



Christians Will Be Rewarded

In an ancient land, on a dusty road sat a beggar. A great caravan of elephants passed by. The beggar began to cry out to the men on the backs of the elephants to give him something. Suddenly one of the largest elephants in the caravan stopped, and a man dressed like a prince climbed down and stood in front of the beggar. The prince did something very unusual. Instead of giving the beggar something, the prince asked the beggar to give him something. As his amazement wore off, the beggar reached down into his meager cup of rice, counted out three grains and handed them to the prince. The prince seemed satisfied with the gift, climbed up on his elephant and the caravan went on its way.



After the caravan had gone and the beggar thought about what had taken place, he was deeply moved by it all. Throughout his life he had to beg from others, and now someone had actually asked him for something. Not just anyone -- but someone as important as a prince. The beggar marveled that the prince seemed satisfied with his gift and tears began to well up in his eyes. Through his tears, he noticed three shiny objects by

his feet. A closer examination revealed that they were three large pieces of gold. He suddenly realized that for every grain of rice he had given the prince, the prince left him a large piece of gold. He looked in the direction of the caravan and cried out with all his might, "Prince, oh prince, had I known, I would have given you everything!"

If we could for a moment see into the future and the reward that Christ, the Prince of Peace, has for those who have served Him (1 Corinthians 2:9), we would stand in amazement and awe declaring, "Lord, oh Lord, if I had only known, I would have given you everything!"

Overview

During the Tribulation, a time of unparalleled suffering will occur on earth. Simultaneously, in heaven, two joyous events will take place. First, the *Bema* (judgment seat) of Christ will occur (2 Corinthians 5:10). This is not a judgement as to whether a person gets into heaven or not. The people in this judgment are already in heaven. It is a judgment according to what a Christian did for Christ while on earth. Christ

Himself will evaluate every believer and determine how each Christian will be rewarded (Revelation 4:4).

Then, before Christ returns to set up his kingdom on the earth, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will take place (Revelation 19:7-9). This will be a glorious and joyful event. To fully understand it, though, we will need to look at it in context of the special characteristics and customs of the Jewish marriage supper.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We believe that the second coming of Christ is personal and imminent; that He will descend from heaven in the clouds of glory with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and that at this hour, which no man knoweth beforehand, the dead in Christ shall rise, then the redeemed that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord;



Insight

BELIEVERS ARE REWARDED

Jesus, in His absolute holiness, will reward Christians for what they have done for Him while on earth. Two passages of scripture give us information about this process, called the *Bema* Judgement of Christ. Read 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 and identify the following observations regarding our future rewards.

• Heartfelt Motivation

The Lord in His uncompromising fairness will not judge according to the world's standards. He evaluates the intent of our hearts and our motives. The bottom line will be whether we were serving Jesus out of our love for Him, or to fulfill some self-centered need within ourselves. Were we seeking His glory or our own? This will all be taken into account when our good deeds are judged and rewarded accordingly.

• Four Specific Rewards

(1) *The Crown of Rejoicing* (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). This is the soul winner's crown. Besides being with Christ, there is something else which will bring us great joy in heaven. We will see people there that we helped lead to Christ.

(2) *The Crown of Righteousness* (2 Timothy 4:7-8). This is for those who are more attached to their Lord and Savior than they are to their own earthly pursuits. They will be looking for Jesus' return and will be living accordingly.

(3) *The Crown of Life* (James 1:12). This crown is for those with extreme faithfulness who endure suffering for Christ. According to Revelation 2:10 this is the martyr's crown.

- Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG

(4) *The Crown of Glory* (1 Peter 5:4). This is for the faithful Christian workers, for those who are willing to take on the awesome responsibility of shepherding a part of God's flock whether it be many or few. This would apply to pastors, missionaries, and other ministers who pour their lives into the lives of others as Jesus did with His disciples.

MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

The Bible refers to the Church as the Bride of Christ. Many fascinating similarities exist between the way Jesus will return for His *Bride* and the marriage customs during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry.

In Jesus' day, an engaged woman had to be constantly ready for her wedding because she did not know when her groom would come for her. Traditionally, a groom was required to build a room for his new family onto his father's house. When the room was finished and approved by his father, the groom could then come for his bride.

The arrival of a betrothed young man in a community would be announced with trumpets as he sought out his waiting bride. Every engaged woman would prepare for her wedding day in case the approaching groom was coming for her.

The Jewish wedding celebration and feasting would last for one week. According to the traditional view, the time between the Rapture and the Revelation, when the Marriage Supper of the Lamb occurs, will be one week of years (Daniel 9:27 NKJV).

