

REWARDS AND/OR LOSS

For 1,000 Years, or for Eternity?

Proffered “rewards,” “crowns” (or, on the other hand, “loss”), have to do with *the exercise of governmental power and authority in Christ’s coming kingdom* (cf. Matt. 25:14-20; Luke 19:11-27; Rev. 2:26, 27).

But *how long* will this exercise of power and authority last? Will it be restricted to “time,” the millennial age? Or, are “the eternal ages” beyond the Millennium also in view?

On the one hand, *Scripture teaches that the exercise of governmental power and authority by Christ and His co-heirs WILL NOT end when the 1,000-year millennial day has run its course*. Rather, the exercise of such power and authority will extend into and last throughout the eternal ages beyond the Millennium.

BUT, on the other hand, *Scripture DOES NOT teach that this exercise of power and authority will continue unchanged into these eternal ages*. To the contrary, Scripture teaches just the opposite. The rule by Christ and His co-heirs during the ages beyond the Millennium *will be quite different* than their rule during the Millennium.

In this respect, among other respects, *a sharp distinction MUST be made between the millennial age and the subsequent ages, comprising eternity*.

The millennial age, as some suggest, is *NOT the first of the eternal ages*. Rather, the millennial age comprises *the last 1,000 years of a septenary arrangement of millenniums*, introduced and dealt with in the opening thirty-four verses of Genesis, establishing an unchangeable pattern, at the outset, concerning *events occurring during time, dealt with in all subsequent Scripture*.

But, again, are rewards, crowns, or loss Millennial alone? Or, do they also include the ages beyond, comprising eternity?

And, with the preceding in mind, note a number of different things about the matter at hand — *“time” associated with rewards, crowns, or loss*.

First, there is the matter of Christ's throne. His throne is *eternal*, but not as a separate entity from the Father's throne.

Conditions of this nature are *millennial ONLY* (Heb. 1:8; Rev. 3:21; 22:1, 3). Christ, with His co-heirs, will reign from His Own throne *UNTIL* He has "put down all rule and all authority and power."

Then, when "all things" have been subjected unto Christ, the kingdom will be delivered up "to God, even the Father," in order that "God may be all in all [*lit.*, 'all things in all of these things']" (I Cor. 15:24-28).

This will occur at the end of the Millennium, and Christ will then assume a position on a central throne with His Father called, "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1, 3).

Second, there is the matter of the location of Christ's throne.

During the Millennium, Christ's throne will be in the new Jerusalem positioned in the heavens above the present earth (from whence a rule from the heavens over the earth will ensue).

During the eternal ages, "the throne of God and of the Lamb" will, likewise, be in the new Jerusalem; but the location of the new Jerusalem will be quite different. The present heavens and earth will be destroyed at the end of the Millennium, and a new heavens and a new earth will be brought into existence.

The new Jerusalem will rest upon the new earth (evidently a much larger earth to accommodate a city this size [about 1,500 miles in length, breadth, and height]), and God Himself will reside therein, seated on a throne, with His Son alongside.

A rule from the heavens over the earth (millennial) will be a thing of the past, and "the throne of God and of the Lamb" will become the central point in the heavens of an eternal rule extending throughout the universe (*cf.* II Peter 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1ff).

Third, there is the matter of the manner in which Christ will rule.

During the Millennium, Christ and His co-heirs will rule the nations with "a rod of iron"; but a rule after this fashion would be *out of place during the eternal ages*.

During the Millennium, *absolute force* will be used to bring and keep the nations under subjection; but such will be unnecessary during the eternal ages.

Conditions on the new earth will be *quite different* than millennial conditions on the present earth. There will be no more sin, death, etc. (Rev. 21:3, 4); and this will allow for numerous changes in the manner of the administration of governmental affairs.

Satan will be bound in the abyss during the Millennium, but at the conclusion of the Millennium he will be loosed for “a little season [‘a short time’].” The rebellion evident among nations during the Millennium, necessitating the rule with “a rod of iron,” will then be brought to a head.

The rebel nations will ally with Satan and under his banner march against Christ and His co-heirs in one final, vain, climactic thrust. But, the entire matter will be speedily brought to an end through *fire* “from God out of heaven” (cf. Ezek. 28:18b, 19).

