

Acts 28 – The Great N.T. dispensational divide

Phils.3 –loss to win, prize, might attain the out-resurrection

2Tim.2:2 – be strong, soldier, athlete, farmer, crown, first to partake
consider the resurrection of Christ

Rewards for faithful service.

When Paul concluded his resurrection section of 1Cor.15, he reminded them that their labors were not in vain, that is wasted or pointless in the Lord.

So that, my beloved brothers, you be firm, immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord always, knowing that your labor is not without fruit in the Lord. 1Cor.15:58. LITV.

Works do not save us; we are saved unto good works. This is a basic salvation fact for our calling today.

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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Eph.2:8-10.

There is however, something that results from works. Faithful service will be rewarded. There is a judgment for works by the righteous judge but with both positive and negative consequences and this is found in every calling.

Obey with enthusiasm, as though serving the Lord and not people, because you know that each person, whether slave or free, if he does something good, this will be rewarded by the Lord. Eph.6:7-8. NET.

And whatever you may do, work from the soul as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance. For you serve the Lord Christ. But the one doing wrong will receive what he did wrong, and there is no partiality. Col.3:23-25. LITV.

Look! I am coming soon, and my reward is with me to pay each one according to what he has done! Rev.22:12. NET.

In other words, our reward may range in quality from sad to satisfying, from bad to good, from being denied or receiving approval and granted something above the inclusions of salvation. Quality and quantity are elements of reward as the parables about the talents and time of labor indicate, Matt.25:14-30, 20:1-16. But there is a possibility of something else accompanying the positive reward.

The writer of Hebrews declares in chapter 11 that faith underscores the actions of those approved and who would be rewarded, but also provides insights as to the future timing of the reward. While Hebrews relates to the faithful within Israel, we should not miss a common positive feature about the aspects of Christ's rewards.

Now faith is the assurance that what we hope for will come about and the certainty that what we cannot see exists. By faith our ancestors won approval. Heb 11:1-2. ISV.

Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who diligently search for him. Heb 11:6. ISV.

Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. Heb 11:35.

The better resurrection in this context is for those whose faith was the motivating factor in a life of self-denial and sacrificial service. The better resurrection these faithful sought could be better as to the quality of the new life they would enjoy and the rewards for faithful service accompanying that new life, but it might also include an earlier resurrection. It might include both, that is better in quality and better in time.

Gatherings and Resurrections.

Exodus 19 records two gatherings, one in the clouds, the other around the base of the mountain. I believe this foretells the future coming of the Lord when, not two but three gatherings will take place.

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

Exo 19:16-17.

And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. Exo 19:19-20. [Ex.24:0-18].

Moses was a picture of the first gathering. He represents the faithful who, at Christ's return, would rise up to meet him in the clouds when the last trumpet would sound and the Lord descends out of heaven to the earth with angels, fire, a voice, the shout of the archangel. Please note the "we" in the following passage does not apply to "us" today as members of the church which is his body.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 1Thess.4:16-17.

This Acts period resurrection of Thessalonians and 1Corinthians 15 is the better resurrection Hebrews spoke about I believe. During the Acts period, the dead members of the elect remnant of grace would be resurrected and then, along with the changed living, they would meet the Lord in the clouds as he descends to the earth, 1Thess.4:13-18. This is the feast of Trumpets. These would reign with Christ, see 1Cor.15:51-52, & 6:2-3. The resurrection of Corinthians and Thessalonians is to the earth, but is the earlier resurrection and gathering than the general resurrection for Israel the unfaithful nation.

Like the picture of Exodus where the majority of the nation were not privileged to ascend up the mountain, so to, when the Lord returns to Israel, only a faithful remnant will ascend to meet him. Those of the nation left in the land after the antichrist, will see him descend, this is the second gathering. They will gather around after he sets feet in the Land and they will mourn for him, Zech.12:10-14. Revelation speaks of the nation of Israel which looks upon him as he returns and stands on the Mount of Olives.

"Behold, He comes with the clouds," and "every eye will see Him, and the ones who pierced" Him, and all the tribes of the earth "will wail on account of Him." Yes, Amen. Dan. 7:13. Rev 1:7. LITV [cf Ex.19:11].

I believe Matthew 24 speaks of the third gathering. After the trumpet return of the Lord other Israelites are gathered from the four winds, Isa.11:12, 43:6. I don't think Matt.24 is the gathering of the elect remnant of grace, rather the gathering of the nation's less faithful who had been dispersed to the four corners, Deut.32:26. The prophet Isaiah spoke of this gathering.

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the heavens. And then all the tribes of the land will wail, Rev.1:7. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and much glory. Dan. 7:13 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the heavens to their ends. [Isa.11:10-12]. Mat 24:30-31.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem. Isa 27:12-13.

