

The Rewards of Heaven

The Good News
Added To
THE GOOD NEWS

A Good King and an evil king in neighboring countries wage a great war. The evil king takes prisoners and puts them in chains to await torture and execution. He tells the Good King that the prisoners can be redeemed, but only for a price equivalent to 700-years' wages *each*. The Good King sends word to his people who are condemned in the foreign land, saying, "I offer to pay your redemption price and repatriate you, *all as a free gift*. When you return home, I will give you suitable employment in my government." All the prisoners accept their Good King's offer with rejoicing. They come safely home, and go to work in their Good King's government.

❖ Now, an important question:

Should the Good King's redeemed and repatriated citizens *expect wages* as they go to work in His government?



❖ Answer:

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1. The King's own law says, "the laborer is worthy of his wages" (Luke 10.7).
2. The King will not allow confusion about Who paid for the redemption.
3. The King will not allow suspicion about the *free, gratis* nature of His redemption.

➤ Hebrews 11.6 says,


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...he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a *wage-payer* (*misthapothotes*) of those who seek Him.

❖ Two understandings of the Christian life:


1.

A cartoon illustration of a man in a suit, looking thoughtful with his hand on his chin. A large thought bubble is connected to his head, containing the text: "I'm saved from Hell, my sins are forgiven; now I can live my life without worries!". The man is wearing a green jacket, a light blue shirt, and a red tie. The background of the illustration is a yellow oval.

I'm saved from Hell, my sins are forgiven; now I can live my life without worries!

❖ Two understandings of the Christian life:

2.

A cartoon illustration of a man in a suit looking thoughtful, with a thought bubble containing text. The man is shown from the chest up, wearing a green jacket, a light blue shirt, and a red tie. He has a large, light-colored head and is looking upwards and to the right. A large, white, cloud-like thought bubble is positioned to his right, containing the text: "God has saved me and called me into His work; now I can serve Him and be *rewarded* for it!". The background of the illustration is a solid yellow color.

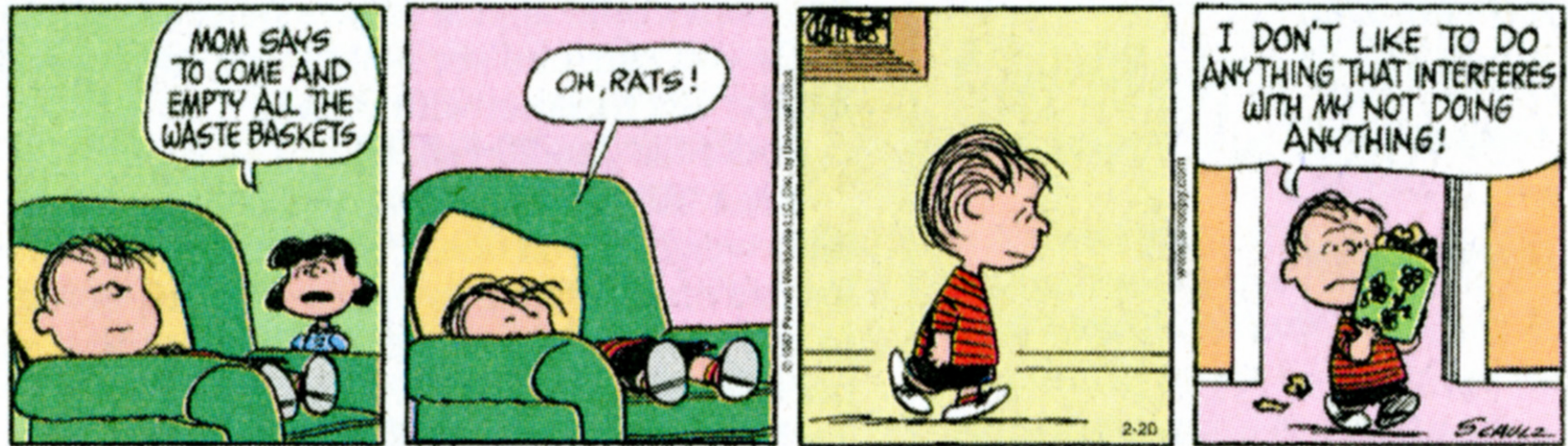
God has saved me and called me into His work; now I can serve Him and be *rewarded* for it!