Satan will then be cast into the lake of fire, the judgment of the unsaved dead from throughout Man’s Day and the Lord’s Day will occur, and the time for major changes will be at hand.

At this time, the kingdom will be delivered up to the Father, the present heavens and earth will pass out of existence, the new heavens and the new earth will come into existence, the new Jerusalem will descend from heaven to rest upon the new earth, and the throne of God and the throne of Christ will become *one throne*.

The nations will then dwell upon the new earth, with God Himself dwelling in their midst. And, as previously stated, universal rule will issue forth from “the throne of God and of the Lamb” on the new earth.

(God presently rules *from a place in the heavens over the entire universe*. Then, provinces throughout His universe are governed by appointed rulers [angels] who evidently exercise their delegated power and authority *from places in the heavens in relation to the provinces being ruled* [e.g., Satan and his angels presently rule *from a place in the heavens in relation to the earth*, one province in God’s kingdom (cf. Dan. 10:13-20; Eph. 2:2; 6:11, 20).

And this structured rule would evidently be the same relative to provinces ruled by angels elsewhere in the universe [*i.e.*, ruled *from places in the heavens in relation to the different provinces*].

It is in this manner that “the heavens do rule” [beginning with God, the supreme Ruler over all].

During the Messianic Era, Christ and His co-heirs will exercise delegated power and authority *over the earth* from the same sphere in which Satan and His angels presently rule [cf. Job 16:15; Rev. 12:7-12].

Then, during the eternal ages, the new earth will be the place in the heavens from whence *universal rule* will emanate [in the heavens in relation to the entire universe, as God's present dwelling place is in the heavens in relation to the entire universe].)

Crowns, Rewards — Millennial, or Eternal?

Promises to Christians concerning crowns, rewards, etc. are to be realized during *the millennial age ALONE, NOT also during the eternal ages*. And that is a simple matter to show from Scripture.

As noted in previous comments concerning differences in Christ's reign during the Millennium and during the ages beyond, many conditions surrounding proffered positions with Christ will not exist during the eternal ages.

Then, in line with the preceding, Scripture plainly states, in a direct manner, that crowns, rewards, or loss have to do with *the millennial age ALONE, NOT with the eternal ages*.

Then, beyond that, there is the matter of the different things of this nature being dealt with *within the confines of the way Scripture is structured, within the confines of events occurring during time seen in the septenary structure of Scripture*.

1) Conditions Surrounding Proffered Positions

On *conditions* surrounding proffered positions in the kingdom, note the overcomer's promises in Revelation chapters two and three. That these promises, referencing rewards and/or loss, are *MILLENNIAL ONLY* in nature is made plain by several of the promises.

In the overcomer's promise to the Church in Smyrna, it is evident that "death" will exist during the Millennium (Rev. 2:11; cf. Rom. 8:13); but this will *NOT* be the case beyond the Millennium, during the eternal ages (Rev. 21:4).

In the overcomer's promise to the Church in Thyatira, ruling with "a rod of iron" is in view (2:26-28). And a scene of this nature

CANNOT exist either during the present dispensation or during the eternal ages. A rule of this nature, by Christ and His co-heirs, *can exist ONLY during the Millennium, NOT before, NOT after.*

Then, in the overcomer's promise to the Church in Laodicea, Christ's throne, "my throne," is in view. *Christ is NOT seated on His Own throne today; nor will this throne exist separate from the Father's throne beyond the Millennium (cf. Heb. 1:13; Rev. 3:21; 22:1, 3).*

Again, the scene can ONLY be Millennial, NOT before, NOT after.

And, continuing with the other four overcomer's promises would be unnecessary, for *ALL of the overcomer's promises have to do with different facets of THE SAME THING pertaining to THE SAME TIME.*

Thus, it is plain that the things seen in the overcomer's promises in these two chapters *can be realized during the Millennial Era ALONE.* They can have *NOTHING* to do with time and events preceding the Millennium, nor can they have *ANYTHING* to do with time and events during the eternal ages beyond the Millennium.

2) The Plain Statements of Scripture

Scripture plainly states, in a direct manner, that rewards or loss will be *MILLENNIAL ONLY*, something which can be seen in several passages.

