concerned about that pile, what I want to know is this, what have you built for me in my absence?" In the writer's case, he has forty-five years to give an account for, it seems reasonable to him that the Lord could reasonably expect an entire subdivision after forty-five years. Here is how sin does factor into the Judgment Seat, as long as a believer is sinning, miss cutting boards if you will, he will not be building any thing worthy of praise and reward. Individual sins will not be raised, but those sins a believer commits keep him from productivity, when a believer is sinning, he is not obeying and accruing rewards.

Yet another objection or concern is this, "Won't rewards create a heavenly caste system? A group of "haves" and "have-nots"? In a sense yes it will. Jesus spoke often about greatness in the kingdom. He spoke about being least in the kingdom. He promised the twelve to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, they will clearly be greater than the majority of saints in the kingdom. Yet in another sense, while there

are levels of reward and honor given to some and not others, there will be none of the jealousy and pettiness that occurs in this life as believers still struggle with sin. The writer contends that in some ways rewards in the kingdom will be a bit like going to a wedding. The writer has attended several weddings in recent years of friends of his children. In a few of these he was officiating but in most he was a casual observer sitting midway back in the audience. In none of these instances did he ever feel slighted and jealous of the best man. He knew intuitively that he did not deserve the honor of being the best man, his relationship to the groom was not that close. So too in the kingdom, there will be no jealousy or envy or pride. Believers will know that whoever is highly honored is deserving and those who are honored will not look down on those who are not.

The writer is compelled to offer what he considers a balanced view of rewards. The scriptures do speak of loss of rewards (2 Jn 8) and the very real possibility of not doing well at the Judgment Seat of Christ, of not being an overcomer and being ashamed at the Lord's coming (1 Jn 2:28). The possibility of not doing well at the Judgment Seat is a topic never discussed in most Christian circles. As mentioned in chapter 1, the writer grew up in a fine Bible teaching church, attended a great Bible college and three outstanding graduate schools and seminaries, yet he has never heard one discussion or lecture in any class on this topic. He has, however, heard many debates on Calvinism versus Arminianism, a pretribulational rapture versus mid-tribulationalism, post-tribulationalism and partial rapture, divorce and remarriage and a women's role in

ministry. It seems terribly out of balance with scripture to never mention a topic that is somewhat common in the New Testament. Note the following examples:

- Paul feared being disqualified from the prize he was running for (1 Cor 9:27).
- Paul stated that believers who build with inferior materials would *suffer loss* (1 Cor 3:15).
- Paul stated a believer would be recompensed for bad (worthless) works (2 Cor 5:10) which led him to be in fear (literal Greek = "terror") 2 Cor 5:11.
- John said it was possible to be ashamed at Jesus' coming (1 Jn 2:28).
- John wrote it was possible to lose rewards (2 Jn 8).

Why are these truths rarely mentioned? The writer cannot look into the hearts of others but in his experience he can testify that it was not until after seven years of biblical higher education and fifteen years of vocational ministry that he heard for the first of very few times a sermon (on cassette tape, no less, not live!) on the possible negative consequences of the Judgment Seat. Before addressing specifically what negative consequences might occur, a balancing thought is in order. Lutzer, in his book *Your Eternal Reward*, captured the balance well, "To overdo the sorrow aspect of the judgment seat is to make heaven into hell. To under do the sorrow aspect is to make faithfulness inconsequential."³⁷ In the writer's opinion, the church has long underdone the sorrow aspect so that the bitter fruit now being reaped is that a vast majority believe that faithfulness is inconsequential. Statistics from chapter 1 and the Pareto principle testify to this.

What loss might there be at the Judgment Seat for a non-overcomer? The writer must

³⁷ Lutzer, 79

admit the Bible is not as clear on this topic as it is on the positive, however there are several truths that are clear and should be known by God's people. In no particular order the negative ramifications of the Judgment Seat could include the following:

- A rebuke from Jesus. Jesus is seen giving a commendation to faithful servants (Mt 25:21) and a severe rebuke to another servant (Mt 25:26). He calls the servant "wicked" and "lazy" and rebukes him harshly. This should not surprise the reader of scripture, when it was needed Jesus handed out a severe rebuke to Peter (Mt 16:23). As wonderful as a commendation from Christ would be, imagine a rebuke. The writer remembers an occasion when he had gotten too big to spank and he had done something worthy of discipline, his father, whom he loved dearly, said "Son I'm disappointed in you". It crushed the writer, he would have rather had a spanking. His father told him regularly how much he loved the writer and to have him now express disappointment was a very bitter experience. Imagine Jesus saying the same to you, "...son of mine, I am ashamed of your waste of talents, opportunities and my resources".

- A denial of a crown. Romans 8:17 and 2 Timothy 2:12 both teach this principle, if a believer suffers for Christ, he will receive a crown. The clear implication is that to not suffer well will result in the loss of the crown that could have been won. If a believer in this life, and especially in the midst of suffering, refuses to follow Christ (denies His call and claims) Jesus will deny the believer (say no to his request to rule). As seen earlier crowns are literal but also signify the right and privilege to rule for Christ. This privilege is an eternal one (Rv 22:5) thus to lose it will have eternal ramifications.

As seen in the overcomer rewards, many of the rewards relate to the privilege of intimate fellowship with Christ. Most believers have experienced this principle in life, They have a decent walk with Christ, better than some others but then they meet a vibrant saint whose intimacy with Christ humbles them. The ability to experience the joy of the kingdom will be reduced by those who suffer loss. That by no means is an evangelical form of purgatory, some will merely not have the fullness of experience that others will. When the writer teaches this concept, being the sports fan that he is, illustrates this way: Suppose going to heaven was like admittance to a college football game, tickets were FREE for general admission, all one had to do was to believe in the generous offer of a gracious benefactor. However once inside the gates to the stadium, one could work for money, say at a concession stand, to upgrade one's ticket to the field level, the fifty-yard line rather than the "nose bleed" section. At this point the writer asks his students, does everyone see the same game? They respond, yes. Does everyone have the same experience? Again they answer correctly, no. Those in the "nose bleed" section in the end zone do not have as much joy as those on the fifty-yard line. Those on the fifty-yard line can see the players, overhear conversations on the sideline and so forth. Why did some get tickets on the fifty-yard line? They are willing to work, to pay the cost to have such a seat. Getting into the stadium is free; getting a fifty-yard line seat will require some effort.