I believe there are resurrections associated with these gatherings. The faithful remnant is gathered, being resurrected and changed to meet him in the clouds, 1Thess.4. I believe the resurrection of Ezekiel 37:1-14 references the later, national resurrections. Some resurrected when they look on the one they pierced and some resurrected when the nation is regathered after he has returned. Note the four winds of Ez.37:9.

The better resurrections are associated with faithfulness. The Lord spoke about this in the gospels.

And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Luk 20:34-36.

The better resurrection is part of and the gateway to rewards.

The elect remnant of grace of the Acts period looked for this better resurrection that Paul wrote about in Corinthians and Thessalonians. They were however, under constant warning by the apostles that this earlier resurrection linked to their reward was not cast in stone, constant faithfulness to the end was encouraged, Matt.10:22, 2Pet.2:18-20, 2Cor.11:13-15, & Hebs.3:14. In other words, while the gift of salvation could not be forfeited, the rewards could be positive or negative, even lost altogether, Acts1:20.

The same warnings are given to us today in the present dispensation of the grace of God revealed to Paul after Israel was nationally let go at Acts 28:25. Paul warns us we can be beguiled of our reward. He joyed in the firmness of the Colossian's faith in Christ, but in that context added words identifying men who, with enticing words intentionally diverted them from this path and rob them of their reward.

And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the

world, and not after Christ. Col 2:4-8.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head... Col 2:16-18. See also 2Tim.2:14-18, 3:12-13.

It is interesting to note in this context, that the elements of the world are those religious practices that existed in the Acts period, such as water baptisms, circumcision, the division of foods, and days of the Feasts including the weekly sabbaths. These shadows of the previous good things to come were contrary to holding the Head in this current administration of God. Shadows which were appropriate and observed before Acts 28, are misdirects and traps snapping away rewards after Acts 28. These are the commandments of religious men, not the father through the apostle Paul. Consider 1Tim.1:7 & Phils.3:18-19.

In Phils.3:11,14 Paul pressed according to the mark for the prize, striving to attain the out resurrection from the dead; he wanted to win Christ. In 2Tim.2 he wrote that his endurance was so that the elect, believers today, may obtain [Hebs.11:35] salvation with eternal glory. The warnings are given so that we might indeed obtain salvation with eternal glory, and like Paul we need to push onwards according to the mark for that upward call of God, Phils.3:14.

Three charts are offered below. The first sets the outline of Paul's prison epistles. The second and third focus on elements about the reward for faithful service. I pray they help us all as we examine this exciting subject including the winning, prize, crown, out resurrection and upward call. We might even find some clarity about Phils.3:20. The Lord bless us as students of his Word learning together to find truth and discard theories.

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THE PRISON EPISTLES

Chart expanded from: "Prize of the High Calling". C.H. Welch.

A Ephesians

Seated
together

PAUL. (3:1, 7-9, 13, 6:19-20).

Prayers. Know hope, inheritance, power. (1:15-19). Know. (3:14-21, 6:18-19).
The Dispensation. Mystery. (3:2,3,9,RV).
Christ's ascent. Christ the Head. (4:9-10,1:20-22).
The church which is His body. (1:22, 23).
Fullness. (1:23, 4:10).
Principalities and powers.* (1:2 1).
Instructions for The Church. (4:1-6:19).
Aware. (3:9).

B Philippians

The Prize

PAUL. Learned, rec'd, heard & seen. (4:9).

Prayers. Knowledge & judgment. (1:9-11). Peace. (4:6).
Analyze the things that differ. (1:10).
sincere & unoffending.
Suffer. (1:29).
Loss, win, press (mark), prize. (3:8, 11, 14).
attain, (out) resurrection. (3:11).
power of His resurrection. (3:10).
Good Ex. (2:5-11, 19-21,25-30, 3:4-7).
Enemies of cross, god is their belly. (3:18,19).
Depart.^o (1:23). Offered.^o (2:17). Abide. (2:25).

C Philemon

A Picture
or an appeal

PAUL. (:10).

Prayer. Faith & Love. (:5).
The Dispensation seen.
Far off made nigh. A brother, son.
Profitable servant.

A Colossians

Complete
in Him

PAUL. (1:23-29. 4:3-4).

Prayers. Hope, knowledge, walk. (1:3-12). Known. (4:2-4).
Dispensation. Mystery. (1:25, 26).
Christ's ascent. Christ the Head. (2:15, 19).
The church which is His body. (1:24).
Fullness. (1:19).
Principalities and powers.* (1:16, 2:10).
Instructions for The Church. (3:1-4:6).
Beware. (2:8).

