

REWARDS IN HEAVEN FROM YOUR WORKS

If you have trusted Christ as your Savior, you have God's promise that you will spend eternity in Heaven. Will every Christian's experience in Heaven be the same, or will that differ based upon our works here on Earth? Let's look at the 5 Crowns referenced in the Bible.

1) The Imperishable Crown – (1 Corinthians 9:24-25) "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate [disciplined] in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown" (NKJV).

All things on this earth are subject to decay and will perish. Jesus urges us to not store our treasures on earth "where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19).

2) The Crown of Rejoicing – (1 Thessalonians 2:19) "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" The apostle Paul tells us in Philippians 4:4 to "rejoice always in the Lord" for all the bountiful blessings our gracious God has showered upon us.

As Christians we have more in this life to rejoice about than anyone else. Luke tells us there is rejoicing even now in heaven. "Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." (<u>Luke 15:7</u>). The crown of rejoicing will be our reward where "God will wipe away every tear . . . there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (<u>Revelation 21:4</u>).

3) The Crown of Righteousness – (2 Timothy 4:8) "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." We inherit this crown through the righteousness of Christ which is what gives us a right to it, and without which it cannot be obtained.

Because it is obtained and possessed in a righteous way and not by force and deceit as earthly crowns sometimes are, it is an everlasting crown, promised to all who love the Lord and eagerly wait for His return. Through our enduring the discouragements, persecutions, sufferings, or even death, we know assuredly our reward is with Christ in eternity (Philippians 3:20).

4) The Crown of Glory – (1 Peter 5:4) "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away." Though Peter is addressing the elders, we must also remember that the crown will be awarded to all those who long for or love His appearing. Recall Stephen who, while being stoned to death, was able to look into the heavens and see the glory of God (Acts 7:55-56).

It also recognizes that believers are incredibly blessed to enter into the kingdom, into the very likeness of Christ Himself. For as Paul so eloquently put it, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18 NKJV).

5) The Crown of Life – (Revelation 2:10) "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

This crown is for all believers, but is especially dear to those who endure sufferings, who bravely confront persecution for Jesus, even to the point of death. He is the "bread of life" (John 4:10, 6:35). We know that our earthly lives will end. But we have the amazing promise that comes only to those who come to God through Jesus: "And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life" (1 John 2:25).

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Other Verses Referencing Rewards Available In Heaven

Corinthians 3:11-14	"For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work."
Colossians 3:23-24	Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.
Philippians 3:20-21	For <u>our citizenship is in heaven</u> , from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who 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.
1 Cor. 2:9	"However, as it is written: What <u>no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived</u> — the things God has prepared for those who love him."
Revelation 22:12	"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."
Matthew 16:27	"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds."
2 Cor. 9:6	"Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.
Luke 6:38	Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
Luke 19:15- 19	"When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done. "The first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.' "And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.' "The second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' "And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.'"

ASKING GOD FOR SALVATION....A SINNER'S PRAYER

Pray the prayer below, FROM YOUR HEART, and you will be saved.

Heavenly Father, I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son, and that He died on the cross to save me from my sin. I believe that He rose again to life, and that He invites me to live forever with Him in heaven as part of Your family. Because of what Jesus has done, I ask You to forgive me of my sin and give me eternal life. I invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust Jesus as my Savior and follow Him as my Lord. Help me to live in a way that pleases and honors You. Amen.

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