The law of sowing and reaping runs throughout scripture. If one sows, he will reap. A person's harvest is proportionate to the sowing he has done. In this life, many sow but do not reap a harvest before being called to heaven by death. Will their reaping all be the

same? Absolutely not. Johnson, in his work, *The Account Which We Must Give*,

comments:

Have you noticed that while there is only one door to heaven, there are two different ways by which we can enter that door. Here is one way, "Well done good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of the Lord." Here is the same way in other words, "For if ye do these things...an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom." Note the phrases "well done" and "abundant entrance". They describe one way of entering.

Now here is another way of entering heaven, "*Ashamed before Him at His coming*" (1 John 2:28). And again "*saved yet so as by fire*" (1 Cor. 3:15). Question: If a Christian stands ashamed in the presence of Christ, will he be happy or sad? Will he be laughing or weeping?³⁸

The New Testament uses rewards as a motivator, sprinkled throughout its pages. God knows the hearts of believers and knows how to motivate them. When a believer is motivated by what God uses to motivate him, obedience occurs in this life and while rewards may occur in this life, they certainly will in the next.

Ultimately, however, while rewards may motivate a believer and there will be some more greatly rewarded by Christ than others, the bottom line in all this is the glory of God. When a believer lives a life of obedience, the believer lives a full life now and will experience fullness of joy in eternity, which brings the Father glory and joy. The writer has three terrific children. All three are believers, their walk with Christ much closer than the writer's was at their respective ages. All three are talented musicians and have very bright minds. When people meet them, they often tell the author what a great job he did in raising his children. When children do well, their parents look great. Conversely,

³⁸ Carl G. Johnson, *The Account Which We Must Give* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1990), 73

though not necessarily fair, when children do poorly, even if raised well and old enough to make choices on their own, it can reflect poorly on the parent. When a child of God does well, and comes through the Judgment Seat with a commendation, a crown, a position of authority and more the King is given great glory! In a book of his grandfather's speeches, Winston Churchill's grandson writes about the context of each speech his grandfather gave and then gives a portion of the speech. One in particular comes to mind. The setting was V- E day, Victory in Europe, May 8, 1945. As one can imagine, after the long protracted struggle against a mad man like Adolph Hitler which saw much of Europe destroyed, the people of the world were ecstatic. This was particularly so in the streets of London. Winston S. Churchill writes of his grandfather, that he stood on the balcony of the Ministry of Health overlooking the thousands assembled on the glorious day, finally victory was theirs. "When Churchill declared, 'This is your victory', the crowd roared back: 'No- it is yours.' Robert Rhodes James, commented: 'It was an unforgettable moment of love and gratitude.'"³⁹

Those assembled before the throne of the great King, will cry out, when He announces any victories believers might have had a part in, "this is your victory, any victory accomplished in and through us was due to Your grace".

³⁹ Winston S. Churchill, *Never Give In! The Best of Winston Churchill's Speeches* (New York, NY: Hyperion, 2003), 390-391

REWARDS IN CHURCH HISTORY

If, as the writer contends, rewards are to be the major motivator for obedience in the life of a believer, it follows logically that there should be evidence in the history of the church that rewards, or loss of them, were a motivator for at least some believers who lived from the close of the canon of scripture to the early twenty-first century.

The writer acknowledges that the vast majority of believer's lives are not recorded in history for posterity's sake. He will also acknowledge that what motivated many people is simply unknown. The writer contends, however, that in the pages of history, enough is known to demonstrate that other believers who have run the race in the past did so with rewards as a chief motivator. This chapter will explore two specific areas of church history. First, rewards in the lives of those who were persecuted and martyred for their faith. Secondly, how church music, particularly the music of past generations, reveals an appreciation of, an expectancy of rewards.

REWARDS AND CHRISTIAN MARTYRS

Before delving too far into the subject, one observation needs to be made. If thousands of people who died for their faith were not to be rewarded in the future, they died cruel, excruciating deaths for little or no reason. If a believer, who lives in carnality, and a martyr are both equal in the kingdom and both told, "well done", the service and life of the martyr is rendered inconsequential.

The writer freely acknowledges that he is not a scholar in church history and that his reading and research is limited in this field. The primary resources he has utilized are, *Foxe's Christian Martyrs of the World*, *The New Encyclopedia of Christian Martyrs* and *Martyr's Mirror*. Foxe's book is the most popular of the three, it was written by John Foxe and first published in 1550. It gives a chronological history of martyrs from the birth of the church to the sixteenth century, the time of Foxe's own life. *The New Encyclopedia of Christian Martyrs* is a fairly recent book, (2001), and documents nearly 200,000 martyrs from the first century to the early twenty-first century. The last resource, *Martyr's Mirror* was written by a Dutch writer, Thielemans J. van Braught. Similar to Foxe's work, van Braught's covers from the first century to the early seventeenth century. While there is some overlap in the books, the three volumes contain over 2,000 pages of material to document the lives of brave men, women and, sadly, even children who died for their belief in Christ. Their lives and deaths a good, yet sobering, reminder to the writer of what the writer of Hebrews wrote of concerning some of the Hall of Fame of Faith members from the Old Testament,

Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mocking and scourging, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground, and all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised (11:35-39).

Who were these men and women? The following are just a few of the believers who preceded our day who gave their lives for Christ and were motivated by rewards. In 304

A. D., the Roman emperor was a man named Diocletian. He was severely persecuting Christians in his empire, as many emperors before him had done. A certain widow by the name of Julitta, from the town of Iconia, had a young child, a boy named Quiricus. Upon being apprehended by the authorities, the child became frightened and cried out for his mother. The proconsul of the region, Alexander, tried to quiet the boy. When the lad refused to be comforted by Alexander, he grabbed the boy and threw him head-first down a flight of stone stairs. Julitta's response to the tyrant was as follows:

Thou needest not think that I am so timid as to be conquered by thy cruelties; for the tearing of my body shall not intimidate me, nor the racking of my members move my spirit; neither shall the threat of the fire, nor death itself be able to separate me from the love of Christ. The greater the torments are with which you threaten me, the more acceptable they are to me, for I hope thereby the sooner to come to my dear son, and to receive with him the crown of righteousness at the hand of Christ.¹

Upon her confession, the proconsul had her tortured and finally beheaded. What would motivate a woman to respond in such a fashion at the murder of her own son and her own imminent death? In her own words, the crown of righteousness, rewards from the hand of Christ himself.

