

# BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

## “Heaven: Our Reward and Work”

Matthew 25:14-30

2006

### Introduction

Review:

1. Our Misconceptions: Harps, clouds, cherubim, Golden Gates and Peter
2. Our Eternal Home: The Past, Present and Future Heaven
3. Our New Environment: The New Earth and the Celestial City
4. Our New Life - Part I: Our surroundings and our glorified bodies
5. Our New Life - Part II: Our relationships and our pre-fall restoration
6. Our Reward and Work: The subject of today's teaching ...

### I The Future Reward Of The Believer

A. We will be **judged** in Heaven

In Roman times, the judgment seat was a raised platform where a Roman magistrate or ruler sat to make decisions and pass sentence.

**Background:** This word was taken from Isthmian games where the contestants would compete for the prize under the careful scrutiny of judges who would make sure that every rule of the contest was obeyed. The victor who competed according the rules was led by the judge to the platform called the Bema. There, a perishable laurel wreath would be placed on his head as a symbol of victory.

There are two judgments that the Bible speaks of:

1. ***The Great White Throne Judgment*** = “Judgment based on faith in Christ”

A judgment of entrance into the kingdom of God.

Rev 20:11-12, 15 “Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books ... If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

2. ***The Bema Seat Judgment*** = “Judgment based on works”

A judgment of reward based on faithful service while on earth.

Romans 14:10 “For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”

2 Corinthians 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be paid back according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or evil.”

B. We will be **commended** in Heaven

1. The parable of the talents:  
Matt 25:21 “His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!’”
2. The parable of the minas:  
Luke 19:17 “Well done, my good servant!' his master replied.”
3. The teaching of Paul:  
1 Cor 4:5 “Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.”

C. We will be **rewarded** in Heaven:

1. With crowns (The New Testament mentions five in particular):
  - a. The Incorruptible Crown  
1 Cor 9:25 “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”

**Application:** This is the crown of the victorious believer  
To win this crown the athlete must be self-disciplined, self-controlled, practice a degree of self-denial and be willing to subject himself to the rigors of training with the goal of winning the race.

- b. The Crown of **Joy**  
1 Thess 2:19-20 “For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.”

**Application:** This is the soul-winner’s crown  
Every time an individual is converted, there is joy in Heaven; but on the day of the giving of rewards, the soul-winner will experience intense joy when he or she sees the men and women they were privileged to introduce to Jesus.

- c. The Crown of Righteousness  
2 Tim 4:7-8 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store 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 longed for his appearing.”

**Application:** This is the reward of those who stayed the course

Living for Christ is often accompanied by suffering and hardship. God has a special reward for all who refused to give in -- give up -- or give way!

d. The Crown of **Life**

James 1:12 “Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.”

Rev 2:10 “Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

**Application:** This crown is reserved for those who gave their lives as martyrs for the sake of the Gospel.

e. The Crown of Glory

1 Peter 5:1-4 “To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

**Application:** This crown is reserved for those who undershepherd God's people -- teaching, preaching, discipling, training and nurturing.

**Question:** Won't these distinctions be unfair and create jealousy?

1. The judgments will be absolutely just and fair without partiality - 2 Tim 4:8
2. The Bible tells us that the quantity and quality of reward is up to us
  - a. We have to build on the foundation of Christ - 1 Cor 3:10-11
  - b. We have to use quality materials - 1 Cor 3:12-13
 

“If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light.”
  - c. We must compete according to the rules - 2 Timothy 2:5
  - d. We must run to win - 1 Corinthians 9:24
  - e. We must exercise self-control in everything - 1 Corinthians 9:25
  - f. We can expect our work to be tested by fire - 1 Cor 3:14-15
 

“If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.”

3. No one will feel deprived. It will be like ...
  - a. A Thanksgiving dinner  
Each person eats a different amount, but everyone is satisfied.
  - b. A graduate at commencement  
All who fulfill the requirements graduate with joy and celebration.  
But their GPAs and awards differ based on their diligence.
  - c. A cup of differing size  
Everyone's cups are full, but the capacity of each will differ according to the degree of faithfulness and fruitfulness.

2. With a good **return** on investment

Jesus often spoke of the wisdom of kingdom investing:

- a. The "Unprofitable Servant" - Luke 17:7-10
- b. The "Laborers in the Vineyard" - Matthew 10:1-16
- c. The "Parable of the Talents" - Matthew 25:14-30

Matt 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. "

3. With an **inheritance**

1 Peter 1:3-4 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-kept in heaven for you ..."

**What is this inheritance?**

Matt 25:34-35 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; **take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.**'"

Just as the children of worldly kings inherit kingdoms consisting of land, property and authority, believers will inherit God's kingdom which includes the New Heaven and the New Earth.