B 2 Timothy

The Crown

PAUL. Learned, assured. (1:7-11,13, 2:2,3:14, 4:16-17).

Prayers. Memory. (1:3-4). Appeal. (4:16?).
Rightly dividing the Word of Truth. (2:15).
approved & unashamed.
Suffer. (1:12).
Suffer ill, strive (rules), labour, endure. (2:3,5,6,10,12)
endure, reign. (2:10).
consider Christ's resurrection. (2:8).
Bad Ex. (1:15,16-18, 2:17, 4:10,14).
Snare of the devil. (2:26).
Depart.^o (4:6). Offered.^o (4:6). Crown. (4:8).

* None of these expressions occur in Philippians or 2 Timothy.
o Only occurrences in Paul's epistles.

Philippians, 2 Timothy

prize, crown, out resurrection-

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| B Philippians The Prize | <p>4:9. PAUL. Learned, rec'd, heard & seen. 1:9-10 Prayers. Knowledge & judgment. (1:9-11). Peace. Analyse the things that differ. sincere & unoffending. Suffer. (1:29). Loss, win, press (mark), prize. (3:8, 11,14). attain, (out) resurrection. (3:11). power of His resurrection. (3:10). Good Ex. (2:5-11, 19-21, 25-30, 3:4-7). Enemies of cross, god is their belly. (3:18,19). Depart.^o (1:23). Offered.^o (2:17). Abide. (2:25).</p> |
| B 2 Timothy The Crown | <p><u>PAUL</u>. Learned, assured. (1:7-11,13, 2:2, 3:14, 4:16-17). Prayers. Memory. (1:3-4). Appeal. (4:16?). Rightly dividing the Word of Truth. (2:15). approved & unashamed. Suffer. (1:12). Suffer ill, strive (rules), labour, endure. (2:3,5,6,10,12) endure, reign. (2:10). consider Christ's resurrection. (2:8). Bad Ex. (1:15,16-18, 2:17, 4:10,14). Snare of the devil. (2:26). Depart.^o (4:6). Offered.^o (4:6). Crown. (4:8).</p> |

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Philippians & 2 Timothy

prize, crown, the out resurrection

Philippians

the prize

Christ's resurrection the key in both letters

- 1:9-11 prayer, love excel in knowledge & judgment
approve/test/analyze things that differ
 sincere, unoffending, fruits of righteousness
- 2:5-10 Christ, our example – faithful unto *death*, even cross
 *highly exalted
- 3:4-8 Paul's loss – genealogy, righteousness of the law
 excel in knowledge of Christ,
 *win/gain Christ
- 3:9-11 Paul's desire – found in Christ
 not his faithfulness/righteousness of the [works] Law
 but righteousness by Christ's faithfulness
to know Christ *power of his resurrection
 fellowship of his sufferings, likeness of his *death*
 Paul's desire – if by any means, attain/arrive
 *the resurrection out from among the dead
- 3:12-14 Paul's gain - reaching forth, to attain, perfection, forgetting
 * the prize – the high calling upward call
- 3:15-21 Paul's example, living to the standard
 Enemies of the cross, destruction/loss, shame, earthly things 1:28
- 3:20-21 *heaven from where we look/wait, then [out-resurrected?] bodies changed

the prize

the prize?

2Timothy

the crown

Christ's resurrection the firstfruit ek the dead

- 1:9-11 prayer, power, love, sound mind, afflictions with gospel
rightly divide the word – be diligent
 approved, unashamed, shun
- 2:1-6 be strong, present truth, faithful taught
 *soldier endure hardship, 2:9, 4:5, war to please
 *athlete compete lawfully, the crown
 *farmer toil to partake first of the fruits [cf 1Cor.15:20 et.al.]
- 2:7-8 consider, understanding from the Lord
 remember *Christ raise from [ek] the dead
- 2:9-13 Paul's hardship, chained malefactor, word not chained
 *endure so elect may obtain salvation with glory in Christ
- faithful word dead with him – live with him
 *endure – reign with him +ve
 deny him – deny us [cf 3:5] -ve
 believe not - he continues faithful, cannot deny himself
- 2:14-26 remember v10-11, unprofitable disputes = subversion of hearers [cf 2Pet.2:6]
 right division, shun profane fruitless discussions [1Tim.1:9, 4:7, 6:20]
 ungodliness, gangrene, error, faith overturned
- the gain *gold, honor, useful vessel, unto good works
 the loss wood, earth, dishonor, captive, snare of the devil
- 4:6-8 Paul's offering and departure, fought, finished, kept the faith
 *crown of righteousness
- Love his appearing** [past for present truth 1:10, future for hope, 4:1, 8, Tit.2:13]

Based on chart in "Prize of the High Calling" C. H. Welch

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