In 310 or perhaps 311 A. D. a man by the name of Lucian lived in Antioch. As was common in the early centuries of the church's existence, the persecution of Christians was intense. One writer described Lucian as being godly, wise and eloquent and well-versed in the scriptures.² This writer would comment that there have been a fare number of

¹ Theileman J. van Braught, *Martyr's Mirror* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994), 181

² *Ibid.*, 185

people in history that those character traits and abilities could be applied to, yet many did not have their stories recorded for modern readers. One great aspect of the kingdom is that believers will have unlimited time to hear the stories of people such as Lucian. The record is not clear on what basis Lucian was apprehended, perhaps it was due to the fact that he was an elder of the church in Antioch. Whatever the reason, Lucian's faith in Christ was discovered and he was summoned to appear before a judge. One writer reveals what happened next:

The judge asked him as he stood before his judgment seat, saying, "O Lucian, how does it come that thou, who art such a wise man, dost follow this sect, for which thou canst give no reason at all? Or, if thou hast any, let us hear it." Having obtained permission to speak, he made a very excellent and glorious profession of his faith; which would well reserve a place here, were we not, in order to avoid prolixity, compelled to omit it. As soon as he had ended his confession, and the people had in some measure, been drawn over to his views, the Judge commanded them to lock him again in prison, and to put him to death there; which, as the ancient writers relate, was accordingly done. *But God shall reveal it all on the last day, and reward every one according to his works* [italics mine].³

As van Braught stated in his closing remarks, there is coming a day when all believers will have their good works revealed and be recompensed for them. It appears that Lucian, an elder in the church at Antioch, will be one of the many little known or unknown saints who will finally be rewarded.

More than a century later, in 421 A.D., and a great distance away from Antioch, in the land of Persia, arises another story of suffering and martyrdom. A man by the name of Isdegerdes persecuted believers greatly and demolished all the Christian churches in his

³ van Braught, 185

realm. Isdegerdes did this for the forty years of his reign. Upon his death in 420 A.D. his son Varanes, became his successor. Varanes continued the systematic persecution of Christians that his father had undertaken, but carried it to even more inhumane levels. One writer states that two of the methods of persecution he employed were to flay alive certain parts of a person's body to let them live but continue to suffer. He also would order a person to be pierced with sharp reeds, like a pin cushion, over various parts of his body and then be hauled around in that condition.⁴ Varanes had a man named Benjamin beaten and imprisoned. After letting Benjamin languish in prison for a year, Varanes informed Benjamin he would allow his living conditions to improve on the condition that Benjamin never speak to any of Varanes' court about spiritual matters. To this offer, one writer comments on Benjamin's response, "...but Benjamin, who was a minister of the gospel, declared that he could not detain the truth in captivity, *conscious to himself of the condemnation of the slothful servant for having hid his talent*. He therefore neglected no opportunity of announcing Christ."⁵

Approximately three years later, due to Benjamin's refusal to discontinue proclaiming the liberating news of Christ, Varanes had Benjamin put to death. First he had sharp reeds run between flesh and nail of each finger and toe. This was repeated over and over. Finally, Varanes ordered Benjamin impaled with a log. In the case of Benjamin, he was

⁴ Mark Water, *The New Encyclopedia of Christian Martyrs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 519

⁵ *Ibid.*, 519

motivated to obey by the negative example of the third servant in the parable of the talents (Mt 25:26-28) who wasted opportunities and earned a sharp rebuke rather than a commendation from his master.

In the annals of history, only some people's names are recorded, the majority are not. Typically, when a person's name is recorded in history books it is because he has done great things. In Hebrews 11, the great Hall of Fame of Faith, the writer mentions several men and women of faith by name. Late in the chapter, the writer merely records some of their deeds but mentions no names (Heb 11:35-39), so it is with the next story, no names were recorded on the earthly side of the ledger, but on heaven's side, that will be a different story.

The year was 780 A.D. and the tyrant was Leo IV. He delegated authority to a man named Thesias to inflict whatever harm he desired upon Christians who refused to convert to Islam. In the region of Damascus, Syria, he cruelly tormented some Christian women. One writer relates the story of what occurred during that point of history,

In the meantime, something remarkable occurred here. Certain women whom he visited with various torments, to see whether he could not make them yield to his ungodliness, remained steadfast, *overcoming*, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, his fury with patience. He caused a thousand stripes to be given them, and had them scourged and tormented unto death, *till they received from Christ the crown of victory* [italics mine].⁶

When one reads history in general and church history in particular, the stories of men dominate and women are somewhat obscure, this is probably due to the fact that men, in

⁶ van Braught, 232

past generations, recorded history. This story is much like the end of Hebrews 11, many faithful women, often unnamed paid dearly for their faith.

In the 9th century, 856 A.D. to be precise, in the country of Spain, a young lady named Aurea was a believer. She was of a noble family and had already witnessed the martyrdom of her brother John. In the region of Seville some acquaintances accused Aurea of being a heretic (a person who did not follow Catholicism). When she appeared before the judge, who was a relative of hers, he convinced her to renounce her "heresy". Aurea later was convicted of her actions and began to prepare for the next attack she might face. One chronicler of the time wrote of her story, "The enemy of mankind who could not endure it, that Aurea now adhered more firmly to God her Creator, than before, instigated another to accuse this maiden to the judge, who instantly had her brought by his bailiffs, and threatened her as before. But in this second conflict she was as much stronger to obtain the martyr's crown...."⁷

In England in the mid 16th century a woman named Mary became queen. She was a hater of those who were of the faith of the reformers and as a devout Catholic determined to eradicate reformed Christianity from England. Her hatred of the reformation and her barbarous ways earned her the title "Bloody Mary". It is estimated that hundreds, if not thousands, were martyred during her reign of terror. Two of the more famous martyrs during her persecution were Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer. Ridley had been the protestant bishop of London before Mary's reign, but when she ascended the throne he

⁷ van Braught, 245

was quickly ousted from his position. Latimer, like Ridley, had been appointed a bishop. His appointment was by Anne Boleyn and was in Worcester, England. Like Ridley, he was a follower of the teaching of the reformers. Also, like Ridley, he was removed from his position when Mary was crowned.

Both men refused to abandon their beliefs despite great pressure from the Catholic leaders who were in power again because of Mary's occupation of the throne. After repeated questioning, under which both men refused to embrace the teaching of the church of Rome, their adversaries pled with them to recant their teachings and beliefs. Upon seeing both men resolute the authorities remanded them to prison to be executed later. The two shared the same cell and undoubtedly some close fellowship as brothers in Christ.