4. With God Himself

The greatest joy of all will be to see the face of God:

Matt 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

1 John 3:2 "We know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Rev 22:4 "They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads."

**Quote:** St. Augustine, *City of God*

“God himself, who is the author of virtue, shall be our reward. There is nothing greater or better than God himself, who has promised us himself.”

D. We will be elevated in Heaven:

1. We will be made **kings** - 1 Corinthians 4:8

Those who reign and rule over a people, territory or kingdom.

2. We will be made **priests**

Those who serve in the presence of God and His people.

1 Peter 2:9 “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

Rev 1:6 “[He] has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father -- to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.”

## II The Future Work Of The Believer

A. We will **worship** God - Rev 5:13; 7:9-12; 15:2-4; 19:1-7

Multitudes of God's people, of every nation, tribe, people, and language, will gather to sing praise to God for his greatness, wisdom, power, grace, and mighty work of redemption.

Amazingly, we won't be the only ones singing in Heaven:

Zeph 3:17 “The LORD your God ... will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”

B. We will rule and reign with Christ

Rev 5:9-10 “And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and **they will reign on the earth.**”

**The Bible's central storyline revolves around a question:** Who will reign over the Earth?

The earth is the realm where God's glory has been most challenged and resisted. But it is also the stage on which His glory will be most graphically demonstrated.

By reclaiming, restoring, renewing and resurrecting Earth -- and empowering a regenerated mankind to reign over it -- God will accomplish His purpose of dethroning Satan and making Jesus Christ the unchallenged, absolute ruler of the universe. And Christ will in turn confer this Kingdom to the saints who will rule and reign as God's delegated rulers of the New Heaven and Earth.

1. Over **every** living thing

a. All the animals

Genesis 1:26 ff “Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them **rule over** the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth ... God said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and **subdue it. Rule over** the fish of the sea and birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the earth ...”

Adam and Eve forfeited our right to have dominion over the earth, but Jesus will redeem that right for us.

b. All the angels

1 Cor 6:3 “Do you not know that we will judge angels?”

2. Over towns, **cities**, regions, nations, kingdoms

Daniel 7:18, 22, 27 The holy ones of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will take possession of the kingdom forever and ever.’ ... until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was rendered in favor of the holy ones of the Most High. Then the time arrived for the holy ones to take possession of the kingdom... Then the kingdom, authority, and greatness of the kingdoms under all of heaven will be delivered to the people of the holy ones of the Most High. His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; all authorities will serve him and obey him.’

Luke 19:17-19 And the king said to him, ‘Well done, good slave! Because you have been faithful in a very small matter, you will have authority over ten cities.’ Then the second one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has made five minas.’ So the king said to him, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’

Rev 2:26 “To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations ...”

3. Over all God’s **possessions**

Matthew 24:45-47 Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom the master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom the master finds at work when he comes. I tell you the truth, the master will put him in charge of all his possessions.”

C. We will grow:

1. In our **relationships**

We will fellowship and celebrate at the table with Christ and the redeemed saints from earth, fellowshiping and rejoicing with them (Matt 8:11; Luke 22:29, 30; Rev 19:9).

**Quote:** Jonathan Edwards, *The End for Which God Created the World*

“Heaven will be a never-ending, ever-increasing discovery of more and more of God's glory with greater and ever-greater joy in him.”

2. In our **knowledge**

The idea that when we get to heaven “we'll know everything” isn't substantiated by scripture. We will continually learn more of God. Eph 2:6-7 “And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

We'll never lose our fascination for God as we get to know him better. The thrill of knowing him will never subside. The desire to know him better will motivate everything we do. It will permeate our lives, energize our bodies, and fuel our imaginations.

D. We will enjoy life as it was meant to be for all eternity

1 Cor 2:9 “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.”

E. We will **rest**

Rev 14:13 “Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.”

We will experience relaxation, leisure, and freedom from the frustrations and monotonous labor of this life.

## Conclusion

**For unbelievers:** 1 Cor 6:9-11 “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

**For believers:** Heaven marks the beginning of an eternal adventure, but the end of earth's window of opportunity. Make every moment count!

Col 3:22-25 “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

Rev 22:12 “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.”

***“Only one life ‘twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last.”***

*(C.T. Studd, “Only One Life”)*

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