In this respect, note the parable of the fig tree in Matt. 21:19, 20.

Christ, en route to Jerusalem two days before His crucifixion, coming to a fig tree, seeking fruit, found none. And he cursed the fig tree, saying, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever [*lit.*, 'henceforward with respect to the age']."

The Greek expression used here, translated "with respect to the age," is *eis ton aiona* (refer to the author's article, "Aion, Aionios," which deals with this expression, plus other related issues in the Greek N.T.).

Christ was using "the fig tree" to represent *fruitless Israel in relation to the message being proclaimed* — the proffered kingdom of the heavens.

The word for "age" (*aiona*) in the expression *eis ton aiona* is singular, referring to *ONE AGE, the Messianic Era.* And Israel, through Christ cursing the fig tree, was being cursed for *ONE AGE relative to bearing fruit for the kingdom of the heavens.*

That being offered to and rejected by Israel had to do with *exercising rulership from the heavenly part of the kingdom, lasting for ONE AGE, not many ages.*

Later in the chapter (v. 43), this kingdom was taken from Israel, to be offered to a “nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,” which can easily be identified in Scripture as *the one new man* “in Christ,” comprised of *new creations* “in Christ,” Christians.

And the length of time that this kingdom will last — ruled by Christ and His co-heirs — is seen in the cursing of the fig tree. *ONE AGE is in view, with rewards or loss having to do with this kingdom and lasting the same length of time that this kingdom would last — for ONE AGE, the Messianic Era.*

Then, the same thing is seen from another vantage point where the expression *eis ton aiona* is used in John 4:14; 6:52, 58; 10:26, or the adjective *aionios* (‘age-lasting’) is used in John 6:40, 47, 54, 68 (again, refer to the author’s article, “Aion, Aionios”).

Or, note the reference to *two ages* in Matt. 12:31, 32 (*aion* [“age”] has been mistranslated, “world” [KJV]). These two ages are clearly *the present age* (Man’s 6,000-year Day) and *the coming age* (the 1,000-year Messianic Era). The reference can be to none other.

ONE FUTURE AGE, not many future ages, is being referenced in *ALL* of these verses. And the reference in *ALL* of the verses is clearly to *the age out ahead, the Messianic Era.*

Scripture simply CANNOT be extended beyond the time clearly stated and/or being dealt with.

3) *But, a Continuing Reign*

The preceding however, as previously seen, does not at all teach that the reign of Christ and Christians will end at the conclusion of the Millennium. This only shows that *their reign during the eternal ages will be OUTSIDE the scope of the overcomer’s promises and QUITE DIFFERENT than their reign during the preceding Millennium.*

God’s revelation to man concerns itself with “time” — *seven thousand years of time* — from the creation of Adam to the end of the Messianic Kingdom. Very little is revealed about that which occurred before the creation of Adam, and very little is revealed about that which will occur beyond the Millennium. Scripture

does reveal though that the reign of Christ and Christians will continue, and the length of this continuing reign is specifically stated to be “forever and ever [Gk., *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, ‘with respect to the ages of the ages,’ i.e., ‘throughout the endless ages]” (Rev. 11:15; 22:3-5).

The activity of Christ and Christians in this continuing reign is not revealed in so many words, but Scripture does present enough information that several observations can be made.

4) *Extent of Christ's Rule*

The rule of Christ itself during the eternal ages will no longer be limited to the earth. Rather, this rule will extend beyond the earth (the new earth), out into the universe.

Christ will be seated upon a throne from which administrative power and authority will extend throughout the universe (“the throne of God and of the Lamb” [Rev. 22:3]). The center of the universe in that day will evidently be the new earth, upon which God, His Son, and redeemed mankind will dwell.

And the Christians' continuing rule “with Christ” (Rev. 22:5) would have to be of a like nature, for the power will no longer emanate from *Christ's throne*, but from *the throne of God and of the Lamb*.

In this respect, the rule by Christ and His co-heirs *over the earth* during the Millennium can only be extended to a rule *over worlds throughout the universe* following the Millennium, with completely different existing conditions and circumstances.