The night before their execution, the two were being fed supper. Their keeper's wife felt sorry for the men and told them so. One writer comments on the conversation that evening:

At this talk the keeper's wife wept, but Ridley comforted her, saying, "O my friend, quiet yourself, though my breakfast on the morrow shall be somewhat sharp and painful, yet I am sure my supper will be more pleasant and sweet". When they arose from the table, his brother offered to stay all night with him. But he said, "No, no, that you shall not. For I intend to go to bed and sleep as quietly tonight as I ever did!" On this, his brother departed, telling him to be a good soldier, and to take his cross quietly, *for the reward would surely be great* [italics mine].⁸

The next morning, both men were fastened to the same stake, a fire was lighted and

⁸ John Foxe, *Foxe's Christian Martyrs of the Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994), 481

both men died for their faith. As Ridley's brother stated, surely their rewards will be great, given what can be discerned about their lives from history.

In Holland, in the year 1569, there was a Dutchman by the name of Dirk Willems. It is reported that Willems crossed over a body of water that had iced over. When a man pursuing him fell through the ice, Willems returned to save his life. The man promptly thanked Willems by turning him over to the authorities. One account of Willems' character and death reads as follows:

...as he had founded his faith not upon the drifting sand of human commandments, but upon the firm foundation stone, Jesus Christ, he, notwithstanding all evil winds of human doctrine, and heavy showers of tyrannical and severe persecution, remained immovable and steadfast unto the end; wherefore, when the chief Shepherd shall appear in the clouds of heaven and gather together his elect from all the ends of the earth, he shall also through grace hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of the Lord" 1 Pet. 5:4; Mt. 24:31; 25:23.⁹

Another fine example of faithfulness in the face of martyrdom is a man named Micheal van Bruyssel who lived in the town of Ghent in the region of Flanders, a part of Holland. He, along with his wife, Barberken, was both persecuted and martyred for their faith in 1573. One writer, another Dutchman named van Braught, describes the couple as follows:

But they, as wise builders, had built their foundation upon the cornerstone Christ Jesus, who was able to keep their treasure until the day of their redemption. Thus they, after manifold temptations, and trials of their faith, were by the blinded, God-opposing papists, put to death, not on account of any evil deed, but only for the obedience of the truth of Jesus Christ. Michael van Bruyssel was burned in the

⁹ van Braught, 741

Friday Market, and Barberken his wife was beheaded with the sword, in the count's castle. And thus they remained faithful unto death to their Redeemer and Saviour; hence they shall receive an eternal and glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown, from the hand of the Lord, which no on shall be able to take away from them.¹⁰

In China, in the year 1900 A.D., a rebellion broke out which was called the Boxer rebellion. It is estimated that 32,000 Chinese Christians, 30,000 Catholics and 2,000 Protestants were killed.¹¹ Never had so many Protestant missionaries been killed in one field in one year. In 1900, 135 missionaries and 53 missionary children in China, of whom seventy-nine were linked to the China Inland Mission. One of these missionaries was a man named David Barrett, who was martyred in the summer of 1900. As his death was impending, he wrote the following words, "Our blood may be as a true cement (for the foundation) and God's kingdom will increase over this land. Extermination is but exultation. God guide and bless us! 'Fear not them which kill' He says, 'are ye not of much more value than many sparrows'.... Let us be true till death. 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'" ¹²

Soren Kierkegaard once said, "A tyrant dies and his rule ends, the martyr dies and his rule begins."¹³ The writer cannot wait to meet the aforementioned people and see what rewards the King confers upon them at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

¹⁰ van Braught, 965

¹¹ Water, 854

¹² Ibid., 862

¹³ Ibid. 946

As seen in the previous examples, several people in history have suffered dearly due to their faith in Jesus Christ. They were sustained in those horrible days and painful hours by the unwavering belief that one day in the future Jesus Christ would reward them. At this point in American history, though subject to change at any moment, believers are not suffering physical persecution. The writer is grateful for this fact, yet would contend that if people in history who suffered greatly, even unto death, were motivated by the promise of rewards, should it not motivate believers to obedience in good times?

REWARDS AND CHURCH MUSIC

Another facet in church history which attests to the thesis of rewards being used to motivate believers to obedience is that of church music. Sacred music has been a part of worship since the earliest time in human history. Indeed the longest book in the Bible is the Psalter, the book of Psalms, with its 150 chapters, songs or psalms. Modern readers can read only the words, the music has not been preserved. Nearly every believer knows how moving music can be, it moves the heart to adoration, repentance or worship.

The writer's method of "research" for this chapter was not scientific or exhaustive. He searched through several old hymnals and, with the aid of his mother, the musicologist in the family who searched several other hymnals, quickly found a few dozen hymns with very clear references to rewards. None of the songs selected were written in the past 50 years. This is not an indictment against contemporary music, the writer has an eclectic taste in music and believes many fine pieces have been written in recent years. This chapter, however, is about the history of the church so it

looks backward for centuries, rather than just a few years.

The hymns to be considered have composition dates that range from the early 1700's to the mid 1900's. Many are hymns the writer grew up singing, and thus has a fond recollection of, others are unknown to the writer but carry a clear rewards message.

When a clear connection can be made to a specific portion of scripture, the writer will comment. Where it is unclear, the writer will venture a guess or offer some speculation. It must be said, however, that though the writer may be unclear on what portion of scripture the hymn writer was referring to, one thing is clear in each of the hymns to follow; the hymn writer used rewards to motivate the worshippers who would later sing the song. The writer will italicize the portion of the hymn that teaches rewards.

Thomas Shepherd, who lived from 1665 to 1739, wrote the Hymn, *Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?* He wrote in verse two,

The consecrated cross I'll Bear
 Till death shall set me free
 And then go home *my crown to wear* [italics mine]
 For there's a *crown for me.* [italics mine]

In stanza four Shepherd wrote,

O precious cross, *O glorious crown* [italics mine]
 O resurrection day
 Ye angels, from the stars come down,
 And bear my soul away.

Perhaps Shepherd had Romans 8:17 and 2 Timothy 2:12 in mind when he penned those words. Both of those verses link suffering for Christ to ruling with Christ.

