

SOTERIOLOGY: DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

PART 55

REWARDS & INHERITANCE, PART 7

Peter presented to us the truth that in our faith adding certain qualities to our sanctification would result in a superior or abundant Kingdom life.

2 Peter 1:5–11 ⁵Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply [ἐπιχορηγέω , add] moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. ¹⁰Therefore, 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; ¹¹for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly [πλουσίως] supplied [ἐπιχορηγέω] to you.

Peter is informing us that our justification salvation provides entrance into the Kingdom and that our sanctification salvation provides the opportunity to have that entrance into the Kingdom enhanced so that our entrance and life in it will be abundant. The grammar Peter used suggests this is our responsibility in terms of bearing spiritual fruit and doing good works.

Supply, ἐπιχορηγέω, means to add to; to supply; to provide something in addition to what already exists. The NASB translated this word as “supply;” given the context, it would have been better translated as “add” which the KJV, NKJV, and NET Bibles do. The word is an aorist active imperative second person plural verb; it is a command to add something to the justification salvation that already exists by virtue of belief. Peter is saying something like this: “You already believe. Now add these things to your faith life and you will receive an abundant supply when you enter the Kingdom.” We can’t add to justification salvation itself, but we do have some measure of control in our sanctification salvation. Peter goes on to describe what elements should characterize our walk. These elements are within our control to add to our sanctification; that’s why he gave us a command to do so. He also allows for the possibility that the believer will not exhibit these qualities and those unfaithful believers are described as “blind or short-sighted” (v. 9). For those who do integrate these behaviors into their walk, he promises an abundant entrance into the Kingdom because they will have been useful and

fruitful in their Christian lives. Abundant, *πλουσίως*, means richly, generously, in a great amount; it is a high point on any scale and having the implication of value as well as abundance. The second use of the word "supply" is the same word used above but this time it is a passive verb. While the believer is responsible for walking in these characteristics, the abundant entrance into the Kingdom is the prerogative of the Lord and He gives it to us. The promise is that He will abundantly add to our entrance into the Kingdom and it is His decision to either do so or not but He will righteously evaluate our life and accordingly reward us. As we walk in the Spirit and operate in the sphere of moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love, we are operating where the Lord desires us to operate. It is our responsibility to walk worthy, the middle voice meaning we have the responsibility to walk worthy because we are not coerced or made to do so by Him, and when we do, the result is the Lord will accordingly reward us, the passive voice meaning He determines and presents the rewards, with an abundant entrance into the Kingdom. Those who fail to walk in a worthy manner will forfeit an abundant entrance into the Kingdom but they will enter. Once again, it is apparent that justification salvation is separate from rewards and it is not itself the reward.

What good works can we do in service to the Lord that will result in rewards? What does faithfulness look like? What are the rewards believers can know may be awarded them for their faithful service? Does the Bible give us any information about these issues?

Our motivation for faithfulness, obedience and good works is to glorify the Father through the Son. Every person who is born again is gifted for service in and to the body. Peter, although he didn't use an imperative (below), is giving us a command to use our God given gifts to serve the body of Christ. We do this through the power of God which He supplies us; it's from Him and it glorifies Him when we use it in His service. We can, however, fail to use our gifts and thereby forfeit rewards that could have been ours.

1 Peter 4:10–11 ¹⁰As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Jesus talked about rewards in general terms during the Sermon on the Mount as He contrasted earthly treasures with heavenly treasures.

Matthew 6:19–21, 24 ¹⁹"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not

break in or steal; ²¹for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.... ²⁴"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

This truth was presented to the Jewish people as Kingdom truth which was part of the Kingdom offer but later Scripture concerning rewards confirms its application to those of us in this age as well. The Jews at the time thought wealth was a sign of divine favor and they spent their time trying to accumulate it. Jesus was telling them that earthly wealth is transitory and subject to destruction whereas that which is done for God has ramifications that are permanent and eternal. He called that "treasures in heaven." Our attitude towards wealth and material things is an indication of our heart attitude towards God; loving wealth leads to evil which leads people away from God. The Lord made it very clear that no one can worship money and worship Him at the same time. What the Lord was not saying is that money itself is evil but an inordinate love and focus on wealth is evil and loving it leads to evil deeds. We need to be able to accumulate money and material goods in order to provide for our families and for our future when we are retired and unable to work, but our attitude concerning financial matters reveals to the Lord the state of our heart. He will know our priority; He will know whether or not we are devoted to Him or devoted to matters of this world which includes, and even prioritizes, wealth. Devotion, worship, and service to God now will result in the application of the heavenly treasure we have accumulated to our lives in the future.

1 Timothy 6:10 ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

The simple truth of these words of the Lord is quite evident in our experience now. How many things do we own that will last forever? Nothing lasts forever and without constant maintenance, most things would last only a short period of time. The contrast the Lord is implying is that heavenly treasure will never wear out, never be destroyed, never be forgotten, or never fade away and, in fact, that heavenly treasure will be applied to your eternal life.