5) *Millennial and Eternal Blessings*

To what extent though, if any, will rewards realized by overcoming Christians during the Millennium carry over into the eternal ages beyond? The question is really unanswerable.

The wiping away of all tears at the conclusion of the Millennium and the fact that the overcomer's promises are *MILLENNIAL ONLY in nature would clearly indicate that distinctions which existed during the millennial age between overcoming and nonovercoming Christians will not exist during the eternal ages beyond the Millennium*. But, to take matters beyond this point and say that *no rewards exercised*

by overcoming Christians during the millennial age will extend over into the eternal ages beyond the Millennium, or have any bearing on the place which they will occupy beyond the Millennium, would be carrying matters beyond Scriptural grounds. Scripture simply does not deal with the matter.

All Things New

The Millennium will not, as many envision, be a time of perfection. Such a state awaits the first of many ages beyond the Millennium. *The restoration of all things* will occur before the Millennium, at the end of 6,000 years of time; but *the making of all things new* awaits the completion of the Millennium, at the end of 7,000 years of time (*cf.* Acts 3:21; Rev. 21:5). Only then will a *perfect order* in all of God's creation exist.

As the present age (Man's Day) has a purpose, so will the millennial age (the Lord's Day); and the ultimate goal of *all* will be realized in the ages beyond (in the Day of God).

The rulers for the millennial age are being acquired during the present age; and during the millennial age these rulers will, as co-heirs with Christ, participate in the age-long work of bringing all things under subjection to Christ. Such a work, brought to pass through a rule with "a rod of iron," anticipates the ages beyond the Millennium, in which a rule with "a rod of iron" will no longer be necessary; and the reason for man's creation will then be realized in its fullest sense.

Very little information is given relative to man and regality beyond the Millennium, but enough is given that matters can be pieced together. And this is seen mainly in properly understanding the purpose for the tree of life and what is stated in Rev. 22:1-5.

(Man today talks about one day going to heaven and spending eternity with God in heaven. In a respect that is true, *but not at all in the same way and sense that man, far more often than not, envisions matters.*

Man's ultimate destiny is to exercise regality out in the heavens, out among the billions of planets in the estimated billions of galaxies, with the power emanating from "the throne of God and of the Lamb" on the new earth.)

The Tree of Life

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:1-5).

“The tree of life” is mentioned nine times in Scripture, in three different books — three times in Genesis (2:9; 3:22, 24), four times in Proverbs (3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4), and twice in the Book of Revelation (2:7; 22:2).

But *WHAT* was *the original purpose* for the tree of life (seen in Genesis), which will be realized yet future (seen in the Book of Revelation)?

The tree of life was one of the numerous trees in the garden in Eden. And Adam, with Eve, was commanded to eat of all these trees, with the exception of one — “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:9, 16, 17).

Adam, the first man, had been created for the specific purpose of assuming *the rulership over the earth*, and the fruit of the tree of life was singled out as *a specific provision for man as he exercised this rule*.

1) *An Evident Connection*

An evident connection between man’s rule and his partaking of the tree of life can be seen by noting *the appearance of this tree* in the beginning when man was in a position to rule, *the absence of this tree* during the entire period when man is not in a position to rule (aside from the tree being referenced in Proverbs), and *the reappearance of this tree* in the Book of Revelation when man is brought back into a position to rule (*cf.* Gen. 1:26-28; Rev. 2:26,27).

The period during which man has been barred from eating of the tree of life *began* following Adam's fall, resulting in his disqualification to rule; and this period will *end* following the issues of the judgment seat, at which time man will once again find himself in a position to rule.

Adam, following the fall, was driven from the garden to prevent his partaking of the tree of life. Adam could not be permitted to eat of this tree in a fallen condition, for had such occurred, Adam, in a fallen state, would have realized that which fruit from this tree was meant to provide.

Thus, not only did God remove Adam from the garden, but "Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way," were placed at "the east of the garden...to keep the way of the tree of life [to prevent fallen man from re-entering the garden and partaking of this tree]" (Gen. 3:22-24).