Isaac Watts, one of the greatest hymn writers in history, with hundreds to his credit, wrote, *Am I A Solider of the Cross?* Perhaps he had in mind Paul's words in 2 Timothy 2:3, "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Jesus Christ". Watts' hymn is the writer's favorite in this subject. Watts wrote in Stanza two,

Must I be carried to the skies
 On flowery beds of ease
 While others fought to *win the prize* [italics mine]
 And sailed through bloody seas?

In the final stanza, Watts wrote,

Sure I must fight *if I would reign* [italics mine]
 Increase my courage Lord
 I'll bear the toil, endure the pain
 Supported by Thy word.

Watts, no doubt, was linking his hymn to 2 Timothy 2:12 which demands a believer to willingly suffer if he would reign. Watts, it appears, understood what precious few today do, that only when one suffers well will he be qualified to reign.

Mary A. Thompson wrote a missions themed song, *O Zion, Haste*. Born in 1834, the date of Thompson's hymn is unknown. The third verse is as follows,

Give of thy sons to bear the message glorious
 Give of thy wealth to speed them on their way

Pour out thy soul for them in prayer victorious

And all thy spending, *Jesus will repay* [italics mine].

Once again the writer is not sure what scripture Thompson had in mind when she wrote but suspects it was Matthew 19:29, where Jesus said, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms shall receive many times as much...." Mark's version of the same story says "one hundred times as much" (Mk 10:30). That is a 10,000% return on investment. Thompson wrote, "Jesus will repay". As has been demonstrated, that usually occurs in the life to come. She wrote to encourage people to give up their children in missionary service, to give liberally and pray passionately. Why? Jesus would repay, in the form of eternal rewards.

Katie L. Suffield was born in 1884 and went to be with the Lord in 1972. She penned a song entitled, *Little Is Much When God Is In It*. In stanza three, Suffield wrote,

When the conflict here is ended

And our race on earth is run

He will say, if we are faithful

"Welcome home, my child, *well done!*" [italics mine]

The chorus reads,

Little is much, when God is in it,

Labor not for wealth or fame

There's a crown and you can win it [italics mine]

If you go in Jesus' name.

Suffield borrowed from Paul's imagery of a soldier (2 Tm 2:3) and a race (1 Cor 9:24-27). She recognized, correctly, that any act of obedience a believer performs may be eternally significant yet deemed insignificant by others and perhaps even by self.

Charles Gabriel lived from 1856 until 1932 and wrote a missions/evangelism themed hymn, *Send the Light*. Verse four admonished the worshipper,

Let us not grow weary in the work of love

Send the light, send the light

Let us gather jewels for a crown above [italics mine]

Send the light, send the light.

While the writer sees no warrant from scripture to agree with Gabriel that one can "gather jewels" for one's crown, the point is valid, one's work, his obedience and service in this life will earn rewards in the form of a crown in the next life. It seems that Gabriel's admonition to "not grow weary in the work of love" is a reference to Paul's words to the saints in Corinth, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor 15:58). The believer's tendency is to grow weary, to give up. This great hymn, borrows from Paul to encourage worshippers to not grow weary and hence give up. What a needed admonition. Many of God's choicest saints, the kind that give sacrificially, volunteer often and pray passionately, need to know their work is not in vain. It will be rewarded one day.

James Rowe, writer of the next hymn to be considered, lived from 1865 until 1933. Rowe's hymn is, *I Would be Like Jesus*. In the fourth stanza Rowe wrote,

That in heaven He may meet me

I would be like Jesus

That His words, "*Well done*" may greet me, [italics mine]

I would be like Jesus.

It appears that Rowe is referring to the commendation given to the first and second servants in the parable of the talents, Matthew 25:21, 23. As a believer lives like Jesus, he will live a life of obedience and from Jesus receive a "well done". Rowe understood the commendation "well done" would not be offered to all believers and challenges the worshipper to live in such a Christ-like manner so as to win such a commendation.

The next hymn is one unfamiliar to the writer, thus he has no idea how well known it is in Christian circles. The writer of the lyrics was Margaret Clarkson while John W. Peterson penned the music. Clarkson's hymn is titled, *So Send I You-By Grace Made Strong*. The fourth and final stanza declares, as if they were the words of Jesus,

So send I you to bear My cross with patience

And then one day with joy to lay it down.

To hear My voice, "*Well done, My faithful servant*" [italics mine]

"Come share My Throne, My Kingdom and My Crown" [italics mine].

Clarkson mentions the possibility of obtaining a throne and crown. She understood that a position of responsibility could be had if one followed Christ obediently in this life.

Yet another hymn, previously unknown to the writer, is *My Soul, Be on Thy Guard*. It was written by George Heath. In verse three, Heath challenges the worshipper:

Ne'er think the vict'ry won

Nor lay thine armour down
 The work of faith will not be done
 Till thou *obtain the crown* [italics mine].

Heath's words remind the writer of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 4:5, "Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time...." As mentioned previously, many people on the pages of scripture and multitudes more in history have laid the armor down or stopped running before the war was over or the race concluded. Heath admonishes the worshipper to not let this happen.

Fanny J. Crosby was born in 1820 and died in 1915. She was one of America's most loved hymn writers. She was born sighted, but became blind as a toddler due to a doctor's erroneous treatment of an illness. One of her many hymns that has survived the past century is, *To the Work*. It contains four stanzas, the last of which reads,

To the work! To the work! In the strength of the Lord
 And *a robe and a crown shall our labor reward* [italics mine]
 When the home of the faithful our dwelling shall be,
 And we shout with the ransomed, "Salvation is free".

Crosby had a good understanding and made a clear distinction between rewards and salvation. She understood that one's labor would be rewarded, perhaps with a robe and a crown, yet entrance into the kingdom, eternal life, is a free gift. A very important distinction indeed. Unfortunately many are confused, some think salvation can be earned, while others believe rewards will be given to all. The first position makes salvation a works based issue. The second position degrades works to being

inconsequential.

Another hymn unknown to the writer is *Labor On*, was written by Dr. C.R. Blackall. Blackall's hymn is an encouragement to the worshipper to keep on laboring for Christ. It is filled with images of agricultural workers planting and harvesting. In the chorus of the four stanza hymn Blackall wrote:

Labor on, Labor on, *keep the reward in view* [italics mine]

For the Master said, He will strength renew

Labor on till the close of the day.

Blackall wanted the worshipper to keep the prize in view. Perhaps he had Paul's words, "run in such a way that you may win" (1 Cor 9:24) or "Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim..." (1 Cor 9:26) or "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor 15:58).