We have previously noted that responsible rule and authority will be awarded those who are faithful stewards of the Lord's resources. That was in Luke 19:17, 19 where the faithful slaves were given authority over ten cities and five cities respectively. The unfaithful slave not only failed to achieve a responsible leadership position in the Kingdom, but what he had was taken away and given to the faithful slave. Leadership and authority in the name of the King seem to be rewards that recognize the faithful service done in this age.

Honor, praise, and commendation may be considered to be part of what constitutes rewards. In the parable of the Talents in the Olivet Discourse, the Lord commended the faithful Jewish slaves with the commendation, "Well done, good and faithful slave" (Mt. 25:21, 23). They were to be put in charge of many things which again reveal the idea that authority and leadership responsibility are rewards for faithful service. That truth seems to be applicable to all who belong to Him. Every person who deserves praise will receive it.

Matthew 25:21 ²¹"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

1 Corinthians 4:5 ⁵Therefore 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 to him from God.

When Jesus was giving the apostles instructions for service, He warned them about the dangers they would face as His disciples. One of the things He told them was that faithful service representing Him to the people would result in Him confessing them before the heavenly realms.

Matthew 10:32–33 ³²"Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. ³³"But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

Luke 12:8–9 ⁸"And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; ⁹but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

Just as it was for the apostles, living life, particularly in the face of persecution and danger, in such a way that Christ is visibly confessed not only in word but in deed as revealed in the disciple's lifestyle and ministry which will be praiseworthy and cause for the Lord to praise such faithfulness in the heavenly realms. "The confession the apostles are to give is not a one-time verbal confession of their faith, but a life of confession in the face of severe persecution. Arrest, scourging, hatred, and possibly death awaited those who faithfully confessed Him, and Jesus wants them to know that such costly confession will not go unrecognized or unrewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. If they testify of Him before others, He will testify about them before the '*Father...in heaven.*' Christ's confession before the Father is that the faithful believer is worthy of the reward of reigning with Christ in the millennial and eternal kingdoms. He is worthy

because he endured opposition in speaking up for Christ" [Hal M. Haller, "Matthew" in the *Grace New Testament Commentary*, p. 1:48]. The confession the Lord references here is not about justification salvation as so many people assert. That is secure whether or not a person ever publicly confesses their faith in Him. This is about our sanctification and serving Him as His disciples not only in the face of adversity and danger but as a life well lived in service to Him.

Paul applied the same concept to us through his second epistle to Timothy.

2 Timothy 2:11–13 ¹¹It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; ¹²If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; ¹³If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

Verse 11 is a justification salvation verse, verse 12 is a sanctification salvation verse, and verse 13 is an eternal security, justification salvation verse. Every believer dies and is raised in Christ (Rom. 6:5) and that is positional justification truth. But not every believer endures in their faith and some even deny Him especially when suffering persecution and those believers will suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ. Conversely, those who endure in their faith will reign with Him which we have seen to be the reward of responsible leadership in His Kingdom. The promise of God is that all who believe in the Son will be saved is dependent only on His promise; therefore, faithless believers will be saved because their eternal life was never dependent on their works in any way and that is also justification salvation truth.

Romans 6:5 ⁵For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

The writer to the Hebrews said that endurance in the face of persecution is a rewardable Christian discipleship trait. We don't like to think about persecution because no one wants to experience it. Persecution against Christians has come to the world with an intensity the world has not seen in some time but since its inception Islam has murdered, enslaved, and made life difficult for not only Christians but, of course, Jews as well. Some Christians today are giving up everything including their lives to proclaim their faith in Christ. We've all seen the videos of Christians bravely facing their death at the hands of Islam. We have never experienced serious persecution in this country, and, in fact, we have had a very comfortable life living as Christians in America and that has been a great blessing. But that is changing. Each one of us must be prepared to deal with this. How will we react? The truth is we don't know how we will react until we are faced with the reality of it but the promise of God is that perseverance in the face of persecution has a "great reward."

Hebrews 10:32–39 ³²But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, ³³partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. ³⁴For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. ³⁵Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. ³⁷FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. ³⁸BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. ³⁹But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

Fruchtenbaum has a good explanation of these verses concerning rewards. The situation described in Hebrews is becoming more applicable to Christianity today and his comments on these verses are timely advice for us. "...he points out two aspects of their sufferings: direct and indirect. First, direct suffering was what they suffered personally: *partly, being made a gazingstock* or spectacle. The Greek word for *gazingstock* is the origin of the English word 'theater.' This pictures these Jewish believers as being brought on a stage and viewed as clowns to be mocked. They were mocked and they suffered in two ways. They suffered *reproaches*, meaning ridicule and mockery, and they suffered *afflictions*, meaning persecution in relation to their possessions. They lost their property. The second aspect of their sufferings was that they also suffered indirectly because of their associations with other believers. They became *partakers with them that were so used*. Even when they did not suffer direct persecution, they suffered indirectly by associating with those believers who were persecuted. In those days, they were not forsaking the assembling of themselves together.