❖ Why is it hard for Evangelical Christians to believe that God rewards His people?

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PEANUTS



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1. We want to protect the doctrine of *salvation by grace* apart from works—but we need only teach clearly that rewards come *after* salvation. **Christ's** encouragement to “store up treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6.20) implies a *future* reward.

❖ Why is it hard for Evangelical Christians to believe that God rewards His people?

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2. We're lazy. We're too happy to accept God's free gift without having to think about good works. (But see Eph 2.10 and 1John 3.7!)

❖ Why is it hard for Evangelical Christians to believe that God rewards His people?

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3. We've been conditioned to believe that we glorify God by *not doing stuff*.

- Would a marriage succeed if both spouses did nothing more than stay out of each other's way, trying not to offend each other?

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➤ Yet this is the approach many take to their relationship with God.

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- Yet this is the approach many take to their relationship with God. It is the Buddhist approach to Christianity:

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*Hurt not others with that which
pains yourself.*

Udanavarga 5.18 (560 BC)

- It is also the Confucian approach to Christianity:

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*What you do not want done to
yourself, do not do to others.*

Analects of Confucius 15.23 (after 479 BC)

- No, we glorify and please God by what we *DO*, more than by what we don't do. It should not surprise us that He rewards us for what we *do* (1Corinthians 3.8).

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*Do to others as
you would have them do to you.*

Jesus in Luke 6.31 (NIV)

❖ Does the Bible really teach rewards?

Yes, Paul wrote:

“With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will *receive back* from the Lord...”

(Ephesians 6.7-8)

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❖ Reimbursement is coming!

Paul also wrote:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

(2 Corinthians 5.10)

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❖ What will God reward us for?

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1. **Giving to the poor** (Matthew 19.21; Luke 14.13-14): “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.”

❖ What will God reward us for?

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2. **Extending hospitality** (Matthew 10.41-42):
“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**.”

❖ What will God reward us for?

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3. **Loving our enemies** (Luke 6.35): “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and **your reward** will be great...”

❖ What will God reward us for?

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4. **Enduring persecution** (Matthew 5.11; Luke 6.22-23): “Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your **reward** is great in heaven.”

❖ What will God reward us for?

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5. **Making disciples** (1Cor. 3.10-17; 1Peter 2.5): If any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for ... the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work ... remains, he will receive a **reward**. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

❖ When will God reward us?

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1. Now, in the present age (Mark 10.29-30).
2. In the coming Day of the Lord (1Corinthians 3.13-14; 2Timothy 4.8).
3. When Jesus comes (Revelation 22.12); i.e., when the King takes full possession of His kingdom (Luke 19.12-19).

❖ What will we receive as rewards?

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1. Family and homes (Mark 10.28-30).
2. A crown and robe of righteousness (2Timothy 4.8; Revelation 19.7-8).
3. Authority over cities and nations (Luke 19.12-19; Revelation 2.26-27).
4. Praise from God (Matthew 25.21,23; 1 Corinthians 4.5).

❖ These are in addition to what we have in Christ:

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- ✓ Eternal life (Mark 10.30; Rev 2.17).
- ✓ The Heavenly City, New Jerusalem (Hebrews 11.10,16; Revelation 22.14).
- ✓ Ever-deepening relationship with Jesus Himself (Revelation 2.17).

❖ Isn't it wrong to do good works in hope of rewards?

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It is foolish to *pretend* to do good works in an attempt to gain the approval of men (Matthew 6.2,5),

But the great heroes of the faith performed their exploits in the hopes of obtaining “a better resurrection” (Hebrews 11.35)!

❖ Isn't it wrong to do good works in hope of rewards?

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Furthermore, giving thought to earning rewards from God cannot help but train our hearts to please God; thinking about rewards from God will bring our hearts into alignment with God's heart.



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Let's throw out
our excuses,
and get excited
about storing up
treasure in heaven
(Luke 12.32-34)!

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