There is an old southern melody, by an anonymous writer which contains four stanzas, the third of which says,

I want to sing salvation's story

In concert with the blood-washed band

I want to wear a crown of glory [italics mine]

When I get home to that good land.

The writer of the hymn expressed a desire to wear a crown and hoped those who would sing this hymn would be motivated to want the same reward.

Yet another hymn, new to the writer but penned years ago, is, *The Crowning Day* by

El Nathan. Like many hymns, this one is a four stanza hymn with the final stanza being somewhat of a climax. It states,

Let all that look for, hasten the coming joyful day
 By earnest consecration, to walk the narrow way
 By gathering in the last ones for whom our Lord did die
 For the *crowning day that's coming by and by* [italics mine].

Nathan's words speak of expectancy, something the Lord lauded, because it promotes service and consecration, something else Nathan's fourth stanza admonishes.

A song loved and sung by many millions over the past few generations is a song by George Duffield, *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus*. Sung for more than eighty years, it was written in 1929, Duffield's fourth and final stanza is particularly noteworthy,

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the strife will not be long
 This day the noise of battle, the next *the victor's song* [italics mine]
To him that overcometh, a crown of life shall be [italics mine]
He with the king of glory, shall reign eternally [italics mine].

Duffield understood that not all believers overcome, but those who do will be rewarded. He encouraged all who would sing his hymn to be overcomers. As Duffield observed from John the apostle's pen, overcomers will reign eternally (Rv 2:26, 3:21, 22:5).

Charles Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, wrote many hymns, some preserved and still in use today. One such hymn is *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*.

Wesley, in stanza four, looked ahead to the future when he wrote,

Finish then Thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be,

Let us see Thy great salvation perfectly restored in Thee
 Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, lost in wonder, love and praise!

Wesley pictures the believer's glorification and the casting of crowns at Jesus' feet (Rev 4:10). Clearly one must have won a crown and been awarded a crown before he can take that crown and use it as an act of worship to his King.

Another great hymn by Wesley is *And Can it Be?* Again the fourth, and final, stanza serves as a climax and looks to the believer's future glorification. Wesley wrote:

No condemnation now I dread, Jesus and all in Him is mine!
 Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine,
 Bold I approach the eternal throne
And claim the crown, thru Christ my own [italics mine].

In both the previous hymns Wesley seeks to encourage his readers to anticipate the day when crowns would be given for service done in this life.

Previously, a hymn, *The Crowning Day*, was referred to, another hymn with a title quite similar is, *Is it the Crowning Day?* It was composed by George Whitcomb. The chorus is as follows,

Glad day! Glad day! *Is it the Crowning day*[italics mine]?
 I'll live for today nor anxious be
 Jesus my Lord I soon shall see
 Glad day! Glad day! *Is it the Crowning day* [italics mine]?

Again another hymn that is filled with expectancy and hope, whose writer hoped to

encourage the worshipper to be expectant of that great day when a crown might be won.

John W. Peterson, a great hymn writer and musician in the mid-twentieth century, wrote a hymn titled *Jesus is Coming Again* in 1957. As its title implies, it is a song about Jesus' return. As it focuses on the future, Peterson's third, and last, stanza reads,

Standing before Him at last
 Trial and trouble all past
Crowns at His feet we will cast [italics mine]
 Jesus is coming again!

Peterson's chorus for *Jesus is Coming Again* is,

Coming again, coming again
 Maybe morning, maybe noon, maybe evening and maybe soon
 Coming again, coming again,
 O what a wonderful day it will be, Jesus is coming again.

What a great hymn of expectancy! Jesus made it very clear in His parables (e.g. the ten virgins, Mt 25:1-13) that when people are expectant, they live wisely. When they live wisely, crowns, commendation and other honors will be given to them.

Another hymn, widely known and often sung for generations is, *My Jesus, I Love Thee* by William R. Featherson. In the final stanza Featherson wrote,

In mansions of glory and endless delight,
 I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright
 I'll sing with a *glittering crown on my brow* [italics mine]
 If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus 'tis now.

Yet another reference to a crown that might be won in the future at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

A hymn, unknown to the writer, yet in several hymnbooks is, *Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord*. Both lyrics and music were written by B. Mansell Ramsey. In the last stanza he wrote,

Long as my life shall last, Teach me Thy way!

Where'er my lot be cast, Teach me Thy way!

Until the race is run

Until the journeys done

Until the crown is won [italics mine]

Teach me Thy way.

Ramsey, like the apostle Paul likened life to a race and a journey. He understood and wanted those who would sing his hymn to run a good race all the way to the end of the journey, then and only then would a crown be won.

Ernest W. Shurtleff composed the lyrics to *Lead on, O King Eternal*. In the third verse he wrote,

Lead on O King eternal, we follow not with fears

For gladness breaks like morning, where'er Your face appears

Your cross is lifted o'er us, we journey in its light,

The crown awaits the conquest [italics mine], lead on O God of might.

Just as Israel of old did not possess the land until defeating enemies who occupied it, so too the saints of the church will not possess crowns without battles, battles with the world

system, the flesh and the Evil One. Battles that can all be won if empowered by, controlled by, the indwelling Holy Spirit.

No date is known on the composition of the next hymn, but its music was written by Ira Sankey, the musician who traveled with D. L. Moody, so it must have been late 19th century or perhaps early 20th century. John H. Yates wrote the lyrics for *Faith if the Victory*. His final stanza says,

To him that overcomes the foe, white raiment shall be giv'n [italics mine]

Before the angels he shall know his name confessed in heav'n [italics mine]

Then onward from the hills of light, our heart with love aflame

We'll vanquish all the hosts of night, in Jesus' conquering name.

Yates undoubtedly had the promises given to the overcomers in the church at Sardis, who were promised white raiment and having their names confessed by Jesus before the Father and the holy angels (Rv 3:5).

One last hymn from the past, *When We All Get to Heaven*, was written by Eliza E. Hewitt, but the date of composition is unknown. The fourth stanza reads,

Onward to the prize before us! [italics mine]

Soon His beauty we'll behold

Soon the pearly gates will open,

We shall tread the streets of gold.

Hewitt encouraged those who would sing her song to ever keep the prize before them.

Though one cannot be certain, Hewitt most likely had Paul's words in mind when he wrote that he did not run without aim and was running to win the prize (1 Cor 9:24-27).

A perusal of the history of the church reveals that there have been many in the past who have been motivated by rewards. Some of the hundreds of thousands of martyrs have clung to the promises of God that one day the Lord Jesus Christ would reward them for their sufferings on His behalf.