Read these verses as a group:

- John 14:2-3
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
- Matthew 25:1-13

Discuss possible answers to this question: What similarities do you notice between our relationship with Jesus and that of an engaged couple in traditional Jewish culture?



Personal Response

Marriage Supper of the Lamb

"People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last." (Luke 13:29,30)

Form small discussion groups and spend some time examining the Bible verse above and answer the questions below.

- What requirements does God have for those who attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?
- What do you think would disqualify someone from attending the Marriage Supper?
- In light of the above verses and Proverbs 30:8-9, is it more spiritual to be wealthy than to be poor?

Believers Are Rewarded

The world evaluates success in terms of the spectacular, the biggest, the greatest. In heaven, God is not impressed with our earthly titles, what kind of car we drove, what kind of a house we lived in, or how famous we were. As a group, review the four crowns which will be rewarded to Christians (second page of this lesson). Make a list of personal qualities which God considers worthy of reward.

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A student in a Bible class once asked her teacher, "If we can earn more than one crown, how will we wear those crowns in heaven? Do we wear one crown one day and a different crown the next day, or do they somehow stack on top of each other?" The other students laughed. But it was not a stupid question. Revelation 4:10,11 tells us exactly what we will do with those crowns. Believers are going to lay their crowns at the feet of Jesus as symbols of their adoration. Everything we do for God is done with the motivation that He might receive glory (Matthew 5:16).



HEART PERSPECTIVE

Some cults make the sharing of their "faith" a mandatory part of their eternal reward. God does not link our personal salvation with the works we do. Salvation is a gift of God (Romans 6:23) and cannot be earned. God gives us the choice to take or to abstain from taking the Good News of Jesus to the world. However, He wants us to be grateful enough for His grace in our lives that we want to help others find the same help. The choice is ours.

The rewards we receive will be based more on heart motivation than the actual works that we do. This is why sharing faith has to be a passion of our heart rather than simply fulfilling someone else's expectation. Imagine for a moment, the great personal satisfaction of arriving in heaven and seeing people there who received Jesus because you shared Him with them!





Lesson 15 Teaching Outline

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1

Reference Point (10 minutes)

Write the following question on the chalkboard: “What is the greatest reward you could ever receive from Jesus Christ?” Allow students a few minutes to respond to the question.

Ask a volunteer with a dramatic flair to read aloud the story of the beggar and the prince. Ask students to evaluate the heart attitude of the beggar before and after the prince’s gift. Specifically, help students arrive at the realization that the motivation for doing everything in life should be to please God and bring glory to Him.

2

Overview (10 minutes)

On the timeline, during the Tribulation, only two events take place in heaven relative to the believers: they are rewarded, and they participate in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Ask the students which of the two events they look forward to more and why?

There was a Bible college student, who, after eating dorm food, said that he was looking forward to The Marriage Supper of the Lamb more.

Of course, the greatest thing for the believers is that they will be with Jesus.

3

Insight (25 minutes)

Review the Bible verses for each of the teaching points in this section. Make a list of observations you would like to emphasize as you teach. Involve students by having them look up and read Scriptures as you make reference to them.

Included teaching points:

- Bema Judgement of God
- God’s standard for judgement
- Personal motivation
- Four specific rewards
- Celebration with Jesus
- Eternity with God
- Similarities between Jewish traditions and our eternal relationship with Jesus

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 15 minutes)

Break the class into groups of three or four, assigning the discussion topics to each group. Allow time to read the suggested Bible verses and to make some observations and conclusions before reporting the results of the discussion to the entire group. The questions are designed to give insight into the motivation of our hearts. This may lead to further discussion and/or a time of personal ministry as students deal with their own heartfelt reasons for serving Jesus.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

Throughout the week have students constantly check the motivation as to why they do the things they do. Encourage them to pray for the right heart in serving Jesus.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Encourage students to consider prayerfully how they can help another person accept God’s gift of life through Jesus Christ so that he or she will be ready to meet Him when He returns.

The Rapture	The Tribulation	The Reign	The Millennium	Satan Released	New Heaven and Earth
Christians meet Jesus in the air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians rewarded • Marriage Supper of the Lamb • Reign of Antichrist on earth • Opening of Seals • Trumpet judgements • God's wrath revealed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battle of Armageddon • Antichrist and false prophet cast into Lake of Fire • Nations judged • Satan bound 	Thousand year reign of Jesus on earth	People deceived	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satan thrown into Lake of Fire • Final judgement of the wicked

(The highlighted events are covered in this lesson.)