In verse 34, the writer reminds them of the extent and the nature of the fellowship. They had *compassion* on those who were *in bonds*. The word *compassion* means 'inner agony.' They had inner agony (compassion) on those who were in jails and in prison. They also *took joyfully the spoiling of [their] possessions*. This is outer deprivation. They suffered both inner and outer deprivation. Yet, they were willing to do this for two reasons: First, they had knowledge of a *better possession*, the one in Heaven; and, second, they knew the possession in Heaven was *abiding* or perpetual [v. 34; this is an indication that rewards are eternal].

In light of the kind of faith they had exercised in the past, in verses 35-39, the author now encourages the readers to continue in the same patient endurance so as not to lose their crowns at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Again, there is nothing in these warnings that talks about losing salvation. They will lose their physical lives and their rewards but not their salvation [referring to those who do become apostate and return to Judaism].

In verse 35, the exhortation is: *Cast not away...your boldness...*The reason they must again exercise patient endurance is so they will not lose their rewards because there is *great recompense of reward* at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is the second deterrent to apostasy: not to lose rewards [the first deterrent is to remember one's earlier days in the faith].

Their need, stated in verse 36, is patient and endurance: *For you have need of patience*. The readers need to know that trials are a part of the life of faith. They do not need more faith; they need more patient endurance. They need to exercise patient endurance because then they will do *the will of God*. Doing the will of God means they will receive rewards. Having kept the will of God, they will *receive the promise*. The *promise* involves two things. First, it involves spiritual maturity in this life. Second, it involves rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ in the next life [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariel's Bible Commentary: The Messianic Jewish Epistles*, pp. 146-148].

Paul expected the Thessalonians, people to whom he had preached the gospel of grace and seen come to faith, to be part of the basis for his own personal reward. Evangelism is a work that will merit reward.

1 Thessalonians 2:19 ¹⁹For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?

Faithfulness to an end of life as a martyr will be rewarded by the Lord.

2 Timothy 4:6–8 ⁶For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸in 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.

Faithful pastoral ministry will be rewarded by the Lord. The description of the crown as unfading suggests the eternal nature of the reward. If you care to get a picture of what unfaithful shepherds look like, read Ezekiel 34.

1 Peter 5:1–4 ¹Therefore, 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, ²shepherd 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; ³nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

James 3:1 ¹Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

Good deeds performed in the name of the Lord to the glory of the Lord will be rewarded.

1 Timothy 6:17–19 ¹⁷Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

Luke 12:32–34 ³²“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. ³³“Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. ³⁴“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Paul said there was a crown of righteousness laid up for those who have loved His appearing.

2 Timothy 4:8 ⁸in 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.

Compare this with 1 John 2:28 in which it is noted that there will be believers who may not love His appearing.

1 John 2:28 ²⁸Now, 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.

Paul had no fear concerning facing the Lord on that day. Some believers are not looking forward to that day while multitudes of other believers eagerly await that day. Whether fearing that day or whether simply ignoring it is due to sinful living or allowing the “worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth” to intrude into their Christian lives as Matthew 13:22 puts it, some believers will suffer shame when the Lord appears because He was not a priority in their life and they failed to faithfully serve and glorify Him at least in part. All of us may well fall into that category to some extent. Some believers want the Lord to delay so they can experience more of this life but this thinking fails to understand how unpleasant this sinful world is as compared to how wonderful life will be in glorified bodies in the presence of the Lord. This personal, felt shame will flow not from the Lord but from our own self-evaluation when we see Him

because we will know we failed Him in many ways. Paul seems to be saying that shame will not be a necessary component of the evaluation at the judgment seat. Knowing the Word of God leads to obeying the Word of God which, in turn, leads to living a life of righteousness and that is a life that need not experience shame at the Βῆμα.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 ¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Living the sanctified life seems to have connected to it the desire to see the Lord. Paul encouraged believers to live holy, set apart lives and when so doing it becomes impressed on the heart of the believer to long for the appearance of the Lord. Apparently, those who do not long for the appearance of the Lord will not be rewarded with this crown of righteousness.

Philippians 3:20–21 ²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Titus 2:11–14 ¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹²instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

With His disciples, Jesus addressed the issue of readiness and subsequent reward for that readiness and that truth is no less applicable to those in the body of Christ in this dispensation.

Luke 12:35–38 ³⁵“Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit. ³⁶“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. ³⁷“Blessed are those slaves whom the master will 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. ³⁸“Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

The concept of rewards and an abundant entrance into the Kingdom seem to be expressed in this Scripture in terms of the master serving at the table those disciples who are ready and faithfully waiting for His return.