When one considers the music of the church, it is also clear that a crown and rewards in the kingdom, were a frequent topic hymn writers employed. Many hymn writers attempted to not only spur those who would sing the song to worship, but also to be encouraged and motivated by rewards.

It is the writer's contention in this chapter that rewards as a motivation is neither a new subject, nor is it merely an ancient one that has no part of history. It is a long neglected and overlooked one, but one nonetheless that has a thread that runs through the fabric of church history's martyrs and her music.

CONCLUSION

If the church were a human body, she would in dire need of a long overdue doctor's visit. If Vilfredo Pareto's principle hold true in the average church, and the writer believes it does, 80% of those who attend church somewhat regularly do very little. They are like parts of a body that do not function properly. They request or demand full-service churches but rarely give to the support of the church and then only a little extra, neither sacrificially nor cheerfully. While this is occurring 20% of the body is overworked. A bit like an overweight person, the heart is pumping feverishly, working hard but approaching a level of danger.

For far too long two major responses to the lack of obedience on the part of the 80% has been to either conclude that these people have forfeited their salvation or that they never really possessed it. Certainly many people attend church on a regular basis who are not saved, but 80% of those who call themselves evangelicals? Merely on a pragmatic level, something needs to change, what the church has been doing for the past many centuries has not worked as these statistics bear out.

An additional problem is that in many circles the Judgment Seat of Christ is never preached. Other than one group of people the writer fellowships with, he cannot remember hearing a sermon on the Judgment Seat of Christ in the past five years. When the Judgment Seat of Christ is preached it is in a very imbalanced fashion. The manner the topic is normally taught, everyone who is a believer can expect to receive a "well

done" or in our culture a pat on the back and an "attaboy". Such teaching is far from the truth of the Bible. To teach such a thing trivializes faithfulness and trivializes carnality. If the martyr, the missionary and the generous giver all end up with the same commendation as the carnal believer, whose life goal is pleasing self, what is the profit of obedience?

The Old Testament gives a handful of glimpses into the concept of rewards but the topic is far more developed in the New Testament. This should not be surprising as that is the case on every doctrine in the Bible. The progressive revelation of God continues to build on previous revelation.

It appears that Jesus, Peter, Paul and John used rewards as a primary motivator when they spoke and wrote. All four lived obedient lives and looked for rewards to be the result of such faithfulness.

If, as many teach and think, the rewards to be won are merely crowns that will soon be cast at Jesus' feet and that is the end of it, it is no wonder few are motivated by them. However, if rewards that can be won include a commendation, a position of authority and responsibility that will never end, the possibility of bringing more glory to Christ, the opportunity to enjoy sweeter fellowship with Christ, a place at the "head table" with Christ, a public commendation before the Father and holy angels, a new name that reflects one's character and is known only by the King and one's self, it is easy to see why many have lived for that day. What a grand time it will be for the many "little" people in history. Those saints who served faithfully as bi-vocational pastors, like the writer's

brother, in small little hamlets, under the radar and with no notoriety. Missionaries like the writer's sister and brother-in-law, who served for twenty years, away from family in a strange culture and at times in very demanding conditions. Others like the writer's parents, an older brother and more who give sacrificially to the ministries that God has raised up. It has been the writer's privilege to have known a great number of people who are in the 20% group, those who live exemplary lives, in that great day, all their work, their sacrifices, the mocking they received, sufferings endured, things done in obedience yet anonymously will be rewarded generously by the great King!

It is of interest to the writer that the worst church in the New Testament, the carnal saints at Corinth, is the church that Paul wrote must often about the judgment seat (1 Cor 3:10-15, 4:1-5, 9:24-27; 2 Cor 4:16-18, 5:8-10). There is little that is more sobering to a believer than the harsh reality that his life will be examined. Upon examination, loss of rewards (2 Jn 8) and shame (1 Jn 2:28) is a distinct possibility. If current trends hold true, 80% will do very poorly at the judgment seat. The writer is passionate that they hear this truth. If pastors are to preach the whole of God's Word, this warning needs to be included somewhere. It is the writer's prayer that for this group, God might, in some way, use this project to move them to obedience.

This concept of rewards is not new, it has merely been neglected. Church history has many examples of people who lived for rewards, who were motivated by rewards can be seen in a review of the martyrs of the church and as well as the music of the church.

On a purely experiential level, the writer knows first hand the power of this truth. He read a book in 1996 which lead to a more careful search of scripture which has

wonderfully changed his life. He is far from perfect and is often discouraged with how far he still needs to travel in the race to be where God would like him to be, however he also knows how much this doctrine has changed him. It has often guarded him from a variety of sins, merely by remembering he will give an account of his life to the King.

On another level, the writer has had many opportunities to preach on this topic in a variety of churches and teach these truths to several hundred students over the past fifteen years. It is very common for those in the congregation or the classroom to comment later how transformational the truths related to the judgment seat are.

It is the writer's hope that God will use these truths to motivate many to live transformed lives, marked by faithful obedience to our King. Few things would give the writer more pleasure than to have a part in the reader receiving a great commendation, be told to rule over a portion of Christ's kingdom and receive a hearty commendation before heaven's hosts!

APPENDIX A

QUOTES ON REWARDS

The following quotes are from church history, to demonstrate the teaching of rewards is not a new concept. Some that are the writer's favorites on the topic of rewards. A few appear elsewhere in this work, but most do not.

"We have all eternity to celebrate our victories, but only one short hour before sunset in which to win them." Robert Moffat, missionary, Bible scholar and father-in-law to missionary David Livingstone

"God always gives undeserved salvation, He never gives undeserved praise."
D. M. Panton

"He who despises a throne despises Him who confers the throne."
D. M. Panton

"Write your obituary now and see if it will play well in heaven."
Kenneth Boa

"I sometimes put it this way: It's easy to lip synch in the chorus of life, but each of us will have to sing a solo before God."
Kenneth Boa

"We are becoming today what we shall be in eternity by what we do with what He gave us."
Earl Radmacher

"We have learned from the prophets and we hold it as true that punishments and chastisements and good rewards are distributed according to the merit of each man's actions."
Justin Martyr

"Nothing is clearer than that a reward is promised to good works, in order to support the weakness of our flesh by some comfort, but not to inflate our minds with vain glory."
John Calvin

John Calvin

"Whatever good thing you do for Him, if done according to the Word, is laid for you as treasure in chests and coffers, to be brought out to be rewarded before both men and angels, to your eternal comfort."

