

“THE LIFE GOD REWARDS”

Part 1: Jesus and the Afterlife

Big idea: *What we do on earth influences what we do in heaven.* Not *if* we go to heaven, but what we do once we get to heaven. “If” we go to heaven after death is decided by what we believe about the person and work of Jesus Christ in this life. Once we trust Christ alone for our eternal destiny, then all we do moving forward in life matters forever. There is a direct connection between what we do today and what we will experience in heaven.

Eternity IQ - survey . . .

Two truths decide our eternal experience – see as keys. The first key is BELIEF – what (who) we believe determines our eternal destination (*Where* we spend our forever). The second key is BEHAVIOR and what Jesus often spoke about – *How* we will spend eternity. I repeat: What we do today impacts how we spend eternity. Millions know Jesus Christ as a great teacher but few, including many of His followers, are too unfamiliar with all He said about a life God rewards.

TODAY: Part 1: “Jesus and the Afterlife”

All our choices (small, large) today (how we interact with spouse, family, etc; how we work, how we glorify Him by bearing fruit, etc. – All change what happens next. Many have missed this important truth – *our actions today will affect our future forever!* Heaven will not be the same experience for everyone. Some will have more rewards, more authority, and more responsibility in eternity. Many are in for a big shock about how eternity in heaven actually works. This series is a great sequel to our previous series.

I. WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE

- A. No one made more shocking statements about the afterlife than Jesus: Matt. 5:11-12 (Lk. 6:22-23). In a few words, Jesus reveals why we can rejoice on earth, even in the worst circumstances. Because *there is a direct connection between what we do for Him on earth and something “great” He will do for us in heaven.* Also producing great joy (Lk. 6:23).

It is a reward for *doing* versus the gift we receive for believing. Plus, the reward is *personally* yours and mine “in heaven”. This can and should impact how we live now, knowing a personal great reward awaits.

- B. Promise of Reward in Heaven is a common theme in Jesus’ teachings: Matt. 5:11-12; 16:27; 19:21, 27-30; 25:20-21; Lk. 14:14. Paul added (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10). These suggest God keeps track of what we do for Him every day – sobering thought!

II. WHAT GREAT CHURCH FATHERS SAID ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE

All had something in common: *They earnestly believed in and hoped for eternal rewards.* Examples . . .

III. THE TWO IMPORTANT KEYS

The teachings of Jesus indicate there are two keys that determine everything about eternity:

- A. The First Key is what/who *Believe*. This key unlocks the door to eternal life and determines *where* we will spend eternity – our destination (Destination issue). John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47
- B. The Second Key is our *Behavior* (actions, works). This key unlocks the door to reward and determines *how* we will spend eternity (Compensation issue). My behavior determines my eternal compensation. We will spend most of our study on this second key.
- C. Two Keys to Living a Life God Rewards: What (Who) we *believe* and how we *behave* after we’ve believed. Everything we do today matters forever. The fruit we bear today directly influences our experience in eternity – realizing that and acting on it will change our life today for the better.

CHART COMPARING THE TWO KEYS . . .

CONC: We should and we must live with an unshakable certainty that everything we do today matters forever! Someone wrote: “Take interest in the future; that is where you will spend the rest of your life.”