

SALVATION AND REWARDS

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour" (I Corinthians 3:6-8).

The doctrine of salvation and rewards is clearly taught in the New Testament. Salvation has to do with the sinner. He is lost, needs salvation, and may be saved.

Of course, there is also a sense in which salvation has to do with the believer. He is saved from the penalty, guilt, and pollution of sin; is constantly being saved from the power and habits of sin, and, will yet finally be saved from the presence and last traces of sin, at the second coming of Christ.

Rewards have to do with believers, and with believers only. There are not any rewards for the sinner. Nothing awaits the sinner except judgment, condemnation, and eternal death. Rewards have to do with works, service, and faithfulness, and exclusively the works, service, and faithfulness of believers. Rewards are received for faithful service, sincere toil, and patient suffering.

I. Salvation And Rewards Differ.

We need to distinguish between salvation and rewards. To confuse them means to do harm to the New Testament teaching concerning both of them. It will mean the perversion of the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith, and to teach works and legalism. To introduce and teach legalism is to strike a blow at the cross and the finished work of Christ. Yea, it brings one under the curse of God. In Galatians 1:6-9 we read: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." The gospel Paul preached was distinctly that of the grace of God.

1. Salvation and rewards differ in purpose.

Salvation is for the purpose of deliverance and safety--deliverance from darkness, sin--its power and consequences, Satan and his power, and the wrath to come. "Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:17-18). "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:13).

Rewards are for the purpose of compensation for service, toil, faithfulness, and suffering. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12). "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a

disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:41-42).

2. Salvation and rewards differ in the nature of their bestowment.

Salvation is a free gift, it is bestowed by grace upon faith. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Rewards are to be attained in the future, received at the judgment seat of Christ. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10). "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27). Peter exhorted the elders in these words: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as beings lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Peter 5:2-4). "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

II. Salvation.

From the Bible we learn various things about salvation.

1. Salvation is wholly of the Lord.

He is its source and channel. "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 1:9). "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord" (Psalm 3:8). "But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: he is their strength in the time of trouble" (Psalm 37:39). It is interesting and instructive to notice some of the expressions in the Psalms. "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation" (24:5). "Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation" (27:9). "The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation" (118:14). "O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle" (140:7). "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation" (Psalm 95:1).

(1) Christ Jesus is the only Saviour.

"Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

(2) Christ Jesus is the mighty Saviour.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). "Uttermost" means of degree and time.

2. Salvation is all of God's grace, love, and mercy.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Timothy 1:9). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

3. Salvation is received by faith.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth to the Jews first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). "That is thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9).

By faith the sinner depends upon Christ Who took his place on the cross, died in his stead, and now represents believers in the glory. Thus the merit of the character and work of Christ is put to his account, and he is both saved and safe. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). Salvation is obtained and not attained. It is divinely and graciously bestowed and not humanly wrought or merited.

4. Salvation is a present possession.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). These verses indicate that it is an accomplished and past act.

III. Rewards.

1. Rewards are earned by work and faithful service.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Timothy 4:7-8).

2. Rewards will be given to believers at the judgment seat of Christ.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10). "Be thou faithful unto

death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

3. Rewards are promised by God as a means of inspiration and encouragement.

(1) They are promised to wean believers from the pursuit of earthly riches and pleasures.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward" (Hebrews 11:24-27).

(2) They are promised to inspire to unselfish and loving ministry.

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose a reward" (Matthew 10:42).

(3) They are promised to encourage under suffering and persecution.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

(4) They are promised to incite to faithfulness in duty.

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:23-24).

(5) They are promised to inspire missionary enterprise and personal soul-winning.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

4. Rewards will be given according to the measure of the capacity for service and responsibility in life.

5. Rewards can be forfeited through carelessness, faithlessness, and compromise.

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3:11). "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (II John 1:8). "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I Corinthians 3:11-15).