John Bunyan

"Any temporal possession can be turned into everlasting wealth. Whatever is given to Christ is immediately touched with immortality."

A.W. Tozer

"The glory of the saint above will be in some proportion to their eminency in holiness and good works here. Christ will reward all according to their works. Christ tells us that he who gives a cup of cold water unto a disciple in the name of a disciple shall in no wise lose his reward. But this could not be true, if a person should have no great reward for doing many good works than if he did but few."

Jonathan Edwards

"There is a 'prize' to win in that future day. How we live on earth will determine our status and authority in a coming day, when Jesus shall reign undisputed over the universe. The Bible tells us that 'if we suffer we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us.' It is a solemn fact to contemplate that throughout eternity we will carry with us the evidences of having been faithful or unfaithful here upon earth. It is important to foresee what is before us, if we should live righteously and rewardingly."

Stephen Olford

"Friend, join me in living wholeheartedly for a day of celebration, not disappointment at the bema. No reward on earth will compare to the pleasure of seeing unclouded joy on the face of our Savior as He reviews the work of our lives, then leans forward to favor us with the reward He most wants to give."

Bruce Wilkinson

APPENDIX B

SCRIPTURES ON REWARDS

The following is a list of many of the biblical passages used in this paper that teach about some aspect of rewards.

"Therefore the LORD God of Israel declares, 'I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever; but now the LORD declares, 'Far be it from Me-for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.'
1 Samuel 2:30

"The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;
The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true, they are righteous altogether;
They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than the honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned;
In keeping them there is great reward."
Psalm 19:7-11

"May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."
Ruth 2:12

"Behold the Lord GOD will come with might, with His arm ruling with Him. Behold, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him."
Isaiah 40:10

"Behold the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth, say to the daughter of Zion, 'Lo, your salvation comes; behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him.'"

Isaiah 62:11

"Blessed are you those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad,

for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Matthew 5:10-12

"Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:19

"Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 6:1

"For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds."

Matthew 16:26, 27

"Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps alight. And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them."

Luke 12:35-37

"And he also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'"

Luke 14:12-14

"And Jesus said to them, 'Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last, first.'"

Matthew 19:28-30

"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the

flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

1 Peter 5:1-4

"Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you."

2 Peter 1:10, 11

"But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Romans 14:10, 12

"According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. For if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet as through fire."

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

"In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted, but the one who examines me is the Lord. Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come from God."

1 Corinthians 4:2-5

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified."

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."

1 Corinthians 15:58

"If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us."

2 Timothy 2:12

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

2 Timothy 4:6-8

"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasure of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward."

Hebrews 11:24-26

"Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection."

Hebrews 11:35

"Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

James 1:12

"And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."

1 John 2:28

"Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward."

2 John 8

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches, 'To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.'"

Revelation 2:7

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches, 'He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.'"

Revelation 2:11

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches, "To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it."

Revelation 2:17

"And he who overcomes and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations."

Revelation 2:26

"He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."

Revelation 3:5

"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God and My new name."

Revelation 3:12

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

Revelation 3:21

"Behold I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

Revelation 22:12

APPENDIX C

MOTIVATION SURVEY

An anonymous, seven question survey was administered to people from four different evangelical churches in the area where the writer lives. Eighty-four of them were completed. Not every survey was completely filled out and some questions, particularly number seven, were answered by choosing multiple answers, rather than one as instructed, so the percentages in the results do not equal 100%.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Gender: 38% of respondents were male, 52% were female and 10% gave no response.

Age: Those completing the survey represented a good cross section of generations:

- 13-19 years - 12%
- 20-29 years - 7%
- 30-39 years - 10%
- 40-49 years - 27%
- 50-59 years - 20%
- 60+ years - 19%

How long a Christian?

- less than 5 years - 11%
- 5 to 9 years - 17%
- 10-19 years - 17%
- 20+ years - 50%

SURVEY QUESTION AND RESPONSES

Question #1: Do you think the majority of believers are motivated to a life of obedience to Christ ?

- Yes - 39%
- No - 54%

Question #2: Why do you think in the average church 80% of the people do not have a ministry?

- A. They are not saved - 10%
- B. They are not properly motivated - 69%
- C. I have no idea - 13%
- D. They haven't been asked or allowed to serve - 7%

Question #3: If you were in charge of the "motivation committee", how would you go about motivating others to serve Christ?

- A. Try to instill a sense of guilt for not serving - 5%
- B. Tell them of the rewards of serving others - 82%
- C. Question their conversion /salvation story - 8%

Question #4: What do you think should be the greatest motivator for the believer to serve Christ?

- A. Others will be benefitted - 8%
- B. Personal love for God - 69%
- C. Personal blessings in this life that come from obedience to Christ - 19%
- D. Rewards that one might receive in heaven - 12%

Question #5: In heaven, will all believers, regardless of their service or lack of, be the same?

- Yes - 32%
- No - 63%

Question #6: Do you think there are any consequences for living an unmotivated life not characterized by good works?

- Yes - 89%
- No - 8%

Question #7: (If YES to #6 answer, if NO to #6 OMIT) What consequences to an unmotivated life will there be?

- A. Others don't receive a blessing - 27% (11%) *
- B. The church is weakened - 33% (17%)*
- C. Personal loss of blessing in this life - 37% (21%)*
- D. Personal loss of blessing in heaven - 42% (26%)*

* Note: 16% of respondents checked all four choices on this question. If all four of these responses were reduced 16%, the number in the parenthesis would be the correct percentage.

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- Journal of Dispensational Theology.
- Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society.

Vitae
Bill F. Korver

Personal

Born: July 25, 1959
Married: Marcia L. Tanner, May 23, 1981
Children: Elizabeth Korver-Glenn (Randall) October 20, 1984
Jared Brannan, born February 18, 1989
Allegra Anne, born June 17, 1995

Education

B.A. Pastoral Theology (1981)
Southeastern Bible College
M.A. Biblical Studies (1988)
Southeastern Bible College
M. Div. (2008)
Luther Rice University

Ministry

Youth Pastor, First Bible Church
Decatur, AL 1982 - 1988
Pastoral Intern w/ Charles R. (Chuck) Swindoll
Fullerton, CA 1988 - 1989
Pastor, Christ Community Church
Southern Pines, NC 1989 - 2004
President, Carolina Bible College
Fayetteville, NC 2004 - present