Studying Gen. 3:22-24 apart from the context and related Scripture could lead one to believe that the purpose for the tree of life in the beginning, in Genesis, was to provide perpetuity of life for Adam in his unfallen state. However, such could not have been the case at all. "Death" *did not* enter into the picture until *after* Adam's sin (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:6ff; cf. Rom. 6:23), at which time he was barred from the tree of life.

Adam had lived in an *undying state* prior to his sin, as he continued to live in an antithetical *dying state* following his sin; and to say that the tree of life was given to Adam in his unfallen state to provide perpetuity of life, preventing death, *CANNOT possibly be correct.*

NOR could it possibly be correct to say that the tree of life would have had anything to do with providing *physical life (keeping Adam alive physically)* following the fall. A tree can produce *ONLY* "after his kind" (Gen. 1:11, 12).

In this respect, *fruit* from the tree of life simply *could NOT have produced one result before man's fall and another following man's fall.*

(The word "forever" in Gen. 3:22, referring to Adam's longevity, is a translation of *olam* in the Hebrew text, referring to a *long period of time, not eternal* — contextually, referring to Adam's lifetime, 930 years.

Again, refer to the author's article, "Aion, Aionios.")

In Rev. 2:7, partaking of the tree of life has been promised to the overcomers from among those *already possessing eternal life*. Consequently, in this passage, the tree of life *can have NOTHING whatsoever* to do with perpetuity of life; and it can only be *the SAME* in the Genesis account when man was first brought upon the scene to rule and to reign.

The tree of life in both Genesis chapters two and three and Revelation chapter two appears in a different setting entirely. The tree of life reserved for Christians in Rev. 2:7 is associated peculiarly with a *PROVISION for those who will rule and reign as co-heirs with Christ*; and viewing Adam's position in the Genesis account — created *to rule and reign*, in possession of an unending life, with the fruit of the tree of life at his disposal — *the SAME thought concerning regality in connection with the tree of life could only hold true*.

Thus, Adam in a fallen state, *no longer in a position to rule*, *COULD NOT* be allowed to eat of the tree of life, for fruit from this tree would provide “life” in relation to *regality*.

This whole overall thought concerning the tree of life in Scripture *would have to hold true*, for that seen relative to this tree in Revelation chapter two is drawn from that which was *first* seen relative to this tree in Genesis chapters two and three. The fruit of the tree of life *was in the past* (seen in the Book of Genesis) and *will be in the future* (seen in the Book of Revelation) a *PROVISION for the rulers in the kingdom*.

This is an evident fact which MUST be recognized (ref. indented data in parenthesis at the end of the next page).

2) Millennial and Eternal Conditions

In that coming day following the Millennium, the tree of life will be for “the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:2). The Greek word translated “healing” is *therapeia*, from which the English word “therapy” is derived.

This is a medical term which has to do with *restorative healing*. In that day, God will *restore all of saved mankind to the original place which man occupied at the time of his creation*. And, consequently, *the whole of saved mankind, with regality in view, will have access to the tree of life*.

During the preceding Messianic Era, the tree of life will have been made available *to overcoming Christians* (Rev. 2:7), those ruling and reigning as co-heirs with Christ. And this tree will probably be made available *to certain others* at this time as well, others occupying regal positions with Christ in His reign from the heavens over the earth (*e.g.*, certain Old Testament saints, Tribulation martyrs [Matt. 8:11, 12; Rev. 20:4-6]).

But following the Messianic Era, in the eternal ages, this tree is seen being made available to the nations of the earth, something which would have been completely out of place during the Millennium. And this will be an apparent end result of Israel's evangelistic endeavors during the Millennium, along with Christ's rule with a rod of iron during this time.

Man was created in the beginning *to rule and to reign* (Gen. 1:26-28). And though only *a PART* of saved mankind will have been brought back into a position to occupy the throne at the beginning of the Millennium (with the tree of life made available to them at this time), at the end of the Millennium *the WHOLE* of saved mankind will be brought back into this position (with the tree of life made available to them at this time).

(For additional information on *the tree of life* in the preceding respect, refer to the appendix in the author's book, *The Bride in Genesis*.

Material in this appendix shows how the tree of life would have provided in the past [preceding man's fall] and will provide yet future [following God's redemptive work lasting six days, 6,000 years] *the necessary wisdom and knowledge for man to rule and reign.*)